

EUROPARC FEDERATION

Verification report for the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park

The cooperation between the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park (France) and the Escaut Plains Nature Park (Wallonia).



Application for the EUROPARC certificate

“Transboundary Parks – Following Nature’s Design”

by the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park

Date of verification visit: 18th – 21st of June 2013

Names of Verifiers: Kari Lahti and Leo Reyrink

Signed _____
Lead Verifier Leo Reyrink

Date: 18th of July 2013

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Part 1

1 Introduction

The Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park is the cooperation between and the area covering the French Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park and the Walloon Escaut Plains Nature Park.

From the early middle Ages until late 17th century this French/Walloon border region was part of the county of Hainaut (Comté Hainaut / Graafschap Henegouwen). Since the beginning of the 19th century coal mining became an important activity in this region. Both parks have a strong shared cultural heritage.

In 1968 the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park was established as the first regional park in France. Centre of the park were the forests of Saint-Amand. The park was later enlarged towards the French-Walloon border.

In the early 1980s the national tasks in France as well as in Wallonia were more and more decentralized. The new tasks of the regional authorities included the administration and politics concerning regional parks.

As a consequence 30 years ago in 1983, the Walloon Region and the French Région Nord-Pas-de-Calais signed an agreement to realise a cross border nature park (Appendix 6.1).

Since 1991 the cooperation was catalysed by first cross border actions and activities for the protection of nature and landscapes through INTERREG-projects within the EU-INTERREG-programmes. The Walloon Escaut Plains Nature Park was founded in 1996 in close cooperation with and support by the French Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park.

Therefore the year 1996 is seen as the birth of the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park.

On the 8th of January 2010 a formal cooperation agreement (Convention de Partenariat, Appendix 6.2) was signed by the president of the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park and the president of Escaut Plains Nature Park.

For the preparation of the new management plan for the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park a thorough study and presentation of characteristics was needed. Therefore an inventory was made for the whole territory of the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park. The data were published in 2008 (Diagnostic de territoire). The publication contains detailed cross border characteristics and data on geography, land use, demography, education and culture, tourism, nature and landscapes.

In 2010 the management plan for the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park "Charte 2010-2022" was approved. The plan was developed for the whole territory of the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park, although only valid in France. For the Walloon Escaut Plains Nature Park, a new management plan soon will be developed with validity until 2022.

The cooperation is organised by a common board with political members from both parks. Directors and staff meet regularly to coordinate the cross border work and projects. Both parks are willing to develop until 2022 one legal structure and one management plan for the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park. This political will is the result and proof of a long, good and strong living cross border cooperation.

In 2012 first studies were undertaken for the creation of the new structure for the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park and a special transboundary coordinator was employed.

The Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park is more than 750 km² in size (490 km² in France and 260 km² in Wallonia). The southern and eastern areas of the park (about 125 km²) are important core zones for nature conservation and play an important role in the European NATURA 2000 network. There are about 225,000 inhabitants living in the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park; it is one of the most densely populated regional parks in France and Belgium.

A common system of zonation is elaborated in the cross border management plan. Core zones are based on three biodiversity types: wetlands, forests and post-industrial cores. In the management plan, the important ecological corridors (wetlands and forests) have been identified between these areas as well as obstacles (like river dams).

We believe that it has been a great strategic step, after more than 30 years of cooperation, to apply the EUROPARC Federation to assess the work done to date. The evaluation based on the best standards for transboundary cooperation in protected area management is not only a good opportunity to make a critical self reflection of the common work, but can also set a milestone for the French and Walloon partners on their way to full cooperation and financing of the cross border work in future (2022).

For the verifiers it was a pleasure and an interesting task to be confronted with this long-term cooperation and the assessments of the achievements from more than 30 years of intensive and successful cross border cooperation and projects.

2 Results of the Desk Evaluation

The official application from Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park for the EUROPARC transboundary certification process was approved by the EUROPARC Transboundary Steering and Evaluation Committee (STEC) on the 18th of January 2013. On the 22nd of February 2013 the EUROPARC Federation received detailed application forms and questionnaires from the cooperating partners. The first assessment by the STEC of the application showed the long-term cross boundary work at the French-Walloon border in the Hainaut region. The self-assessment was critical and the materials proved the high standard of cooperation. The STEC decided that the area was worth to be assessed on location. On behalf of the STEC and the EUROPARC Federation Kari Lahti and Leo Reyrink were appointed as verifiers for the verification visit and the reporting.

Before the mission and after a second critical review of the materials, a number of questions and points, which needed clarification during the verification visit were summarised and distributed to the cooperating partners. The handout for the mission with questions and further information requested is attached in the Appendix 6.3: Handout for the Verification Visit (Desk Evaluation).

Part 2

3 Results of the Mission

3.1 Context

From 18th - 21st of June the French Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park and the Walloon Escaut Plains Nature Park were visited to be certified on location according to the programme "Transboundary Parks – Following Nature's Design".

The EUROPARC expert team Kari Lahti (second verifier, senior advisor Natural Heritage Services, Finland) and Leo Reyink (lead verifier, director Cross Border Nature Park Maas-Swalm-Nette, Netherlands) visited the site. The coordinator for the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park, Juan Lloret-Salvo and the directors Michel Marchyllie and Reinold Leplat organised an interesting programme for the verification visit (see Appendix 6.4: Programme of the Verification Visit). During the visit the verifiers were accompanied by the coordinator, members of staff and regional stakeholders.

The programme was very well organised with excellent guides and the time schedule was perfect. The atmosphere was open and a lot of further information and answers were given during the indoor evaluation and during the field visits. The visit was closed with a meeting with the presidents of the parks, directors and members of the board of the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park. The meeting ended with a lunch with the Vietnamese ambassador to France who was visiting the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park.



