

MINUTES

THEMATIC SEMINAR V for Exchange of Experience & Site Visits

10-11-12 June 2025 – Świętokrzyskie Region, POLAND

Summary and Conclusions

Tuesday, 10th June 2025

- The venue of the meeting was the Nature Education Centre in Umianowice which is a headquarter of regional stakeholder of NACAO project in Poland PP03 (świętokrzyskie region).
 - The theme of V Thematic Seminar was: “Engaging Organizations and Citizens in Nature-based Emissions Offsetting” as it was planned in Application Form.
 - The meeting started with an official welcome of all participants of the V Thematic Seminar by Mr Kamil Kubicki Deputy Director of Świętokrzyskie and Nida Landscape Parks and Mrs Joanna Rudawska Deputy Director of Regional Development Department in Marshal Office of Świętokrzyskie Region. The moderator of the Seminar was Liliana Krężolek - Chief Specialist in the Section for Economic Cooperation and European Projects, local coordinator of NACAO project.
 - The seminar brought together all project partners, members of the stakeholders’ group from świętokrzyskie region and stakeholders from other partner regions as well (Italy, France, Finland, Germany, Spain and Poland). Before the main part of the meeting all participants had a chance to introduce themselves which allowed to share mutual knowledge before starting the exchange of good practices but also contributed to create a favourable atmosphere for that.
 - Local coordinator presented the planned agenda for all three days.
 - Lead Partner introduced NACAO project. That was important especially from the new participants point of view as they could get familiar with the frames of Interreg Europe programme itself and also the NACAO project assumptions and particularities.
 - The V Thematic Seminar for Exchange of Experiences followed, with the exchange of the following initiatives:
 - Engaging local residents – Forest Planting Initiative - POLAND
 - ClimaSTORY®workshop - FRANCE
 - FEVer Strategy – Ecological Function of Green – ITALY
- After the coffee break, the scheduled second part followed:
- Sustainable destinations, beyond offsetting - SPAIN
 - Climate Strategy Project of City of Viitasaari - FINLAND
 - Bremen Biodiversity Strategy 2030 – GERMANY
- After each presentation, there was time dedicated to questions, clarifications, and open discussion. It was highly rewarding to witness the strong interest sparked by the Good Practices shared, both among project partners and the stakeholders in attendance. The presentations prompted a wide range of insightful questions, as participants sought to deepen their understanding of specific elements with an eye toward possible transfer and adaptation. Some partners even mentioned afterward that they had already begun considering how certain practices could be applied in their own regions. This exchange clearly demonstrated the added

value of the NACAO project and the Interreg Europe programme—not only in terms of knowledge sharing, but also through the invaluable networking opportunities they offer. These interactions foster trust, collaboration, and a shared ambition to develop and implement innovative regional policies grounded in mutual learning.

- After the lunch Mr Wojciech Sołtysik from Świętokrzyskie and Nida Landscape Parks and Nature Education Centre in Umianowice initiated:

Study Visit 1: Inland NIDA River restoration area.

- The inland delta of the Nida River is a unique geomorphological structure spanning approximately 20 km², characterized by rich biodiversity and a terrain that fosters the formation of floodplains. The primary goal of the project was to enhance the delta's water conditions to restore its rare natural features, including the preservation of riparian forests, oxbow lakes, old riverbeds and wetlands that provide habitats for protected species such as wading birds, reptiles like the European pond turtle and amphibians like the great crested newt. The project also seeks to reintroduce grazing practices discontinued in the 1990s, supporting meadow habitats, local economies and cultural traditions. Another key objective was to raise ecological awareness and involve the community in the collective protection of this unique inland delta.
- A social dinner was organized to continue exchanging on what was learned during the day and for networking purposes.

Wednesday, 11th June 2025

- The second day of the Thematic Seminar started with study visits. For that purpose, we travelled from the city centre to Daleszyce (as the first step) and met with representatives of State Forests dr Jacek Koba:

Study Visit 2: Small-scale retention project in the Daleszyce Forest District

The Daleszyce Forest District was a beneficiary of the project ‘Increasing retention capacity and counteracting flood and drought in lowland forest ecosystems’. As part of the project, the renovation of retention reservoirs (4 mid-forest ponds with a total area of 2.55 ha) located in the Sieraków forestry took place. The investment was completed in 2013. The reservoirs retain a minimum of 137,000 m³ of water.

In 2021, the reservoirs were renovated after damage caused by a flood wave that destroyed the water damming equipment in 2018. The reservoirs contribute to stabilizing moisture conditions in the forest habitats adjacent to them and increase biodiversity.

After that we were transported to other part of forest where Dr Jacek Koba from State Forests continued presenting the next study visit:

Study Visit 3: Protective measures within the BIAŁE ŁUGI (WHITE PEAT BOG)

The reserve comprises the largest raised bog in the Polish uplands. The central zone is occupied by raised and transitional bogs, while the side zones are overgrown by low bogs and bog forests.

Due to the observed decrease in groundwater levels, monitoring and active protection measures are carried out here. The activities take place in cooperation between Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce and the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Kielce and the Daleszyce Forest District.

