



## CHERISH PROJECT





## Action Plan Middelburg Municipality



### ***CHERISH PROJECT***

Creating opportunities for regional growth through promoting Cultural HERitage of fISHing communities in Europe

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#### **Part I – General information**

This Action Plan is part of the CHERISH interregional cooperation project. It is developed with co-funding support from European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and made possible by the Interreg Europe programme.

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## Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact: Investment for Growth and Jobs programme

Name of the policy instrument(s) addressed: OP South: Operational Programme South  
Netherlands ERDF 2014-2020

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document presents the Action Plan drafted by the “Afdeling Leefomgeving” of the Middelburg Municipality, within the framework of the CHERISH project, which addresses the EU challenges regarding climate change, tourism pressure and transformation of the European fishing industry.

Fishery communities in the EU share the same challenges concerning climate change, tourism pressure and the transformation of the European fishing industry. The EU recognizes the valuable role of this cultural heritage in sustainable development and stimulates increased efforts to better position and profile the fishing communities, including its intangible heritage, like myths to daily practices, traditions, ecological knowledge and crafts. Through the development and implementation of new strategies utilising cultural assets of fishing communities' new jobs and new products or services are created as well. Thus contributing to viable (fishery)communities in the region Zeeland.

Interregional cooperation and policy learning will allow the exchange of experiences on developing a policy for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage in fishing communities via the integration of the lessons learnt into the regional policies.

In this context, the project aims to improve regional development policies to protect and to promote cultural heritage in fishing communities in order to boost attractiveness of these regions for businesses, local people and tourists.

### 1.1 Middelburg & Arnemuiden in Zeeland, Holland

Zeeland has a very long coastline on the one hand a coastline facing the North Sea and a lot of inland coastline because 2 big rivers have their estuaries there: Westerschelde and Oosterschelde.

Because of the big flood in 1953 the government started a project to protect the land against the sea. Which resulted in a lot of new dikes and existing dikes were improved and made higher and the big river Oosterschelde got a special dam, which only closes at storm tide. In this way the Oosterschelde keeps connected with the sea and the natural habitat was preserved. The whole operation project was called “De Deltawerken” and had enormous impact on the fishing communities in the region. A number of fishing villages got cut off from the sea and their fleet moved elsewhere or disappeared. The small village Philippine is an example of fishing village that got cut off from the water.

Still there are fishing communities who go out fishing every day and/or week:

Vlissingen and Arnemuiden have the biggest and most modern fleet. (definition trawlers, comparison English/French vessels) In the region of Yerseke the fleet focusses on the cultivation of oysters and mussels. In Arnemuiden 10% of the population depends on the fishing industry.

In Zeeland there is no local Action group or Flag.

The sector as a whole contributes 15% to the regional gross product. And occupational rates give 7-12 % working in the fishery sector (definition).

Through its participation in the CHERISH programme, the Afdeling Leefomgeving of the Middelburg Municipality strives to promote the maritime cultural heritage linked to fishing communities in the region, especially Arnemuiden village.





## 1.2 Lessons learnt within the project

This Action Plan is the sum ( $1 + 1 = 3$ ) of the learning process and the exchange of experiences exchanged during Phase 1 of CHERISH. In particular, from partners Good Practices and the Interregional Learning and Exchange of Experiences (ILEE's), where staff from Middelburg Municipality and its stakeholders observed on the spot, several good practices and experiences during the working sessions and field visits. The lessons learnt came from:

- \* The good practice Costa del Trabocchi Territorial Brand, shared by partner of Abruzzo Region (Italy), has been a good example on creating a marketing brand enhancing traditional fishing heritage. The creation of this brand is intended to make the territory more attractive for potential visitors and tourists and proves that is important to clearly identify the route with the territory where it is located.
- \* The partner from Paphos presented the Good Practice "The Vernacular shipbuilding wharf of Paphos. This was presented to the CHERISH project team during the ILEEE in March 2019
- \* The third source of inspiration was the Good Practice of the Portuguese partner Alto Minho. During the ILEEE in October 2019 the CHERISH project team saw The "Lugar do Real" platform, this project involved the production of a set of audio-visual contents for online viewing, the main objective of which was to disseminate and enhance the social image of fishing activity and professionals of the sector in the "Aldeias do Mar" territory
- \* Vila Nova de Cerveira, Vila Praia de Âncora, Viana do Castelo, Castelo de Neiva and Esposende. The project worked directly with fishermen, their families, the issues approached were chosen together with the people. The portal is the result of this encounter with a chamber that does not take sides, but observes, interrogates and registers.
- \* The last inspiration was the Good Practice in Mallorca the GALIBS project. In Zeeland we have a long tradition with old shipbuilders and traditional wooden boats. The motivated staff and volunteers in the Galibs project documented a lot of abandoned and disappeared tradition wooden boats and the expertise and skills of the ancient shipbuilders. Through the introduction of 3 D design and new IT technics they encourage young people to learn the traditional skills. They connect the past, present and future. The boat design database protects this very value information into the future. Repository of information that can be accessed by future generations and tangible information that can be use by boat builders in the Netherlands and in particularly in Zeeland as well.

## 1.3 Policy context

The OP SOUTH South Netherland program is an operational program from Europe for the provinces Zeeland, Limburg and Noord-Brabant. Priorities are innovation, increasing employment and transition to carbon low economy. From 2014-2020, the program was mainly aimed at innovation within SMEs and strengthening cooperation between the business community, knowledge institutions and governments.

Priorities for Zeeland are: agro & food, fishery and tourism. The Regional Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization (RIS 3), in which the objectives of Europe are translated into regional social challenges, formed the basis of OP-Zuid. The responsible Managing Authority is Stimulus Program management. The local contact point is located in Middelburg in the House of Province.

Because of the decline of coastal fishing the importance of cultural assets became more important together with bringing experience for visitors (tourists) to the fishing communities. The cultural heritage is of major importance for innovation in the tourism sector and the introduction of sustainable eco-tourism.





## 1.4 Policy Change

A new regional development strategy was prepared through a consultation process and informal dialogue with all parties involved. In November 2020, a new draft document for EU 2021-2027 was drawn up. A document that clearly describes how we can let the EU contribute optimally to the Zeeland ambitions, including the Zeeland strategic objectives e.g. innovation, digitalisation, maritime industry and culture. Through the good cooperation between the local authorities, social and economic partners and stakeholders in tourism, culture and maritime sector, more attention has been paid to the protection of the cultural maritime heritage.

Also the development of new products based on maritime traditions, stimulated by the Province Zeeland resulted in growing awareness and preservation of cultural heritage. The unexpected and devastating pandemic COVID-19, caused and have strengthened new trends, such as: traditions, handcraft, bringing back production to the own region instead of out sourcing it far abroad.

Province of Zeeland is represented in the OP South Steering Committee. Middelburg is regularly consulted by the Province and the National Ministry as key stakeholder. Middelburg transferred the CHERISH achievements and knowledge gained in CHERISH to the Managing Authority. Good Practices inspired by the fishery heritage, such as the Arnemuiden Fishery sweaters, Ship Wharf Meerman, Zeeuws Blauw (oyster shells) resulted in new economic possibilities. The joint CHERISH photo competition has captured the cultural significance of the fishery heritage. This activity illustrates how photography captures the invisible and intangible meaning that people attach to cultural heritage. Different stakeholders in the Province Zeeland work now closely together in different areas in the tourism sector to diversify the economic activities and to stimulate projects aimed at creating jobs, improving the quality of life in coastal fishery area's and stimulate innovation. Different best practices gave us the opportunity to create a relevant policy change to preserve culture and heritage in the fishery communities and stimulate new activities and tourism.

The European Committee wishes a more integral approach of the management of the Sea and Coastal areas, thus representing social, economic and cultural values of the fishery communities.

