

18th EUROPEAN WEEK of REGIONS and CITIES

05>09 OCTOBER 2020

12>16 OCTOBER 2020

19>22 OCTOBER 2020



RESTART
EUROPE
Together

#EURegionsWeek



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Interreg Grande Région V AGRETA 2017 - 2021

Cross border study:
nature & tourism



© Alsaphotography.com /ORTAL - Upper-Sure Lake



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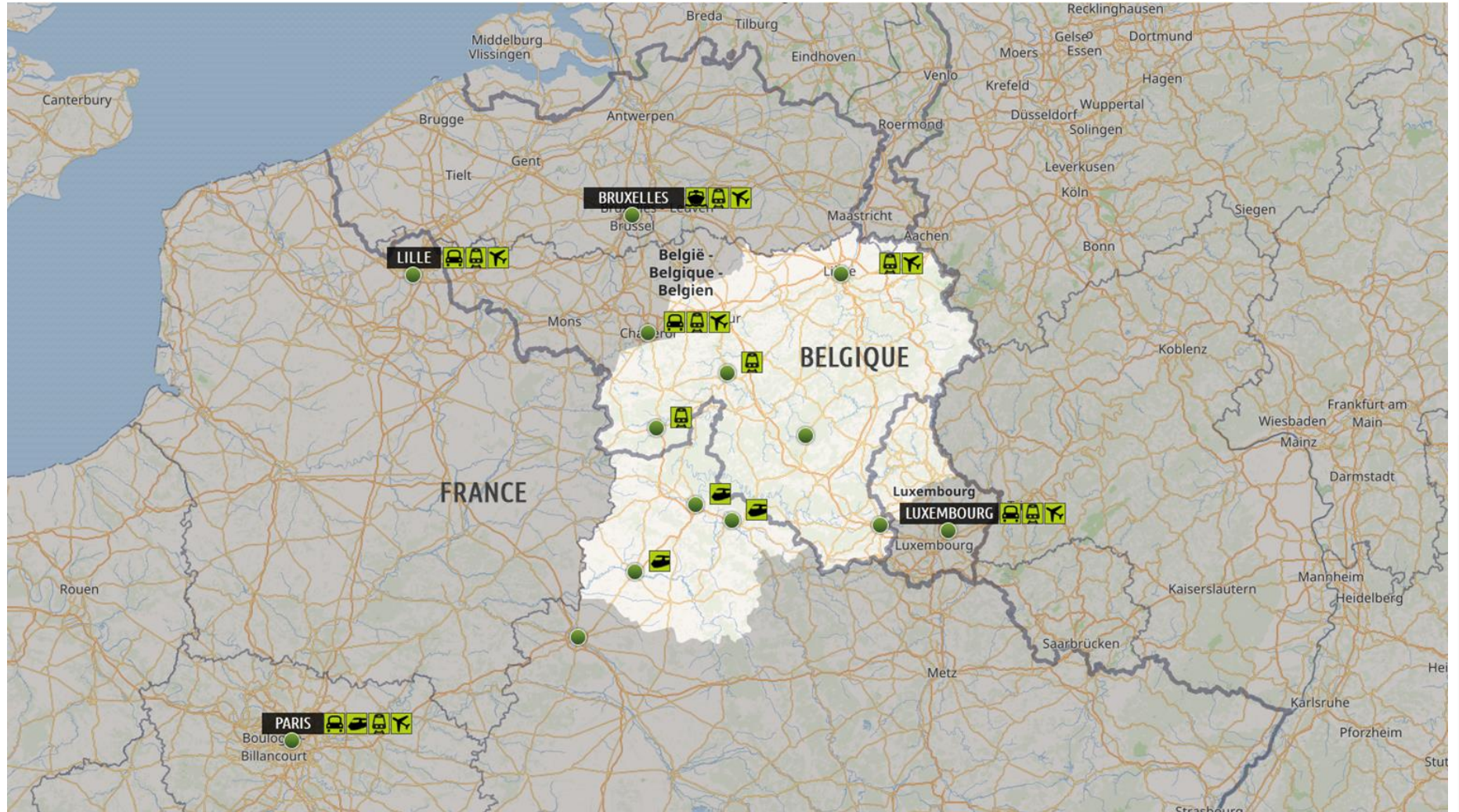