Visit of the Vietnamese ambassador to France to the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park (from left to right)

Alain Bocquet, Mayor of Saint Amand les Eaux

Duong Chi Dung, Vietnamese ambassador in France

Erick Charton, President Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park

Charles Picq, President Escaut Plains Nature Park

Daniel Mio, former President Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park

3.2 Observations on the Strengths and Weaknesses

3.2.1 Strengths

1. Long-term political support since 1983 (already more than 30 years!) and intensified in 1996 and cross border work based on the agreement from 2010: Convention de Partenariat (Appendix 6.1).
2. Vision documented in the 2010 agreement and a step by step development of the TB Park with the following mile stones:
 - Birth of the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park in 1968
 - Memorandum of Understanding between North-Calais Straight and Walloon regions in 1983
 - Birth of the Escaut Plains Nature Park and therefore of the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park cross border nature park in 1996
 - Cooperation agreement 2010: Convention de Partenariat
 - The management plan of Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park considers the Belgian site and the future management plan of the Escaut Plains Nature Park will consider the management plan on the French site.
 - Vision to build one juridical structure before the end of 2022.
3. The Nature Parks and therefore the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park fulfils the standards of IUCN category V protected landscapes.
4. There is a clear zonation with core zones: wetlands, forests and important former industrial sites for biodiversity and ecological connections between them. The cross border area with its industrial and agricultural landscapes and sites form an interesting region for sustainable recreation, tourism and regional development.
5. Because in both regions French is the main language there is no hindering because of language differences.
6. With the cross border data (Diagnostic de territoire) and the management plan (Charte du Parc 2010-2022) detailed plans on transboundary goals, zonation and habitat restoration (ecological connections) exist.
7. Detailed cooperation with information for visitors and tourists and programmes for sustainable land use and agriculture exist, as well as forms of local renewable energy exist (example pellets from local willows for heating the visitor centre in Bon-Secours).
8. Joint research projects like the inventory of hibernation sites for bats.
9. Environmental education and tourism and visitor programmes based on different visitor centres (Maison du Parc naturel des Plaines de l'Escaut, Maison de la Foret, Centre d'éducation Amaury, Gite de groupe le Luron) and a network of interesting info points and museums in which cultural history like the coal mining, plays an important role.
10. Realisation of the common cross border logo and communication (leaflets, walking/biking trails/horse riding).

11. Profits to local population in the TB Park by promotion of local offers (selling of regional branded products) and inclusion of farmers for example in the Eco-garden project and of restaurants in the tender "Fins Gourmets".
12. The TB Park follows "nature's design" as the large cross border natural forest situated in the heart of the Hainaut region is a core zone surrounded by further protected forests, wetland protected areas, landscape protected areas and a network of running waters (Escaut) throughout the parks and the goal to connect them in the future.
13. Good cross border cooperation with local stakeholders (tourism and agricultural organisations) and local authorities (communities are represented by the members in the nature park boards and the cross boundary board).
14. Fostering of social and economic wellbeing of local communities were shown by activities in:
 - 2006: First Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park festival and "Sharing our Landscapes" elected officials meeting to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park.
 - 2008: "Our revalued mining and industrial past" elected officials meeting and the second edition of the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park festival.
 - 2010: third edition of the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park festival.
 - 2011: Start of the regular café-debates with local responsible politicians.
15. One of the most important strength is that the cross border cooperation between the partners exists since 1983. After the creation of the Belgian park in 1996 the cooperation got an important impulse through INTERREG-projects. In 2010 the cooperation becomes formal with the Agreement and the Charter.

The cooperation is realised by different members of staff with an open mind towards cross border cooperation and strong personal engagement of the presidents and directors of both parks. The will of both nature parks to realise one organisation before the end of 2022 shows that in future the cooperation will get even stronger. The Parks are very successfully in realizing cross border projects.

3.2.2 Weaknesses

1. A weakness is the different organisation form: In France a territorial entity and in Belgium a non profit association. This might be hindering the realisation of one organisation in future.
2. The past cross border cooperation was strongly positively influenced by the realisation of cross border projects within the INTERREG-programs of the EU. In future it will be very important to have a more structural financial basis for the coordination of the cross border cooperation, which is independent of INTERREG-funds.
3. The cross border management of habitats and biotopes and the monitoring of species are not yet very well developed. It certainly needs a special effort in future. Biological data are important for the evaluation of the impact of recreation and tourism. It might be useful to work stronger together with ngo's and volunteers.

4. Visitor management including visitor data collection concerning the natural areas (Natura 2000 and other protected zones within the park) is not in place. This will become a more important issue in the near future because of the growing land use pressures and on the other hand because of the new methods of evaluating ecosystem services.
5. The Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park is a very densely populated cross border area. In future it will be important to stop further urbanisation and to strengthen the core zones by the realisation of ecological corridors and the removal of obstacles. Also the restoration of the riverbanks (strongly canalised) of the Escaut river might strengthen the populations of endangered species.
6. There is not yet a complete internet site for the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park. Therefore for foreigners it is not easy to find the adequate information for a visit in the cross border park.

4 Review of the criteria and fulfillment of the basic standards criteria and verification of the key points

Primary Criteria - 1.1 Vision

There is a clear and concrete vision for the cross boundary cooperation based on the starting agreement in 1983 and the agreement signed in 2010.

The management plan for the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park (2010) is the basis for the future management plan of the Escaut Plains Nature Park. It deals with the benefits for the protected areas and is recognised by all partners. The state of the environment is clearly documented in 2008 (Diagnostic de territoire).

The socio-economic benefits are taken into account in the development of sustainable tourism and recreation together with the tourism organisations and agricultural organisations.

Primary Criteria - 1.2 Joint management

The common fields of work are clearly documented in the signed agreement from 2010 (Convention de partenariat) and the management plan (Charte du Parc) 2010-2022.

The organisation plan for cooperation between the cross border organisations is documented in the agreement from 2010. A common board for the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park is political responsible for the cooperation. Regular meetings do take place. On an operation level also regular meetings take place between the directors of both regional parks and between different staff members. The joint management of the protected areas can be improved.

Primary Criteria - 1.3 Official Agreements

The official agreements for the cross border cooperation are:

- Agreement from 1983 signed by the minister of the Walloon region and the president of the regional council of Nord-Pas de Calais.

