

GSN Best Practice Competition 2008



Application form

Applicant

Organisation, country	Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), Germany (BMU)
Name, surname	Dr. Horst Freiberg
Headline of best practice initiative	Naturedetektive http://www.naturedetektive.de

Description of best practice initiative

Describe the basis of your best practice initiative (why, what, when, where; budget in EUR).
"Naturdetektive" has developed over 10 years into a youth/public multimedia nature observation project and supports the awareness raising on the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Germany. It starts on 1 st January and ends on December 31. It strongly links web-based information, e-Learning tools and reporting facilities with practical field work. Naturdetektive offers on a yearly basis up to 12 different topics eg. butterflies, birds, to practically work with in and outside schools. On a weekly basis it presents competitions and self-learning environments. Experiences and observations can be interactively reported by using special forms and observations can be charted Online into maps. The project offers a couple of Pan-European and global wide activities (regional observation of spring arrival based on key species eg. Swift, cuckoo). The yearly budget oscillates around 25.000 EURO. The total visits per month in 2008 oscillate between 25.000 - 30.000.

What was the main objective of the initiative and what were the results obtained (please quantify)?
Main objectives were: raise awareness on nature and biodiversity; access the formal education sector by providing useful and applicable information on these topics; mainstream biodiversity into schools and the public; offer an innovative communication and reporting platform. Main results: over 11 years increasing recognition of the project; two national awards (best website for children on e-Learning GigaMaus 2003 and 2004); more than 75 different topics and 20 different competitions implemented over 11 years; several innovative activities and tools developed eg. "Online Flyway of the White-Stork" (Satellite-based migration routes);

What type of media did you use (TV, radio, print, electronic)? Why this choice of media?
Internet, Flyer, printed material (10 years summary and presentation of the project - see attached file), posters, CD ROM, over four years regular publications about the project in the Journal "NaturErleben", TV Spot (regional TV NDR "NaturErleben" 2007) and several advertisements in didactical journals, catalogues and teacher wallplanners. In 2002 a "stuffed animal" was produced. The project uses the Internet as its main electronic platform. Print media follow and are used in the beginning more as posters and fliers; in the last years more as brochures and more content oriented (see file attached).

Who was the target group?
students (schools), NGOs (nature groups) and the public in general (families).

What were the main messages?

it is exciting and it makes fun observe and work in nature.

New Media / Internet and its relation to practical field work in nature are complementary and no contradiction

It is attractive and interesting to learn about others experiences and make these experiences available

Naturdetektive provides a platform of a diverse range of nature/biodiversity related information

Users are main developers of the platform Naturdetektive - "your proposal will influence the project development"

Who were the partners? Did you involve other institutions/ministries/agencies/NGOs?

The project is coordinated and financed by BfN but a lot of different national and as well some international partners from Universities, private sector, other administrations, NGOs and sometimes schools contribute every year to the content (eg. the 12 topics, the e-Learning environment or/and design of competitions eg. "Painting Competition" with a professional cartoonist); this integrates the project into different partner platforms, websites and other partner environments.

International partners were Canadian Env. Ministry, Ministry of Env. Palau, South-African SchoolNet, Env. Agency of Antigua & Barbuda and other institutions who participated in the "20+10 schools and trees" activity (see below).

It was clear in the early project planning in 1997/98 that Naturdetektive would complement existing initiatives - the innovative approach at that time was , to make use of the Internet as an interactive platform for charting observations.

--> the overall Concept can be described as "Shared Partnership"

Who financed the activities, amount of finances?

BfN finances Naturdetektive Platform; 25.000 EURO per year (includes: yearly webdesign, upload of content, hosting and 12 month support to all new activities during this time (eg. new webpages, new pictures,...) by the contracted media company)

Did you experience any specific difficulties during the action that could be learned from?

in relation to the target groups we learned that Primary schools can work more flexible with Naturdetektive than Secondary schools. This guided us to the development of tools or "offers" with different levels of "complexity" requiring less or more time when using them.

Did you receive any feedback after your activities? Did you carry out an evaluation of the results and if yes, what was the outcome?

Feedback is continuously provided by participants by Email or also by Phone. Immediate feedback is provided during the German National Didacta Fair (national Fair on education) where the project is presented during the Fair on the BfN stage). Some schools reported that the weekly competition on "The Plant/Animal of the week" has been integrated into the regular biology/geography school lesson.

An evaluation of the project was issued several times during the last 11 years. The latest evaluation was realised from February 2008 to June 2008 as Bachelor Thesis. Some major items discussed in the Bachelor thesis propose to strategically focus the communication plan on more specific target groups and related educational material; as well support more species-related information activities.

Is any follow-up or duplication of this experience foreseen?

Yes, the project planning has started already for the 2009 phase.

Why do you consider that your proposal should be selected as the best practice initiative of the year?

Naturdetektive has started since its early beginning in 1998 with several innovative interactive tools which have influenced in the course after many other initiatives (eg: interactive Flyway of the White Stork, online charting of observations on maps, web-based competitions, online reporting facilities).

It also has initiated since 2006 a Pan-European observation activity on four main species indicating the arrival of spring in Europe (Swift, Cuckoo, Red Admiral and Wood Anemone) - the four observation tasks are translated into 14 European languages.

An important objective of Naturdetektive comprises that Naturdetektive represents also a "test platform" for specific activities integrating regional and global partner organisations and schools. One recent activity from march to June 2008 is the competition called "Surf the Global Grid" - schools searched the Web and used other tools to establish worldwide partnerships along a specific "Longitude" taking biodiversity into account.

Two other major important activities with international recognition were "Biodiversity around my school"

<http://www.naturdetektive.de/2008/dyn/12029.php> and "20+10 schools and trees for Biodiversity"

<http://www.naturdetektive.de/2008/dyn/12388.php> both activities were implemented in 2007 and showed the potential but also limitations of web-based activities around the globe. The activity "20+10 schools and trees for biodiversity" inspired by its extremely positive reactions by the ten participating schools from around the world, the creation of the "GreenWave" idea <http://greenwave.cbd.int>

In some way the project can be seen as "trend setting" and innovative testing platform.

Please feel free to attach any printed material, photos etc.

Send your application to EECN_secretariat@cowi.com by 1 June 2008