Since 2017, research has been carried out on the groundwater level in the Białe Ługi area using a permanent network of piezometers. At the same time, activities were also carried out to cut down trees and shrubs that overgrown the most valuable parts of the peat bogs, contributing to their degradation.

After the visits we travelled to Starachowice City.

The Vicepresident of the City hosted us and funded lunch for the group. She was keenly interested in the project idea and potential cooperation with the project partners in the future and with French partners in particular. So it was also a perfect occasion for networking.

After the lunch we were introduced to:

Study Visit 4: Starachowice City interventions:

- Revitalization of Lubianka Artificial Lake
- Revitalization of Pasternik Reservoir
- Revitalization of Starachowice City Park
- Green bus stops in Starachowice

After this part we travelled to Święty Krzyż where we had a social dinner.

Thursday, 12th June 2025

The morning of the day 3 was dedicated to the Steering Committee of the project, for internal work of the partnership.

Lead Partner representative chaired the session, which was very useful and served to review in detail numerous works in progress, to plan those to come while proposing a series of ideas aiming at making the most of the project and of future meetings. The main insights out of the 5th SCC held follow:

- Progress Report 4 submitted the 1st June

- The state of the art of the project financial situation was reviewed and some hints to be taken into consideration to optimize the remaining budgets were provided, given the fact that the core phase budget has to be used or returned by the end of semester 6 (February 2026).
- It was agreed the LP coordination will have a round of consultations partner by partner at the start of semester 6 to check the respective budgetary situations on a case-by-case basis.

- Follow-up of Technical contents:

- **Good Practices** to be published in NACAO web: the Good Practices shared during the seminar in Poland need to be uploaded onto the project website as regularly done. Ideally, they should be uploaded before the semester ends up (31/08) or in any case before PR5 is submitted (01/12/2025).
- **Policy Improvements (transfers) in progress:** all the partners shared theirs with the excellent result of several new policy improvements being reported in PR4.
- **Pilot Actions approved:** unfortunately, the Pilot Actions intended by NACAO were not encouraged for funding on the part of the officers, since finally the focus needed to be on influencing a policy instrument and the protagonist being the partner rather than a stakeholder, what made our NACAO approaches for pilot actions difficult. However, the good part of it all is that NACAO partners are reaching all policy improvements without the need of pilot actions, what the programme considers indeed very positive.
- **In-House & Stakeholders Meetings:** they are permanent structures during the project lifetime. Stakeholders' meetings will continue being held at least once per semester; with regard to in-house meetings, the partners should be able to prove to Interreg Europe (if required) that 3 have been celebrated before the end of the core phase (February 2026). Importance of keeping record of every type of meeting held, in the form of simple minutes (this concerns stakeholders' groups, in-house meetings, communication events...)

- Follow-up of Local Communication:

- The partners shared their achievements/pending issues with regard to communication.
- All could enjoy and find inspiration in the Itinerant Exhibition developed by Swietokrzyskie which has been present during the meeting.
- Apart from itinerant exhibitions, all the partners have funds and are expected to have 2 more local actions of communication. If these activities are not developed, the corresponding funds will need to be returned at the end of the core phase, which is in any case the deadline to have them done.

- Follow-up of Horizontal Communication:

- P5 Central Finland representative shared the main insights, emphasizing the main achievements but also bottlenecks with regard to project website, social networks, media presence, project video(s), newsletters, leaflet recently approached, quality of GPs writing.

- Next Interregional Thematic Seminar & Study Visit: Marche Region

- The next and last thematic seminar for exchange of experiences is different from the others in several facts: (i) the topic is not centered on nature-based solutions, but on "other" solutions for carbon offsetting; (ii) the meeting should be scheduled to coincide with ECOMONDO

Fair, possibilitating thus the presence of NACAO in the fair, both with the purpose of wide spreading NACAO insights and of providing and gaining technical knowledge there;

- Marche Region proposes a meeting combining study visits and exchange of good practices (as usual) but then a third part standing for participation in ECOMONDO.
- Some additional proposals take place during the Steering Committee, which will need to be analyzed in practice during the following months: (i) possibility of having a Peer Review session on day 3 of the meeting; possibility of having this time the Steering Committee of NACAO online; etc.
- LP and Marche Region will work with all the proposals in the following months to check their feasibility/added value and to draft the agenda of the meeting.

This 5th Thematic Seminar was a very fruitful event, providing an excellent platform for knowledge-sharing, policy learning and peer exchange among international and local participants. The atmosphere was highly collaborative and constructive, enabling stakeholders to present their experiences and ask practical questions. For regional actors, it was also a valuable opportunity to build new connections and foster long-term partnerships within and beyond the NACAO network.

Polish coordinator thanked all participants, local host institutions and regional authorities of Świętokrzyskie and finished the 3-day event.



















Thematic Seminar for Exchange of Experiences and Site Visit
10th-11th- 12th June 2025 – Świętokrzyskie Region (Poland)

Tuesday, 10th June

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Wednesday, 11th June

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