- Agreement from 8th of January 2010 (Convention de partenariat) signed by the presidents of the parks.

The agreement has a duration time from 2010-2022 parallel to the duration time of the management plan of the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park.

Primary Criteria - 1.4 Staff

In the organisation plan it is agreed that the directors and responsible staff of the cross border partners meet at least three times a year for internal exchange and clearance of matters and the overall coordination of the cooperation. In reality the directors and members of staff meet very regularly.

The existence of a living cross border cooperation is documented in detail by the minutes of the meetings of the staff members and working groups. Through both regional parks the cross border cooperation and the permanent communication involving all levels of staff is guaranteed.

Secondary Criteria - 2.1 Guiding Rules for Cooperation

The cooperation agreement clearly lists the guiding rules (Convention de Partenariat 2010).

The mixed board is political responsible. For the cooperation on an operation level the office (bureau) of the mixed board is responsible and meets at least three times a year. The boards of both parks meet at least one time in a year.

The two directors are responsible for the implementation of the cooperation (management plan 2010 for the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park). There are four working groups:

- Urban and rural solidarity
- Nature, landscape and cultural heritage
- Regional development
- Mobilisation (getting inhabitants and volunteers involved)

Secondary Criteria - 2.2 Exchange of data

With the publication of the land diagnostic (Diagnostic de territoire) detailed information was published for the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park. There were few data on species and ecosystems published.

In future it is important to improve mutual monitoring and management of endangered species and ecosystems.

Secondary Criteria - 2.3 Foreign Language Communications

French is the common language on both sites. So language is not hindering the cooperation.

Secondary Criteria - 2.4 Ecological Monitoring

Evidence of the ecological monitoring of the shared ecosystems is given in the cross border core zones and ecological corridors. A good example of mutual research is the realised map with hibernation sites for bats and the database on the location of ponds and endangered plant species.

An important issue is also the monitoring of number of visitors on both sides of the border in order to evaluate the impact of recreation and tourism and to show economic benefits from landscape and nature.

Secondary Criteria - 2.5 Basis of financing

There is not a budget for the cooperation. The finances are secured within the annual budgets for the management of both regional parks. A mid-term financial security is depending on the budgets of the parks. It is important that in future the partners keep the current level of human resources and that the priority for cross border cooperation will not be reduced. The partners cooperate successfully in EU-funded projects.

Primary Field of Work - 3.1 Nature and Landscape Conservation

There is a zoning system with core zones for wetlands, forest and former industrial zones with high biodiversity, that is adequately complementary. About 17.500 ha are defined as core zones; most of it part of Natura 2000.

The management of nature and landscape conservation areas is done in accordance with IUCN Protected Area categories Cat. V.

The migration of species and natural evolutionary processes are not hindered by the border. The management plan shows an ambitious network of ecological corridors between the core zones. Realising the corridors will be important to strengthen the ecological quality in the core zones. In such dense populated regions like the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park it will need strong efforts to realise them.

Secondary Fields of Work - 4.1 Education and Communication

Within the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park there are four important sites for education and communication:

- House of the Escaut Plains Nature Park in Bon-Secours, with a very interesting forest exhibition for children (e.g. the mushrooms).
- The woodhouse (Maison de la Foret) in Saint-Amand-Raismes-Wallers forest.
- The environmental education centre in Amaury, situated near a lake offers special and more days' education programmes for school groups and other youth organisations.
- Special site for accommodation of groups, Gite de groupe le Luron, near the office of the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park was developed for education and communication.

An interesting way to communicate is the café debate with local politicians started in 2011.



Parc naturel transfrontalier du Hainaut

Common logo for the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park

Secondary Fields of Work - 4.2 Recreation and Sustainable Tourism

Recreation and sustainable tourism is an important economic factor in the Hainaut cross border region. Having big cities like Lille and Valenciennes in the neighbourhood, the facilities and marketing material for visitors are necessary. There are very good maps for accommodation and trails for horse riding, for bicycle tours and walking trails. Accommodation sites like hotels and bed and breakfast (with quality label Panda site) can be found in brochures and on internet. Also the marketing of local products is actively supported by the regional parks.

Secondary Fields of Work - 4.3 Research and Monitoring

Research activities and monitoring programmes are goals of the cross border cooperation. Some examples show the good results of the cross border cooperation in research and monitoring:

- Joint mapping of the hibernation sites of bats, ponds and endangered plant species
- Cross border Landscape Observatory; a program not only to document the changes in landscapes by photo monitoring, but also an interesting method to raise awareness and get the inhabitants involved.

The documentation of flora and fauna including habitat level information need more emphasis in future.

Secondary Fields of Work - 4.4 Mutual Understanding and Peace

The promotion of peace and mutual understanding is part of the work done in the visitor centres and during the regular activities of the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park festival. The work with volunteers and participants of the Landscape Observatory help to strengthen the mutual understanding and peace.

Local communities are represented in the boards of both parks and therefore also in the mixed board of the Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park. Through the café debates the parks raise further awareness in the communities.

5 Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The cooperation of the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park and the Escaut Plains Nature Park is a very good example of a living cross border cooperation in the protected area management of regional parks in Europe.

Important steps have been achieved in the recent years. Exemplary are:

- The cooperation agreement in 2010.
- The management plan of the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park with impact on the Escaut Plains Nature Park from 2010.
- The will to realise one organisation structure, joint offices and joint finances by 2022.
- The regularly meeting of the mixed board and of the directors.
- A special employee to coordinate the cross border cooperation.
- The regularly meetings of the working groups.
- The four information sites, museums and other sites of interest (agriculture and former coal mining sites).
- Important core zones and the definition of ecological corridors in the management plan.

Based on the agreement from 1983 between the Walloon region and the Region Nord-Pas-de-Calais, the agreement of 2010 and the management plan 2010 the cooperation functions well. The cooperation has a long tradition by engaged people.

The Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park and the Escaut Plains Nature Park meet all standards of the transboundary park (IUCN Management Cat V) and is an excellent example how regional parks with lower protection levels (besides the core zones) can be linked across the national borders.

The Primary and Second Criteria and Fields of Work are fulfilled.

The basis of financing is only short-term on a year to year basis, depending on the budgets of the regional authorities.

The applicants are therefore successful in achieving the level required for official EUROPARC certification. The personal impression of the verifiers during the visit was that the applicants cooperate already for several years according to the EUROPARC Federation Standards for transboundary protected areas in Europe.

Based on our evaluation, the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park and the Escaut Plains Nature Park with the communities and the stakeholders from the sectors of tourism, agriculture and cultural heritage are a good example of transboundary cooperation and deserves fully the certification as Transboundary Park Following Nature's Design of the EUROPARC Federation.

5.2 Specific Recommendations to the Applicants

Although the criteria and fields of work are fulfilled according to the standards there are still some recommendations. For the applicants it will be a challenge to keep the high level of the transboundary cooperation. Therefore it is important that the mixed board, the installed cross border working groups as well as the meetings of the directors continue in the coming years. Then a permanent exchange of information and planning is ensured.

Organisation form of the cross border cooperation

We strongly support the idea of the realisation of one cross border organisation for the Hainaut Cross border Nature Park in 2022, with structural finances and independency from EU funds. Making one organisation would make the cooperation even much more efficient. A structurally financed office which realise additional financial power through EU-funded projects with changing and different cross border stakeholders and partners would make the cooperation unique in Europe.

In the next five years it will be important to see which steps the Hainaut Cross border Nature Park has been taken towards one organisation form and how to overcome the challenges of different legislations in Wallonia and France.

Communication and environmental education

The Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park has a logo. To improve the corporate identity of the park and to create more economic spin off we recommend the realisation of one website for the cross border park with information in French, Flemish and English. Through one internet site for the cross border park visitors will get an easier access to the cross border region.

The communication and marketing material should always have at least some general information on the natural values of the Park (one of the principle objectives for establishing Regional Natural Parks). Currently this seems not to be always the case.

The challenges for crossing the border especially for school children (need for id-cards, insurance etc.) are obviously preventing the full usage of environmental centres (e.g. Amaury Centre) and their programmes. We recommend that there should be official discussion whether these formalities could be eased by some means.

Research and Monitoring

There is some cross border research and monitoring done. It would be good to have more research on the distribution of flora and fauna species and to publish regularly the results of management, monitoring and research of the protected areas. We also recommend a visitor management program in order to monitor and evaluate the impact and potential benefits of visitors in relation to the protected areas and to get an idea of the value of the natural areas to the total economic spin off of the region. The understanding of economic benefits of nature and landscapes is important for the acceptance by and cooperation with local stakeholders.

Nature and Landscape

The Scarpe and the Escout rivers play an important role for the ecological functioning of the network of flowing waters in the protected areas. According to the water directive in Europe lot of rivers will be restored. We recommend also to restore the banks of these rivers, if possible, in order to get a good quality of the riparian ecosystems. Therefore the

cooperation with the water managers of the rivers and the water boards should be intensified.

The management plan shows a clear ecological network of core zones and corridors. We recommend starting soon with the realisation of the ecological corridors. It is important to strengthen the core zones between the wetlands and the forests. A good functional ecological network is important for overall resilience and works also as a effective buffer against any potentially negative impact on the protected areas.



Verification visit Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park 18th – 21st of June 2013
(from left to right)

Kari Lahti
Juan Lloret-Salvo
Michel Marchyllie
Reinold Leplat
Cristophe Tesnière
Leo Reyrink

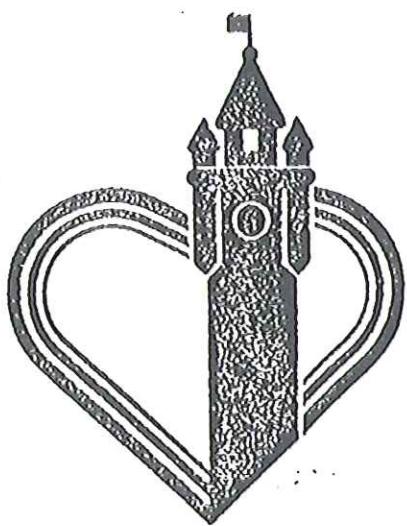
verifier
coordinator Hainaut Cross Border Nature Park
director Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park
director Escaut Plains Nature Park
land planning policy officer Scarpe-Escaut Park
verifier

6 Appendices

- 6.1 Cooperation agreement (protocol d'accord) between the Region Nord-Pas-de-Calais and the Region Wallone from 1983.
- 6.2 Cooperation agreement (Convention de partenariat) between the Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut (France) and the Parc naturel des plaines de l'Escaut (Wallonia) from 2010.
- 6.3 Handout for the Verification Visit (Desk Evaluation).
- 6.4 Program of the Verification Visit 18th – 21th of June 2013.



REGION WALLONNE



Région Nord-Pas de Calais

REGION NORD/PAS-DE-CALAIS / REGION WALLONNE

PARC NATUREL TRANSFRONTALIER DES PLAINES
DE LA SCARPE ET DE L'ESCAUT

Exposé des Motifs

Entité physique et historique, les pays du Haut Escaut et de la Scarpe, se signalent par leur valeur biologique, la beauté de leurs paysages, la forme de leur habitat qui s'inscrivent dans une continuité du territoire, au sein d'une même communauté culturelle

La frontière d'Etat ne peut être un obstacle à cette unité. La Région Nord/Pas-de-Calais et la région Wallonne, en concertation avec les élus des collectivités locales concernées, veulent affirmer, par le présent protocole d'accord, leur volonté commune d'établir des liens privilégiés pour un réaménagement et un développement harmonieux de leur territoire, dans le cadre d'un Parc Naturel Transfrontalier des Plaines de la Scarpe et de l'Escaut.