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3 countries
20.000 km²
12 nature parks



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Developing ecotourism



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Territorial branding



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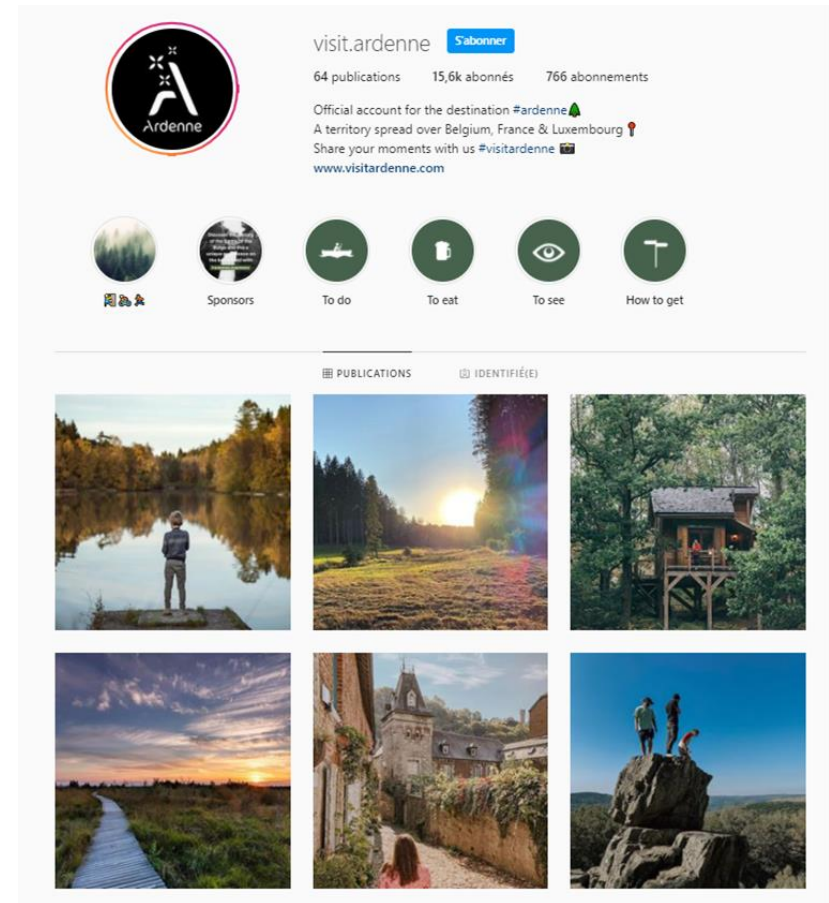
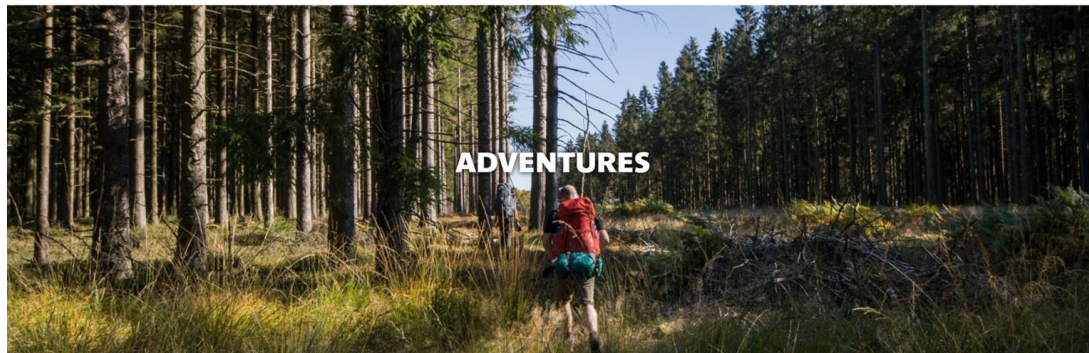
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Marketing

#VISITARDENNE

HERE, CROSSING BORDERS ✕ IS CHILD'S PLAY...