All above mentioned developments resulted in a policy change for OP-South, only for the region Zeeland: EU REACT. The Managing Authority opened calls as per 01-03-2021. The REACT -EU has been developed along two lines:

- for innovative and broad SMEs focused on digitization, along the line of RIS3 program with the focus on innovation.
- for the broad SME sector, including tourism and (maritime) culture with the focus on future innovation

In this program it is possible to apply for projects with cultural, creative industry and touristic character. Only in Zeeland is, besides RIS 3 2021-2027, tourism & culture a theme in South- EU React program, European innovation program for South Netherlands. For more information, see:

<https://www.stimulus.nl/opzuid/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/11/Factsheet-inhoudelijk-kader-REACT-EU-d.d.-03-maart-2021-met-REACT-EU-logo.pdf>

For achieving these changes, the municipality of Middelburg will implement in collaboration with several stakeholders two actions during phase 2 of the Cherish project :

- **A call to give digitalization, culture and creative industry in Zeeland a boost by developing a Creative Fieldlab (REACT- EU)**
- **Digital portal & virtual visitor / maritime experience center**





### Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

#### **ACTION 1 :**

**Name of the action: A Call to give digitalization, maritime culture and small business a boost by developing a Creative Field lab (EU- React)**

#### **Relevance of the project**

The cultural, tourism and maritime and fishery sector have been very badly affected by the COVID- pandemic. At the same time development of digitalization is booming. The current COVID pandemic reveals the vulnerability of modern society in a harsh way. In all regions small business and cultural life was heavily struck by the corona virus. Especially the total closure of the cultural sector and tourism sector caused great disruption and unemployment. The pre-corona time is history and will not return to its old form. This results in a clear acceleration in the use of technology. Digitalization is an important catalyst for innovations in the cultural heritage - and tourism sector.

These developments, experience and needs of the involved sectors were discussed with the Province of Zeeland and stakeholders and resulted in November 2020 in a draft document for EU 2021-2027. A document that clearly describes how we can let the EU contribute optimally to the Zeeland ambitions, including the Zeeland strategic objectives e.g. innovation, digitalisation, maritime industry, culture and heritage. This basis document and the aim of the EU parliament for a resilient recovery of the economy after the Covid 19 pandemic provided the framework for the new EU REACT program. It was then agreed within the Netherlands that an extra priority will be given to Zeeland, in which tourism and culture are important pillars. OP Zuid- EU REACT program for Zeeland. In this program it is possible to apply for projects with cultural and heritage, creative industry and touristic character. The new call of projects was approved by the Managing Authority, and was added to the OP ZUID program. The Call of projects for improving digitalization, cultural activities, heritage and stimulate the creative industry was launched in March 2021 with the deadline to submit proposals till April 2021.

REACT - EU focuses on digitalization, culture and creative industry. The Managing Authority wants to use this to respond to digital developments, new trends and gives a boost to the economy in Zeeland.

This priority is an opportunity to preserve the fishing culture, to make aware the wider public of the profession of a fisherman, the traditions and the life in fishery communities. To inspire young people to make use of the old skills and traditions for new product-market-combinations. At the same time it gives opportunities to diversify economic activities and increase employment. Diversification can generate more income and can make the necessary difference.







### **Project Creative Field lab**

Together with the Province of Zeeland, creative industry and the main maritime municipalities in Zeeland, Middelburg was actively involved in the development of a new proposal for EU-REACT with the focus on (maritime ) culture and heritage, new product-market-combinations and digitalization. The title of the project is “creative field lab”. The project was approved in June 2021. Together with the Province, municipalities in Zeeland will make a start with the activities end of 2021/ beginning 2022.

### **Nature of the action**

Specific activities implemented

All parties involved will establish together a creative field lab

The aim of the creative field lab is to strengthen the collaboration between the maritime fishery sector, the cultural sector and the creative industry. Through partnerships we can respond better to post-corona trends by cross-disciplinary collaboration. Stakeholders with different backgrounds work together on new product-market combinations to boost responsible tourism and the economy from a cultural perspective.