La mise en place de la Régionalisation ouvre aujourd'hui de part et d'autre de la frontière des perspectives nouvelles dans le domaine de la coopération interrégionale.

C'est particulièrement vrai dans le domaine de l'environnement.

D'une part, la mise en place du PARC NATUREL REGIONAL DU NORD/PAS-DE-CALAIS a entraîné l'extension du territoire du Parc de Saint AMAND-RAISMES, et la création d'un outil adapté pour la gestion du Parc.

D'autre part, avec la mise au point du projet de décret sur les PARCS NATURELS, l'Exécutif Wallon s'apprête à doter la région

.../...

.../...

Wallonne de l'instrument dynamique qui, jusqu'ici, lui faisait défaut..

Il est également à noter la recommandation 587 de l'Assemblée Consultative du Conseil de l'Europe, relative à la création de Parcs Naturels Régionaux et de Parcs Naturels suprafrontaliers.

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PROTOCOLE D'ACCORD

Conscients de la nécessité, pour les deux régions, de coopérer dans le domaine de la protection de l'environnement, la mise en valeur d'espaces naturels nécessaires à la qualité de vie des populations,

Considérant l'exposé des motifs annexé, et plus particulièrement la recommandation 587 de l'Assemblée Consultative du Conseil de l'Europe,

La Région Nord/Pas-de-Calais, représentée par Monsieur Noël JOSEPHÉ, Président du Conseil Régional Nord/Pas-de-Calais

La Région Wallonne, représentée par Monsieur Valmy FEAUX, Ministre de la Région Wallonne, pour l'Eau, l'Environnement et la Vie rurale.

Décident :

1. d'unir leurs efforts, en concertation avec les collectivités départementales, provinciales et communales, pour promouvoir la création d'un Parc Naturel Suprafrontalier des plaines de la Scarpe et de l'Escaut

2. Pour ce faire, de créer une commission permanente mixte, qui aura pour mission d'élaborer des propositions permettan

* L'étude d'une organisation suprafrontalière qui pourrait être mise en place pour une politique harmonieuse de l'ensemble

.../...

- * La mise en œuvre, dès à présent, d'actions communes, notamment dans les domaines de:
 - la protection des milieux naturels
 - la sauvegarde des paysages et leur restauration
 - la promotion de l'image de marque s'appuyant notamment sur la reconstitution d'une Scarpe et d'un Escout mortu
 - la coopération scientifique
 - l'échange des expériences réalisées ou en cours.
- * La mise en œuvre d'une politique globale de développement et d'aménagement, fondée sur les ressources locales, les activités économiques, et respectueuse des équilibres naturels.

FAIT A HERGNIES

LE 7 OCTOBRE 1983

Le Président du
Conseil Régional
Nord/Pas-de-Calais

NOËL JOSEPH

Le Ministre de
la Région wallonne

Valmy FEUX

Q



Convention de partenariat entre le Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut et le Parc naturel des Plaines de l'Escaut »

Nés du décret du 1^{er} mars 1967 enrichi de la loi du 8 janvier 93 dite « loi Paysage » et de la loi du 14 avril 2006 sur les Parcs nationaux, naturels marins et naturels régionaux, les Parcs naturels régionaux sont « *des territoires, des hommes, des valeurs partagées. Ils sont des territoires remarquables au sein des régions françaises, des territoires recelant des patrimoines naturels, culturels de qualité, mais fragiles. Animés d'un esprit pionnier, les hommes et les femmes qui les ont fondés et qui les portent aujourd'hui partagent des valeurs ancrées dans l'identité culturelle de leurs territoires.* »

Le décret relatif aux Parcs naturels de Wallonie du 16 juillet 1985, issu de la Loi sur la conservation de la nature du 12 juillet 1973, révisé profondément le 3 juillet 2008 définit le Parc naturel comme « *un territoire rural, d'un haut intérêt biologique et géographique, soumis à des mesures destinées à en protéger le milieu, en harmonie avec les aspirations de la population et le développement économique et social du territoire concerné* ».

Un territoire transfrontalier aux caractéristiques communes, un projet partagé

A l'intersection des grands pôles urbains proches (Tournai, Mons, Valenciennes, Douai et Métropole lilloise), sa forte densité de population, ses patrimoines industriels, miniers, naturels humides et culturels en font un territoire atypique, caractère revendiqué dans le réseau des Parcs naturels régionaux de France comme dans le réseau des Parcs naturels de Wallonie.

Dès 1989, la volonté d'ouverture du Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut (PNRSE) fut mise en œuvre dans le champ du transfrontalier par un appui très clair à la création du Parc naturel des Plaines de l'Escaut (PNPE), s'appuyant sur le protocole d'accord de 1983 signé entre la Région wallonne et la Région Nord-Pas-de-Calais, appelant à la création d'un « parc suprafrontalier ».

Cette collaboration a permis la création d'un Parc naturel transfrontalier du Hainaut (PNTH) « à deux versants » dès 1996, sans structure juridique ni contractualisation formelle entre les deux Parcs. Mais le Président du Parc naturel des Plaines de l'Escaut est personne associée à chaque comité syndical du PNRSE français tandis que le Président du Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut est membre à part entière de la Commission de gestion du PNPE belge depuis 2008. Un Bureau transfrontalier est mis en place en 2007, et se réunit deux à trois fois par an.





Le PNTF est aujourd'hui composé de 48 communes françaises (174.000 habitants) et 6 communes belges (42 villages), habitées de 254.000 citoyens européens sur 77.000 ha. Sept villes portes du PNRSE sont également associées à celle dynamique transfrontalière (104.574 habitants).

Ces deux parcs parfaitement autonomes conçoivent depuis des programmes de travail partagés : études, chantiers, plates-formes d'échange, sensibilisation des élus... avec l'appui du FEDER dans le cadre des programmes Interreg I, II, III et IV de 1991 à 2011. Un travail permanent commun anime les deux équipes des Parcs qui, au-delà des échanges quotidiens entre missions, se rencontrent annuellement.