Imagine crossing borders in a **kayak**, on a **horse** or on a **bike**, in the **Semois valley**, on a **vole verte cycle path** or via one of the **nature parks**. An adventure that's **100% nature!**



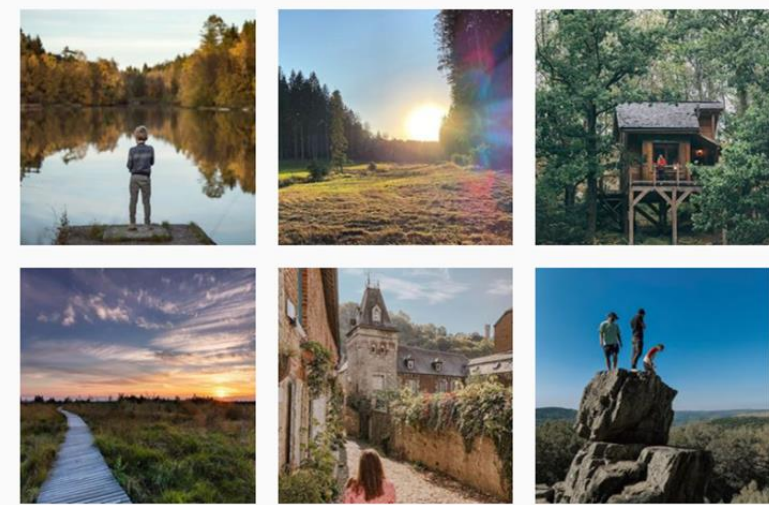
visit.ardenne [S'abonner](#)

64 publications 15,6k abonnés 766 abonnements

Official account for the destination #Ardenne 🌲
A territory spread over Belgium, France & Luxembourg 📍
Share your moments with us #visitardenne 📸
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What is the main reason to visit the Ardennes ?



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Nature

Family

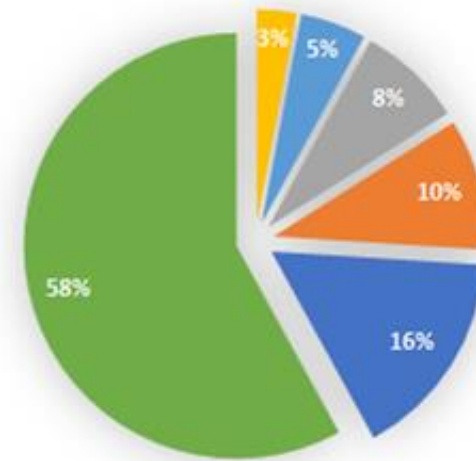
Gastronomy

Culture

Attraction Parc

Sports

Main reason to visit the Ardennes



Based on 1260 surveys (the wider public survey)



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Research on nature & tourism

Research goals:

- Reveal behavior and expectations of tourism operators
- Reveal behavior and expectations of (potential) visitors
- Evaluate to what extent expectations have been met
- Estimate visitor frequencies to nature areas
- Estimate the economic value of nature tourism

→ To formulate management alternatives that improve the attractiveness of the territory for nature tourism AND benefits nature conservation and restoration



© Céline Lecomte / GEIE Destination Ardenne

Research Methods undertaken (2017-2020)



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1) Surveys : 3

- Survey to Ardennes tourist operators
- Survey to Ardenne visitors (on site)
- Survey to the wider public (residents, visitors and non-visitors)