Activities and steps to take:

Two quartermasters/intendants have been appointed to make connections between the various sectors ( SME's and culture sector) and to establish teams with various stakeholders.

Those multidisciplinary teams will develop the following activities:

- Brainstorm sessions in all municipalities/ communities involved
- Inspiration sessions for entrepreneurs, young people and (fishery) maritime communities
- Exploring new concepts, new product- market –combinations based on cultural heritage and fishery traditions
- Stimulate young entrepreneurship by organizing an innovator's challenge contest
- Developing hybrid concepts and digital applications
- Organizing cultural events and Zeeland city safaris: a multifunctional team consisting of innovative entrepreneurs, culture and heritage representatives and the creative industry will get to work on this.
- Drawing up practical local action plans to maximize the opportunities for the involved municipalities and small businesses.

Municipality of Middelburg is actively involved in above actions. On initiative of the Province of Zeeland meetings are taking place on a regular basis to discuss the content and the progress of the various actions. The project manager of CHERISH Jack Dooms is one of the members of the multidisciplinary teams.

### **Stakeholders involved:**

- Province of Zeeland
- Maritime municipalities in Zeeland and fishing communities
- Creative industry: artists, architects
- CBK: “Centrum voor Beeldende Kunst “ in Zeeland





- Administration of cultural heritage, regional and national
- Foundation of Zeeland Heritage
- University of applied sciences for art, culture and creative industry
- Roosevelt University College
- Small businesses
- Tourism business, board and industry
- Museums, wharfs, maritime galleries and all other parties involved in culture and heritage

### **Timeframe**

The proposal “ Creative Field lab” was approved in June 2021. The project ends 31 December 2023.

The preparatory activities have been completed. Two quartermasters/intendants have been appointed and multidisciplinary teams have been established. Two field project managers will be appointed this year. The implementation phase (see above activities) will start before end of 2021.

### **Costs**

The total costs of the project are € 1.250.120,--

### **Funding sources**

The application for creative field lab was submitted by the province of Zeeland in close consultation with the 4 main municipalities ( Z 4 ) : Goes, Terneuzen, Vlissingen and Middelburg. Within the new cultural policy, the province is strongly committed to young talent and innovation by making connections between different sectors. 50 % Of the budget is co-financed by Province of Zeeland and 50 % by OP Zuid- REACT EU.





## **ACTION 2 :**

Name of the action: **Digital portal & virtual visitor /maritime experience centre**

### **Relevance of the project**

From the discussion with the CHERISH project partners in Aldeias do Mar as well with the relevant stakeholders in Zeeland we realised how important it is to make this heritage accessible for a broader public making use of new technics. Abbruzzo region inspired Middelburg to make the link with responsible tourism and how to include this topic in the Operational Programme.

During the ILEEE in Mallorca all partners realised how important it is to save and preserve the skills and traditions in maritime heritage and how valuable they are for future developing sustainable eco-tourism and increasing (transformation) of employment. The variety in fishing heritage, maritime history and traditions are an important economic driver for tourism in Zeeland and for the liveability of the coastal communities.

The Good Practice of the Aldeias do Mar project “the audio-visual platform Aldeias do Mar” inspired Middelburg to document tangible and intangible cultural fishery heritage and traditions. Together with cultural partners and the creative industry the initiative has been taken in Zeeland to collect and document the history, the traditions of the fishing communities as well audio visual material and to tell the story.

So tangible and intangible cultural maritime heritage is safeguarded for the future and can be used for tourism promotion purposes.

Above initiative forms the basis for the development of the digital maritime portal.

### **Nature of the Action**

The digital portal is a kind of virtual visitor and experience centre and gives easily access to a broad audience. Besides physical visits and journeys, virtual journeys will become a structural phenomenon. The cultural heritage and maritime exploration begins at home. This is why Middelburg Municipality decided to invest in a digital portal & virtual visitor / maritime experience centre. The virtual centre must develop itself as regional welcome portal for the complete regional maritime heritage. It can also be developed as a portal site for tourism in Zeeland on which all fishery communities can profile and present themselves.