En 2005, les deux Parcs délibèrent en faveur d'une révision de charte à l'échelle transfrontalière. Ils partagent diagnostic, enjeux et axes stratégiques, sachant que les actions seront déclinées en fonction des cadres juridiques propres à chaque pays et des moyens spécifiques, et bien que la procédure de classement en jeu ne concerne que le territoire français.

Le projet d'une convention de partenariat entre les deux Parcs, préparant la reconnaissance officielle d'un Parc naturel transfrontalier doté d'un véritable outil juridique et structurel, naît alors parmi les élus (Bureau transfrontalier du 13/11/2009), fondé sur le respect des différences de culture et d'approche entre les deux versants pour des enrichissements permanents.





CONVENTION DE PARTENARIAT

Entre

LE SYNDICAT MIXTE DU PARC NATUREL REGIONAL SCARPE ESCAUT
357 rue Notre Dame d'Amour - F-59230 SAINT AMAND LES EAUX
représenté par Daniel MIO, Président
d'une part,

ET LA COMMISSION DE GESTION DU PARC NATUREL DES PLAINES DE L'ESCAUT
31 Rue des Sapins -- B-7603 BON-SECOURS
représentée par Charles PICQ, Président
d'autre part

Article 1 – Objectif de la convention

La présente convention a pour objectifs de :

- affirmer une bonne reconnaissance par tous de la légitimité des projets de part et d'autre de la frontière, et favoriser leur co-existence et leur cohérence globale
- favoriser la mise en œuvre de la charte du Parc naturel régional de Scarpe-Escaut 2010-2022,
- favoriser l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre du nouveau plan de gestion du Parc naturel des plaines de l'Escaut,
- inscrire cette complémentarité dans les politiques contractuelles, notamment au titre du programme Interreg ou de tous autres fonds européens ou bilatéraux.

Elle a pour objectifs particuliers de :

- rappeler les objectifs et les champs d'intervention du PNRSE et du PNPE dans un souci de compréhension et de partage des actions chaque fois que cela est possible,
- préciser les principaux domaines de collaboration et les principes de mise en œuvre entre le PNRSE et le PNPE.



Article 2 – périmètre de la convention

Cette convention concerne :

Les 48 communes adhérentes et 12 communes associées au Parc naturel régional de Scarpe-Escaut (7 EPCI) en France.

Les 6 communes (42 villages) du Parc naturel des Plaines de l'Escaut en Belgique.

Ce périmètre sera automatiquement révisé pour adopter le périmètre définitif du Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut (maximum de 58 communes) suite à l'approbation de la Charte par le Premier Ministre (F).

Article 3 – Compétences et missions des signataires

Missions du Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut

Selon le décret n°94-765 du 1^{er} septembre 1994, un Parc naturel régional a pour objet :

- de protéger le patrimoine naturel et culturel notamment par une gestion adaptée des milieux et des paysages ;
- de contribuer à l'aménagement du territoire ;
- de contribuer au développement économique, social, culturel et à la qualité de la vie ;
- d'assurer l'accueil, l'éducation et l'information du public ;
- de réaliser des actions expérimentales ou exemplaires dans les domaines cités ci-dessus et de contribuer à des programmes de recherche.

Missions du Parc naturel des Plaines de l'Escaut

Selon le décret wallon du 3 juillet 2008, un parc naturel vise à :

- assurer la protection, la gestion et la valorisation du patrimoine naturel et paysager du parc naturel ;
- contribuer, dans les limites du périmètre du parc naturel, à définir et à orienter les projets d'aménagement du territoire suivant les principes du développement durable ;
- encourager le développement durable sur le territoire du parc naturel, en contribuant au développement local, sur les plans économique et social, ainsi qu'à l'amélioration de la qualité de la vie ;
- organiser l'accueil, l'éducation et l'information du public ;
- participer à l'expérimentation de nouveaux modes de gestion de l'espace rural, au test de processus et



méthodes innovants de planification, ainsi qu'à la mise en œuvre de programmes européens et de coopération territoriale européenne ;

- rechercher la collaboration entre les parcs naturels et, le cas échéant, la collaboration transfrontalière avec les zones similaires des régions ou pays limitrophes ;
- susciter la mise en œuvre d'opérations de développement rural dans les communes qui le composent et veiller à ce que la cohérence des projets transcommunaux dans le cadre des programmes communaux de développement rural soit assurée.».

Article 4 – Articulation des interventions

Les textes fondateurs des Parcs naturels français et wallons sont très proches. La définition d'une stratégie transfrontalière commune en a été facilitée. Le Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut et le Parc naturel des Plaines de l'Escaut portent ainsi une ambition transfrontalière commune. Ils partagent les objectifs stratégiques de la charte renouvelée de Scarpe-Escaut et souhaitent mettre en œuvre, à l'horizon 2022 au plus tard les objectifs opérationnels de trois manières selon l'antériorité et la nature des actions proposées (certaines sont le prolongement ou le développement d'actions anciennes), les dispositions réglementaires en vigueur et des moyens dont chacun dispose :

- niveau 1 : la démarche transfrontalière est à mettre en place
- niveau 2 : la mise en œuvre coordonnée d'actions est envisageable
- niveau 3 : une véritable gestion commune de la « mesure » est à prévoir

4 axes de travail sont proposés, sur lesquels chaque niveau de partenariat est proposé (cf. annexe) :

1. Terre de solidarité où s'invente entre ville et campagne une nouvelle manière de vivre et habiter son territoire...
2. Terre de nature et de patrimoine où l'eau, le bâti, le minier, forgent le caractère rural et les identités du territoire...
3. Terre d'un développement réfléchi où les ressources locales et les valeurs du Parc transfrontalier sont créatrices d'activités économiques...
4. Terre de mobilisation où les individus s'investissent en faveur de leur territoire...

La convention ne concerne pas l'ensemble des actions mises en place par les Parcs. Chacun garde son autonomie et la possibilité de monter des programmes ou opérations spécifiques, en toute indépendance. Les Parcs naturels s'attacheront à resiluer dans leurs instances les bilans d'actions développées en commun.