2) Frequency estimates : 3

- Traditional statistics
- Mobile Phone positioning data
- Camera traps



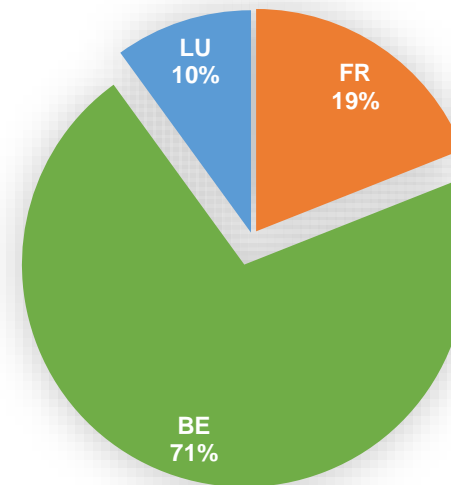
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Behavior and expectations: Survey, tourist operators

Method:

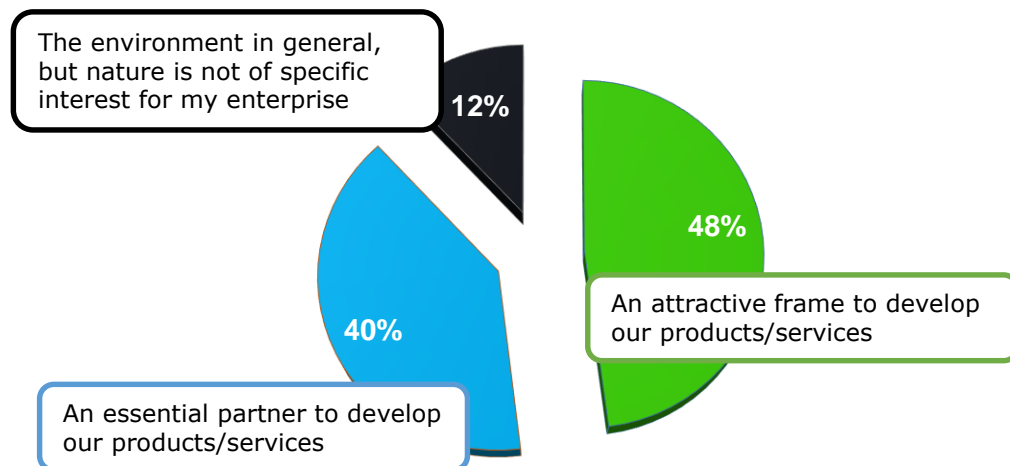
- Early 2018 (low season)
- On-line survey
- Panel of 1925 tourist operators
- Transborder Ardenne
- Incentive: lottery of 10 winners
9 local product baskets and 1 publicity article

598 completed surveys

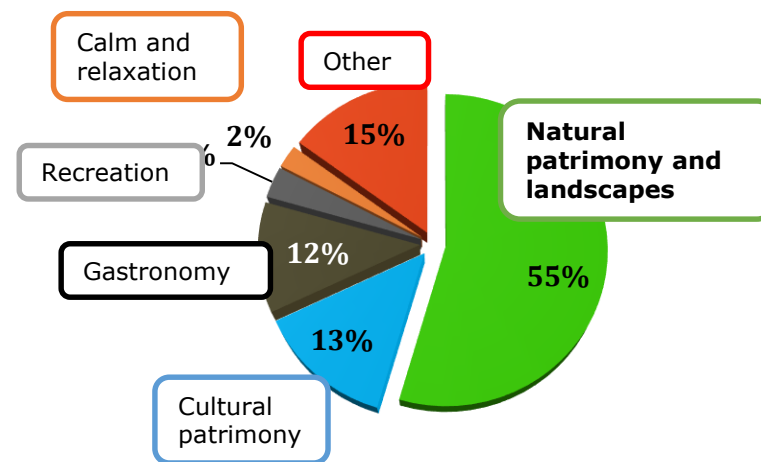


Behavior and expectations: Survey, tourist operators

Results: ✓ Nature for you means ... ?