The digital portal will encourage visitors to increase interest in cultural heritage of fishing communities, visit the fishery communities and buy the new products based on fishery traditions.

- Telling the story of the traditions and culture of fishing communities in Zeeland
- Promote new initiatives and products based on those traditions and culture

The portal will be about storytelling of the communities, visuals, virtual productions and augmented reality of history and skills and present an experience in short. Promotion of the production of new souvenirs for the region based on cultural heritage. In the province of Zeeland this will be a new method to promote cultural heritage.





#### Specific activities implemented:

- With stakeholders Middelburg Municipality will work on an inventory of culture heritage of fishing communities. Middelburg will document tangible and intangible cultural fishery heritage and traditions
- Middelburg will collect the relevant material already present in the maritime museums and archives
- Middelburg will stimulate, involve and inspire (young) people to turn/use the cultural heritage in new touristic products / possibilities
- Develop storylines of the fishery communities, especially of Arnemuiden
- Develop virtual journeys to the fishery communities
- Reconstruct maritime heritage via augmented reality
- Develop human story lines, e.g. a fisherman telling the story of the catch
- Present local/regional products of Zeeland (based on the outcomes of Action 1)
- Stakeholders will put up a list with priorities (due to limited budget)

.The digital portal & virtual visitors/ maritime experience centre is a good way to:

- Quickly adopt new trends and developments ;
- Improve cooperation between providers of maritime cultural heritage;
- Raise awareness of the cultural values of fishery communities and fishery heritage;
- Connect maritime heritage and communities with the city Middelburg;
- Connect initiatives on this platform and reinforce each other;
- Collect and concentrate news about cultural heritage on 1 place /platform;
- Grow ambassadorship amongst inhabitants within the fishery communities.

The main goal is to make this heritage and culture accessible for the broader public and to generate and preserve jobs and income.

#### **Stakeholders involved**

- Zeeuws Museum: unlock, reveal existing stock now hidden for public;
- Museum Arnemuiden: presenting the history of the village;
- Local fishery communities and their representatives deliver content and stories;
- Foundation “Stichting Zeeuws Erfgoed “: making the cultural heritage already present available in the Fishing communities Arnemuiden, Breskens, Vlissingen, Yerseke ;
- Local musea, such as “Visserij museum Breskens” , “ Historisch Museum Arnemuiden”, “Wharf Meerman”, “Polderhuis Westkapelle” and many more are consulted producing stories;
- The “Zeeuws Archief” is a regional institute which preserves all local and regional government archives, such as from the VOC, which go back to the 15th century. The archives can deliver historical content in documents and photos;
- Maritime museums in the region with maritime cultural heritage;
- Entrepreneurs in tourism: transform story lines and maritime heritage in a ( virtual) experience;



- Creative industry like the “Food curators” to develop new products based on story lines (outcome of Action 1).

Almost 400 stakeholders will be connected with this initiative, therefore widely adopted in our province. The virtual visitor/maritime experience centre will be a structural tool in tourism policy of the Middelburg Municipality. In the future Middelburg can monitor the success of the digital platform based on the number of visitors.

### **Timeframe**

The development of the digital & virtual visitor /experience centre will start in the last quarter of 2021. The centre will go live in summer 2022. To ensure continuity Middelburg Municipality will be the owner of the platform. The platform will grow every year by retrieving and adding content.

### **Costs**

The initial costs for building the digital platform are € 20.000. The development of the content € 30.000. The costs for the development of video's productions, voiceovers, etc. are spread over different budget and different organisations.

### **Funding sources**

The funding is foreseen by Municipality of Middelburg. Besides the funding of the development and content Middelburg will adopt the costs for maintaining and hosting the site in the structural yearly budget for tourism. (€ 25.000 ).

**Date:**15-11--2021

**Name of the organisation :**

Middelburg Municipality

**Signatures of the relevant organisation:** \_\_\_\_\_