Article 5 – Suivi et concertation

Les deux Parcs naturels (Scarpe-Escaut et Plaines de l'Escaut) s'engagent à assurer le suivi de la présente convention de partenariat. Pour cela, une concertation régulière est mise en place s'appuyant sur :

- les Bureaux transfrontaliers (3 à 4/an),
- les « journées transfrontalières des élus » (1/an),
- les commissions de gestion (PNPE) et comités syndicaux (PNRSE),
- les réunions d'équipes transfrontalières (1 à 2/an),
- les comités d'accompagnement (dits COMAC) Interreg (2/an),
- les rencontres bilatérales techniques.

Article 6 – Durée de la convention

La présente convention prend effet à compter de sa signature pour une durée correspondante à celle de la charte de Scarpe-Escaut (2010-2022) et du plan de gestion des Plaines de l'Escaut.

Article 7- Clauses de révision

La présente convention pourra être révisée en cas d'évolution du contexte législatif ou de la mise en place de nouveaux outils structurels ou juridiques de gestion ou de financement, en cas de modification des statuts ou de révision anticipée de la charte du Parc, ou encore lors de la mise en place du nouveau plan de gestion du Parc des Plaines de l'Escaut, et à tout moment, par chacune des parties. La nouvelle convention sera élaborée en concertation entre les deux Parcs.





Article 8- Clauses de résiliation

La présente convention pourra être résiliée à tout moment par chacune des parties. Cette résiliation fera l'objet d'une lettre recommandée avec accusé de réception avec préavis de 3 mois. Cette décision particulièrement motivée sera prise par l'assemblée délibérante compétente.

Fait le 08 janvier 2010, à Beloeil
En autant d'exemplaires que de parties,

Daniel MIO
Président

Parc naturel régional
Scarpe-Escaut

Charles PICQ
Président

Parc naturel
des Plaines de l'Escaut



Handout for the Verification Visit (Desk Evaluation)

Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut (France) and the Parc naturel des plaines de l'Escaut (Wallonia)

Here: Open questions and wanted information

Author: Leo Reyrink & Kari Lahti

Date: 10th of June 2013

Dear Juan Lloret

Meanwhile a study of the provided materials and information/appendices for the assessment was carried out. We send you some few points for further information and some questions in advance. Sure you, the staff or the stake holders of the cooperating partners can provide us with some more detailed information.

There is no need to send us it now. During our visit we will have time enough to discuss these questions and look at further detailed information/materials.

Primary Criteria

- 1 **Vision;**
a very important step towards cross border cooperation is the signed Convention de Partenariat from January 2010. We would like to hear some more in detail how the vision and the cooperation is implemented into praxis by the two partners.
- 2 **Joint management;**
the most important ecological zones (core zones) are connected. We would like to hear more about the mutual policy and management goals on the ecological connections within in the landscape areas.

Secondary Criteria

- 10 **Basis of financing;**
Is the financing of the cooperation in future structurally?

Primary Field of Work

- 11 **Nature and Landscape Conservation;**
 - Is there a joint (zonation) map (and mutual GIS-System) of the cross border area in which the partners cooperate? Some more explanations of the functioning of the zonation system are wanted (details from the management plans?).
 - We are very interested to hear more about the Cross border Catalogue on didactic skills related to water.
 - Flood protection is important, as some areas might be important for the retention of rainwater. Is there a connection between the flood risk planning and the management of the rivers? And how is fishing organised on both sides of the border?
 - What are the elimination actions for invasive plants and do they have success?

Secondary Field of Work

- 12 **Education and Communication;**
- Some more information on how, where and when the local people and volunteers are involved in: recreation, socio-cultural cooperation, environmental education (besides the Fêtes de Parc in 2006, 2008 and 2009).
- To us the presentation of the cooperation on the website seems to be not complete. For example it is not easy to find quick information upon visiting centres and other public places for recreation and tourism. How is the cooperation with stakeholders i.e. public services/tourist agencies?
- 14 **Research and monitoring;**
Some further detailed information/examples as indicators on the evidence of the ecological monitoring of the shared ecosystems, flora and fauna (for example cross border distribution maps from different years (technical/scientific terms)?

Looking forward to meet you and learn more about your cross border cooperation.

Kind regards

Kari Lahti (second verifier) & Leo Reyrink (lead verifier)



Transboundary Parks
EUROPARC FEDERATION



PROGRAM OF THE "TRANSBOUNDARY PARKS" VERIFIERS' VISIT, JUNE 2013

DAY	TIME	EVENT	SITE
<i>Tuesday, 18th June</i>	17:30	Reception of second verifier (Mr Lahti)	Aéroport Bruxelles International, Zaventem
	19:30	Reception of lead verifier (Mr Reyink), explanation about the programme and dinner	Gîte Panda Entre deux N°s, Hergnies
<i>Wednesday, 19th June</i>	10:00	Extraordinary cross-border board meeting; overview of the cross-border dynamism of the park: origin, legal basis, organisation, staff performance, financing.	Maison du Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut, Saint Amand les Eaux
	12:00	Briefing of the common territorial database and cross-border diagnostic in advance of the Park's Charter	Maison du Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut, Saint Amand les Eaux
	12:30	Lunch	Maison du Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut, Saint Amand les Eaux
	14:30	Presentation of the cross-border actions on education and the degree of awareness of local inhabitants	Centre d'éducation à l'environnement d'Amoury, Hergnies
	17:00	Talk about cross-border actions promoting sustainable agriculture and cattle raising	Parcelle primée "Prairies fleuries", Thivencelle
	19:00	Display on the common promotion of local produce and dinner in the "Fins Gourmets" label Guesthouse	Gîte Panda Entre deux N°s, Hergnies
<i>Thursday, 20th June</i>	08:30	Visite of the installations of the Escaut Plains Nature Park visitor's center (with a walk along a path overlooking the tree tops and showing of the wood fired stove)	Maison du Parc naturel des plaines de l'Escaut, Bon Secours
	09:30	Briefing on common touristic promotion operations followed by an excursion along a path with explanatory panels on the story of the Maréchal de Croy	Bois de Bon Secours, Condé sur l'Escaut
	12:00	Talk on cross-border strategy concerning the protection of species and their habitats as well as the NATURA 2000 network	Val de Vergne, Hergnies
	12:30	Explanation on the common actions of orchards safeguarding	Verger de Grivardie, Wiers
	13:30	Lunch	Bibliothèque communale, Bléharies
	14:00	Talk on the actions on landscape with viewing of the Cross-border Photo Observatory of Landscapes website	Bibliothèque communale, Bléharies
	14:30	Talk on the Cross-border Photo Observatory of Landscapes landmark	Pont sur l'Escaut, Bléharies
	15:00	Excursion to the cross-border circuit of the Coupure de Bléharies and talk on the ecological corridor study of the DCOSTRADE project	Coupure de l'Escaut, Bléharies
	16:00	Presentation of the Interreg project: "Towards a new governance of Hainaut Cross-border Nature Park"	Maison du village, Bléharies
	17:00	Time for pondering by the verifiers and dinner	Gîte Panda Entre deux N°s, Hergnies
<i>Friday, 21st June</i>	09:30	Cross-border political board meeting and convivial lunch	Maison du Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut, Saint Amand les Eaux