✓ For what main interest do visitors of your enterprise frequent the Ardennes ?



✓ 2 most cited actions to improve the attractiveness of the Ardennes landscape:

- Develop the network of **protected areas**
- Develop the **naturalness** of forest landscapes (elder trees, deadwood, diversity of layers, ...)

✓ Observed difference between stated engagement and actual management

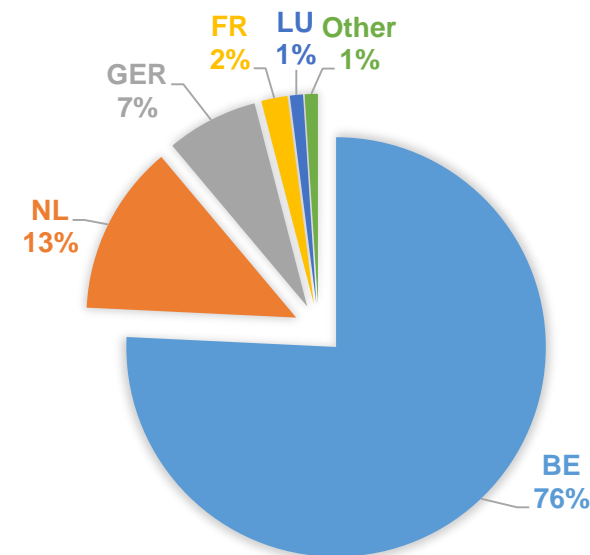
Behavior and expectations: Survey, on-site visitors

Method:

- 22 days of field surveying during spring/summer 2019
- 2 Natural Parks: PNDO (BE) and HFE (BE, border with GR)



586 completed surveys



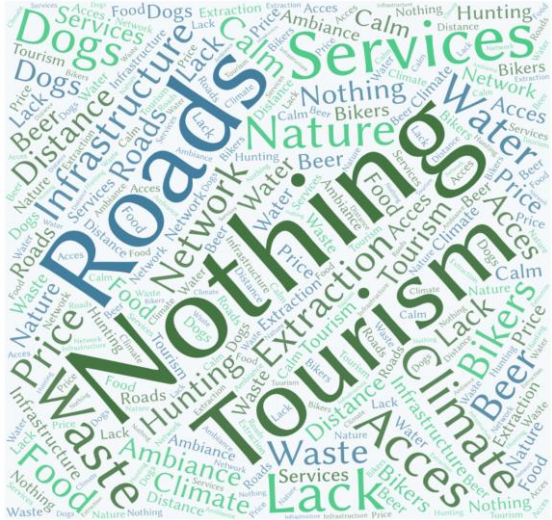
Behavior and expectations: Survey, on-site visitors

Results:

✓ Appreciated elements



✓ Disturbing elements



✓ The SAME most cited actions to improve the attractiveness of the Ardennes landscape:

- Develop the network of **protected areas**
- Develop the **naturalness** of forest landscapes (elder trees, deadwood, diversity of layers, ...)

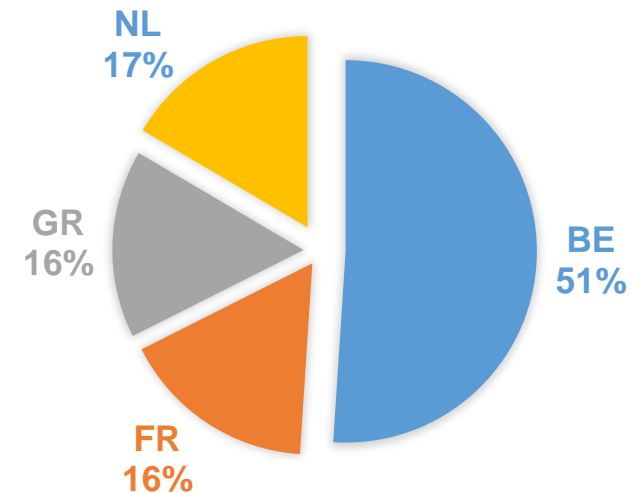


Behavior and expectations: Survey, the wider public

Method:

- On-line survey
- Sampling by a private company (age, gender and income)
- 2 waves: autumn 2018 and spring 2019
- Sampled countries: BE, FR (north), GR (west), NL

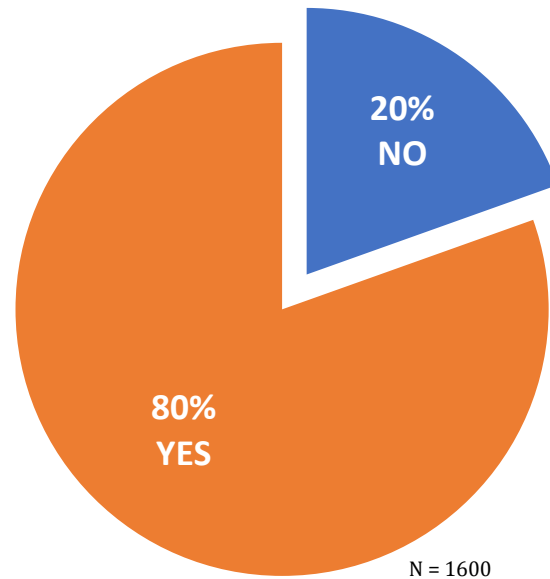
2290 completed surveys



Behavior and expectations: Survey, the wider public

Results:

- ✓ When visiting the Ardennes, did you also visit a nature area ?



- ✓ Three most popular activities:

1. Hiking
2. Picnic
3. Observation of fauna and flora

- ✓ Cited as most important aspects of the Ardennes forests:

1. **Esthetics** (view, sounds, smell)
2. **Biodiversity**
3. **Life Support** (carbon sink, water purification, ...)

