

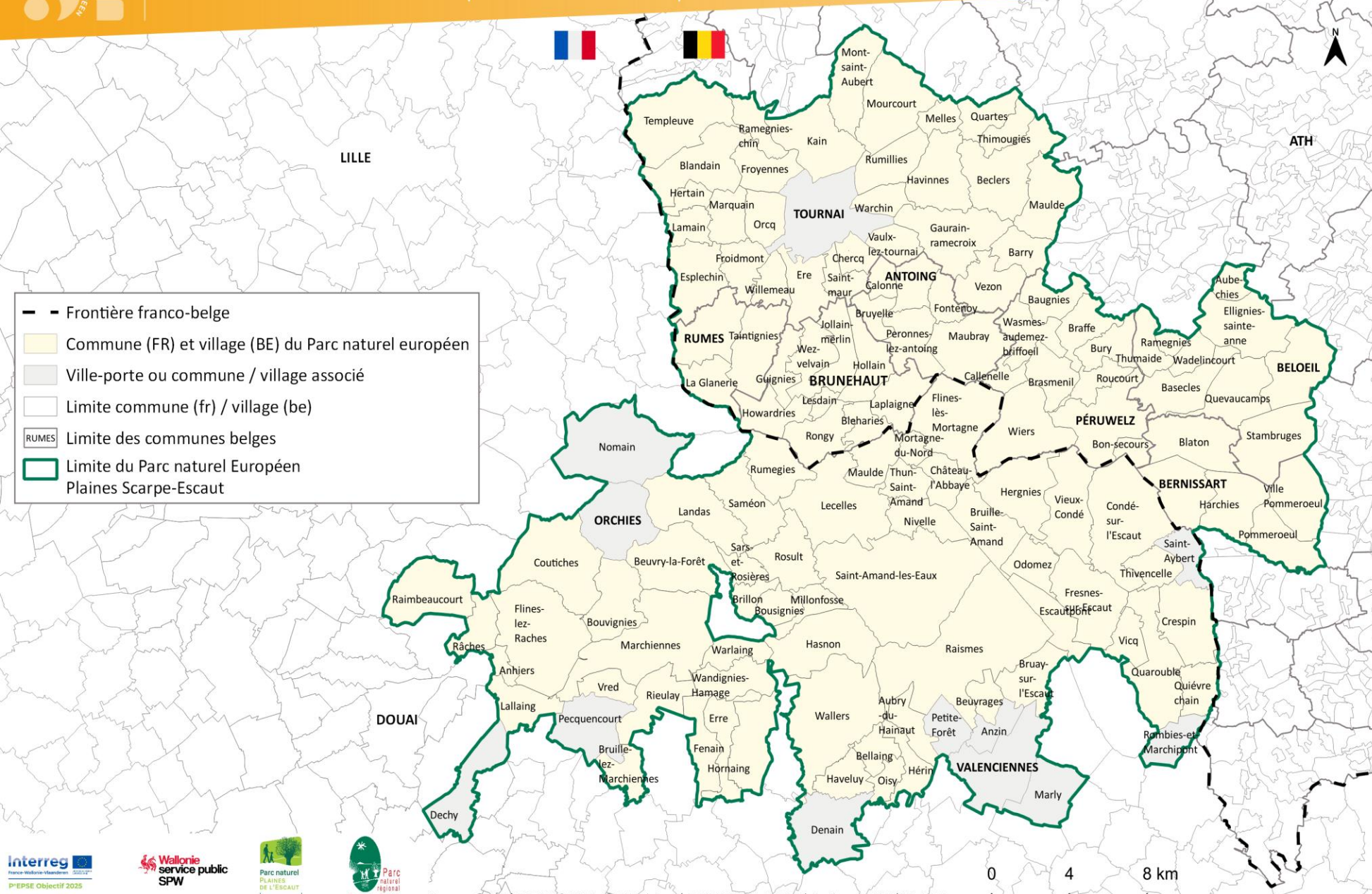


Presentation of our
European Grouping
of Territorial
Cooperation:

The European Natural Park of Scarpe-Escaut Plains



Les 127 communes et villages dans le Parc naturel européen Plaines Scarpe Escaut

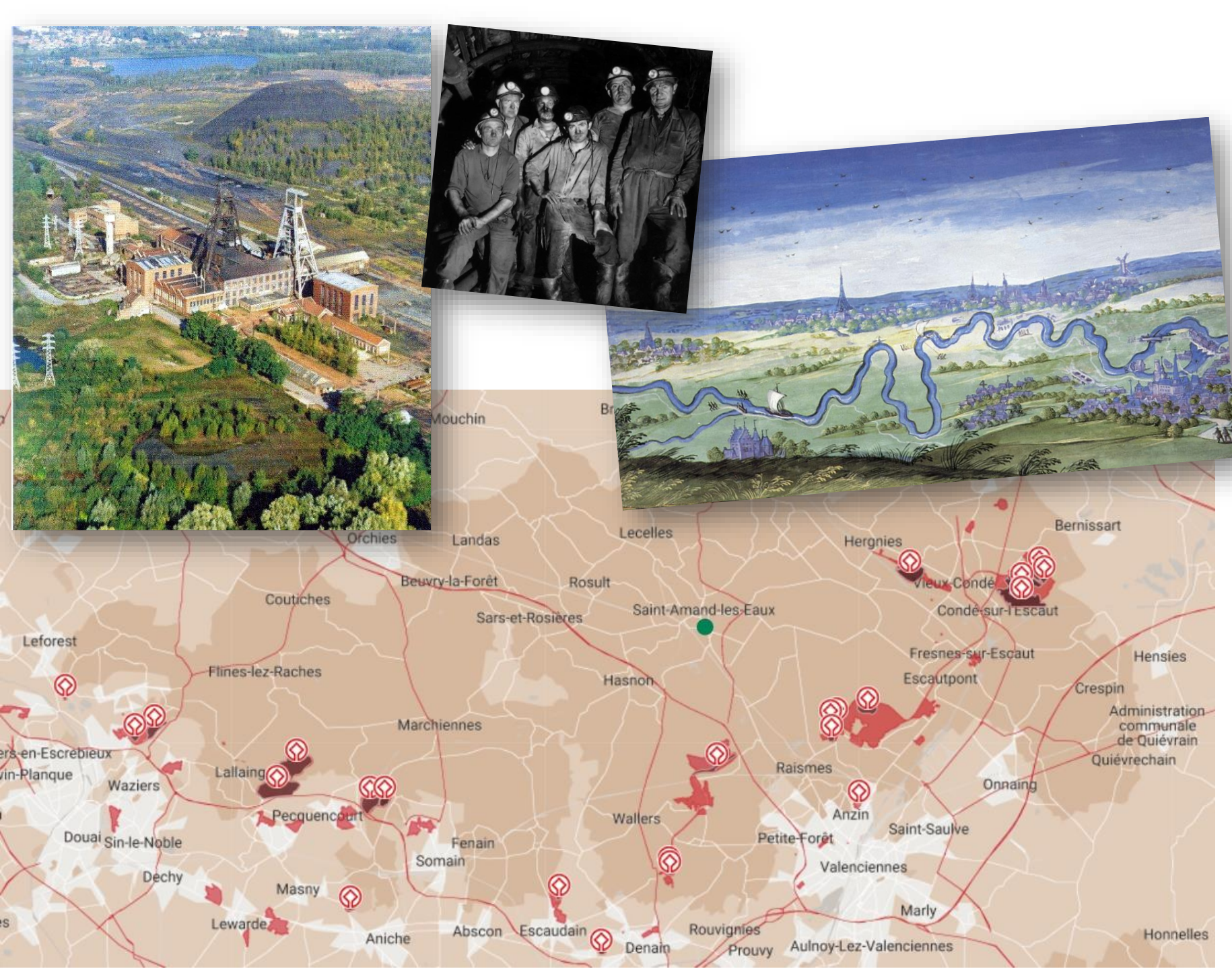


- The same watershed
- The same pool of life
- 127 villages
- 950 km² (i.e. 485 (FR) and 465 (BE))
- 292,000 inhabitants (190,000 (FR) + 102,000 (BE))

