We are regionAHL!

Ahaus, Heek & Legden in the LEADER-funding period 2014-2020

From the region - for the region:
The LEADER-region "Kulturlandschaft Ahaus-Heek-Legden" consists of the three eponymous municipalities, namely the city of Ahaus and the villages Heek and Legden. All three are located in the administrative district Borken in the western Münsterland, close to the border of the Netherlands.

The region "AHL" in total consists of one city centre (Ahaus) with its additional five districts Alstätte, Graes, Ottenstein, Wessum and Wüllen as well as the territories of the villages Heek with its district Nienborg and Legden with its district Asbeck. In summary there are ten spatial separated settlement areas within the region that distribute over a regional surface of about 27,695 ha.

There are about 55,000 people living in the region at the moment, which makes the "Kulturlandschaft" one of the smaller LEADER-regions in Northrhine-Westfalia. The population of Ahaus is about 40,000, with more than half of them living in the local districts. Heek has the second largest number of inhabitants, coming in at about 8,400 people. In Legden are living about 7,000 people. The region is characterized by a structural homogeneity, the by now years long cooperation between the three municipalities is constantly perpetuating by the common activities as a LEADER-region.

Cooperation with a history
Ahaus, Heek and Legden already worked together before LEADER on a united regional development strategy:
With the „Integral rural development concept“ (ILEK) the three municipalities has2006 their first collaboration.
To have a reliable plan on how the Kulturlandschaft Ahaus-Heek-Legden should look and be like in the future, the regional participants arranged a common strategy for the time up to the year 2023. Its main goal is the improvement of the quality of life within the region in all relevant aspects.

In an extensive system of strategic objectives the mission statement was named „We are regionAHL: Thinking together – acting sustainable”. To achieve this statement, a lot of overarching and specific goals were added.

The complete strategy is summarised under the term „We are regionAHL!” and puts its focus on such aspects as regionality, communion and identification. Based on an extensive SWOT-analysis and the thereof extended goals four fields of action were named: Social community, vitalisation of the city and village centres, tourism/culture/tradition and energy/climate.

The strategy is characterised by an integrated approach with interconnection between all of the thematic focuses.
LEADER-regions in Northrhine-Westfalia are - following the regulatory requirements of the statewide competition for subsidies - clearly structured. They are named „Local action groups“ (LAGs) and in most cases are organised as registered associations. In AHL the LAG is officially named „Lokale Aktionsgruppe der Kulturlandschaft Ahaus-Heek-Legden e.V.“ and leads the regional development in the context of LEADER. The association was founded in 2011 and is structured in three levels: Mainly there is the open to everyone level of the „Mitgliederversammlung“, in which are consolidated all members of the LAG. Every inhabitant of the region can join at no costs. The number of members is not limited. The remits of the Mitgliederversammlung are among other things the supervision of the LEADER process, its monitoring and its controlling.

Appointed from among the members is the extensive board every two years. It is the decision committee of the association and decides about the realisation of projects und the use of the subsidies. At the moment it has eleven members, with the majority necessarily being private representatives. Also a balanced relation of the sexes is required. The extensive board is responsible for the preparation of meetings, the coordination of the LEADER-process and the project controlling.

The formal board of the association is formed by the first and second chairman. The LEADER-process is accompanied by an external regional management. Two employees of a bureau planinvet (Münster) attend the region in the implementation of the development strategy and lead the operative businesses of the association, including the support of projekt developers and public relations.
Facts and numbers

Number of municipals within the region: **3**

Euros in millions of the subsidies that the region gets for the funding period: **2.3**

It's actually the second funding period for the Kulturlandschaft AHL to participate in the LEADER programme after being successful in 2007.

Number of projects implemented in the funding period 2007-2013: **15**

Number of actual members in the LAG: **27**

There is not only European money in the northrine-westphalian LEADER budget, but also 20% from the budget of the state.

That's the actual number of LEADER regions in Northrhine-Westfalia: **28**

And that’s the actual number of LEADER regions in Germany: **321**

There are almost no limitations for regions on how to spend their subsidies. There’s also no fixed budget for cooperations for example.

Adress of the LAG
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