WEDNESDAY, 19th June 2013

Parc naturel
transfrontalier

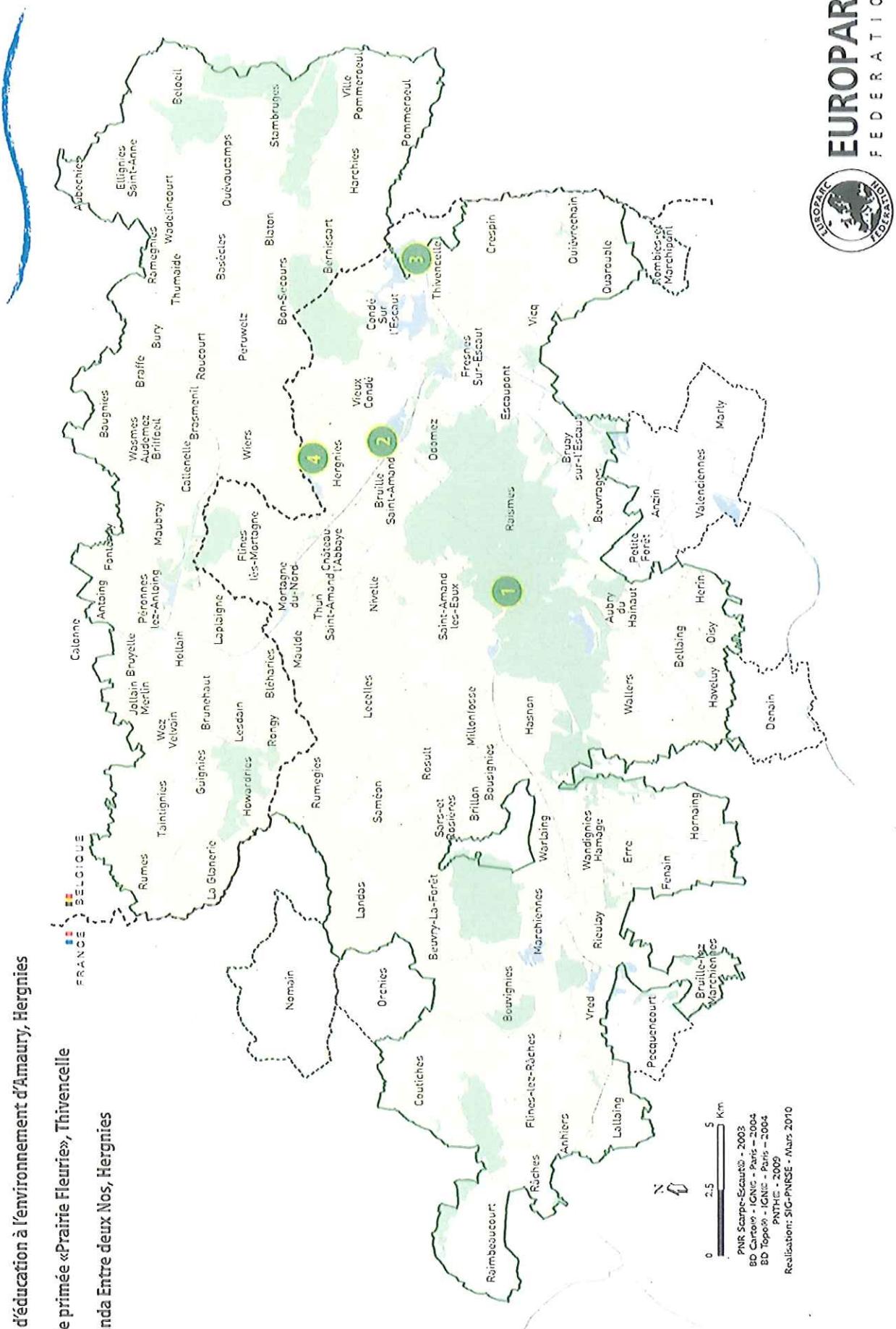


- 1** Maison du Parc naturel régional Scarpe-Escaut, Saint Amand

2 Centre d'éducation à l'environnement d'Amaury, Hergnies

3 Parcelle primée «Prairie Fleurie», Thivencelle

4 Gîte Panda Entre deux Nos, Hergnies



THURSDAY, 20th June 2013

Parc naturel
transfrontalier



- 5** Maison du Parc naturel des plaines de l'Escaut, Bon Secours

6 Château de l'Ermitage et Bois de Bon Secours, Condé sur l'Escaut

7 Val de Vergne, Hergnies

8 Verger de Grivardie, Wiers

9 Coupure de l'Escaut, Bléharies

10 Maison du village, Bléharies