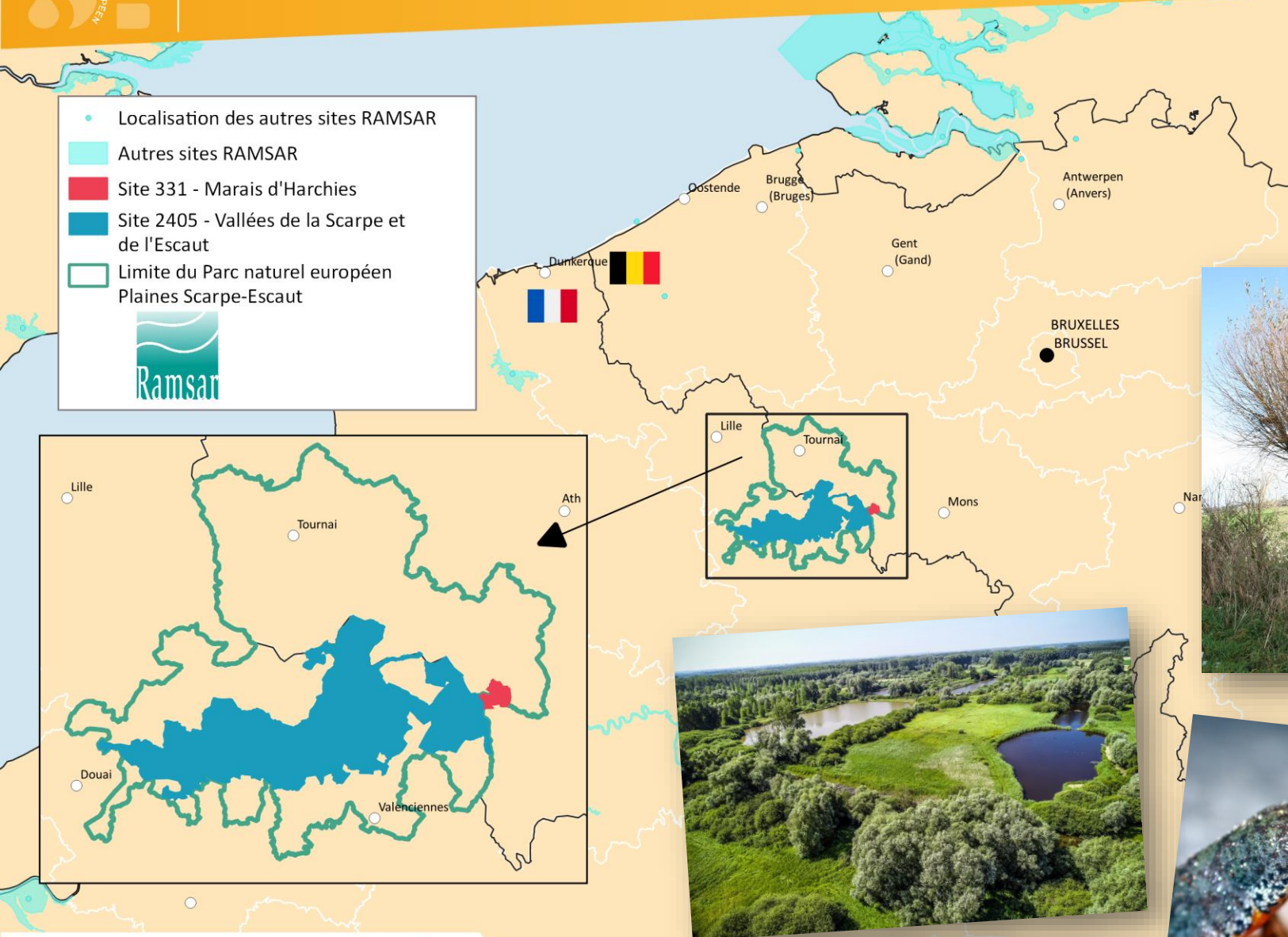
+60 employees in the two parks with similar missions:

- protection of the environments and natural resources
- territorial, urban and landscape planning
- economic, local and sustainable development
- education, awareness and reception of the public

- A territory shaped by a common humans' history
- Ancient bonds on the cross-border territory: abbeys, castles, impact of wars...
- The exploitation of minerals has transformed the territory, creating a landscape continuum existing alongside the ecological continuum
- UNESCO sites on the southern part of the territory "mining basin"



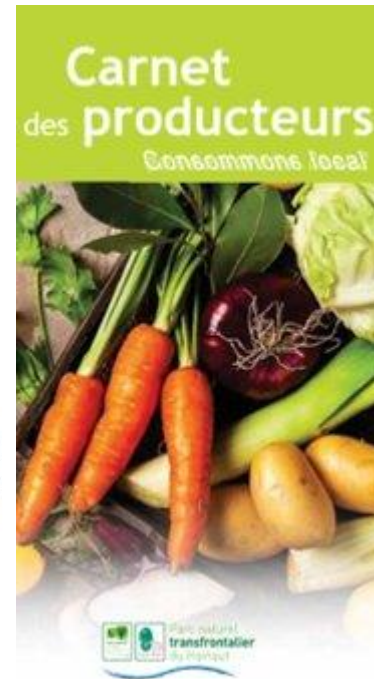
Common ecological features



- 23,000 ha of wetlands and aquatic environments, including grassland areas
- 15,910 ha of forest environments
- 65,736 ha of open environments and grasslands, including cultivated agricultural
- 24,000 ha of urban and peri-urban spaces
- Emblematic species such as : field frogs, tadpole willows, crested newts...

Main common activities implemented

- Festivals of the Transfrontier Park
- Nature objective (environmental education)
- Study on transboundary ecological corridors
- Cross-border Landscape Photographes Observatory
- Calendar of cross-border events
- Eco-gardens
- Gourmets competition
- Cross-border hiking maps
- Citizens in action
- Ecorurable (sustainable agriculture)
- Trans'Vert (socio-professional inclusion) ...



The process to get to the EGTC

What was needed:

- Common budget
- Common organisation and structure
- In order to push further the cooperation and have more influence



How did we proceed :

- SWOT analysis
- Study tour in a national transboundary Park, also EGTC (2019)
- Survey sent to diverse EGTC (2020)
- Regular meetings between transborder elected representatives of both parks



***** We had to imagine new forms of collaboration, the EGTC is the result of long-term exchanges and meetings *****

EGTC's « European Natural Park of S-E Plains » identity card



Creation on the 3rd of June 2021

How to conciliate the specificities of a Belgium law association and a mixed union of local governments into the EGTC ?

- A general Assembly of 34 elected representatives
- A transborder office of 4 elected representatives
- 1 transborder greetings event
- 2 general assemblies per year
- 1 actions plan per year
- 1 website



Some feedbacks about this institutionnal adventure

Challenges:

- **External communication** (creating the identity of one transborder park but preserving the 2 parks' identity)
- **Sustainability of the budget** (with an impact on the transborder coordinator and actions)
- **Agenda gap regarding local, regional elections** between France and Belgian (turnover amongst EGTC's elected representatives, instability and lack of background for new members)
- **Implement a unique transborder strategy** (responding to the EGTC's guidelines, matching nature and people's interests)

Added Value:

- **Legitimacy to act** on the transborder territory (once it officially and legally exists, possibility to ask for change in practices, go further in natural resources management plans etc.)
- **More visibility** (being able to speak with once voice to partners and institutions)
- **Ability to have an expertise and gather stakeholders on a specific topic** (sustainable tourism, water governance, wind energy, hunting, agriculture...)