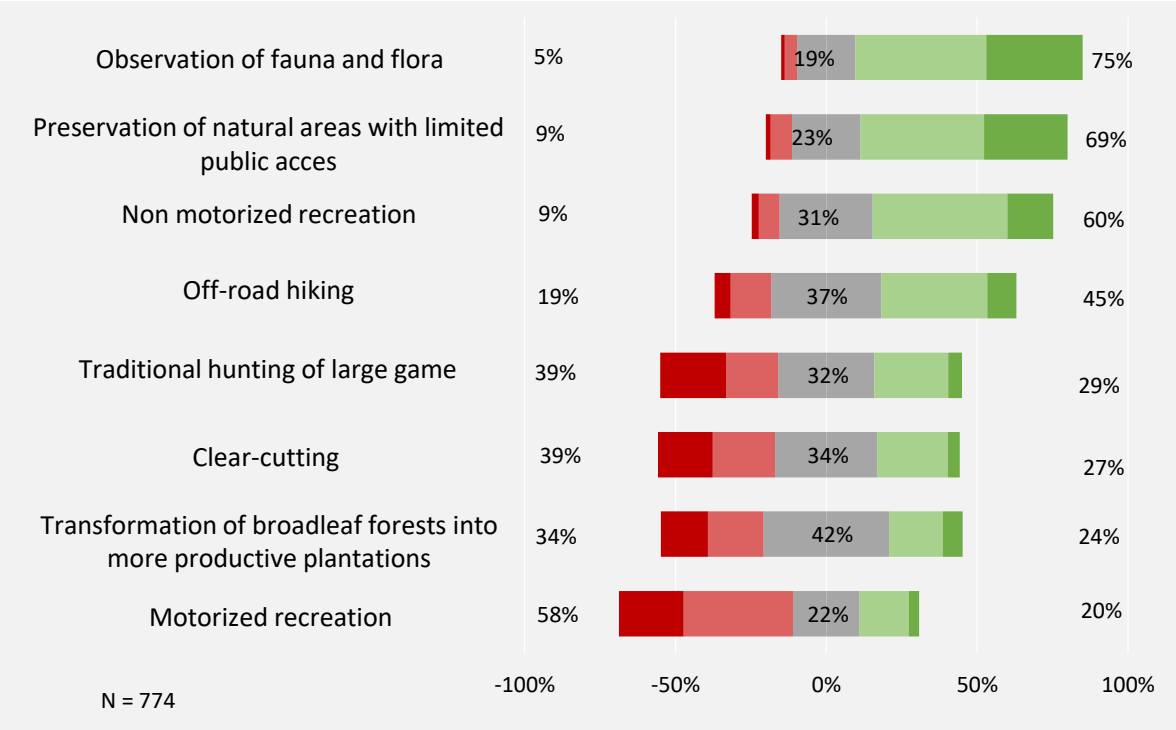


Behavior and expectations: Survey, the wider public

Results: ✓ Usages of the Ardennes forests:

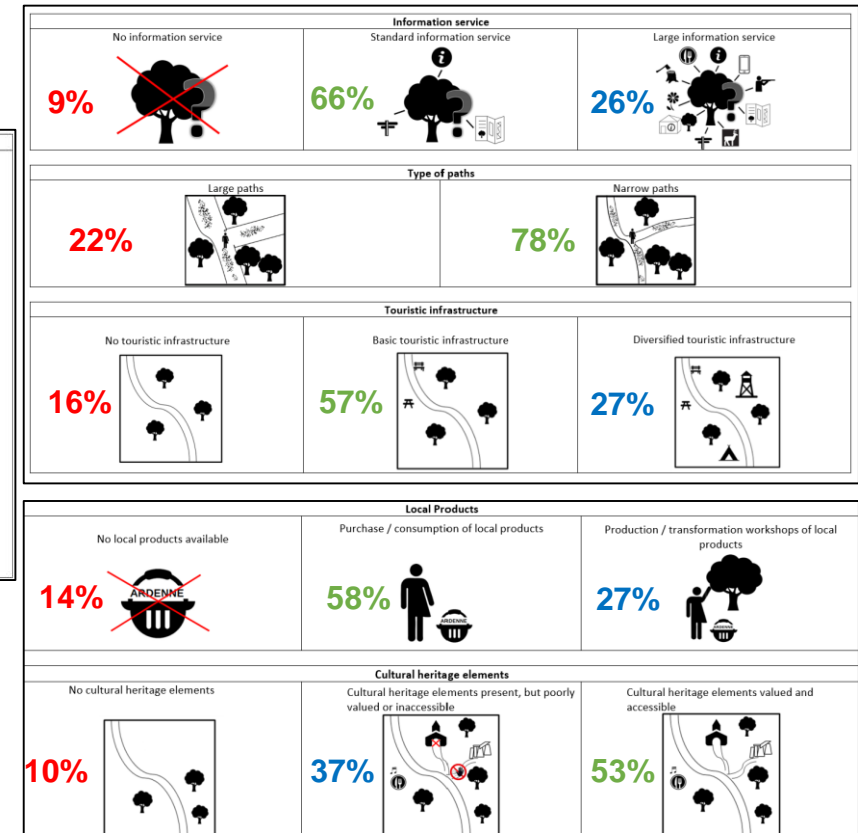
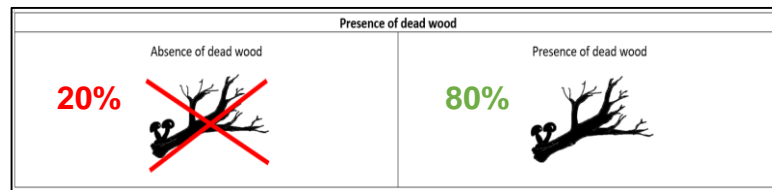
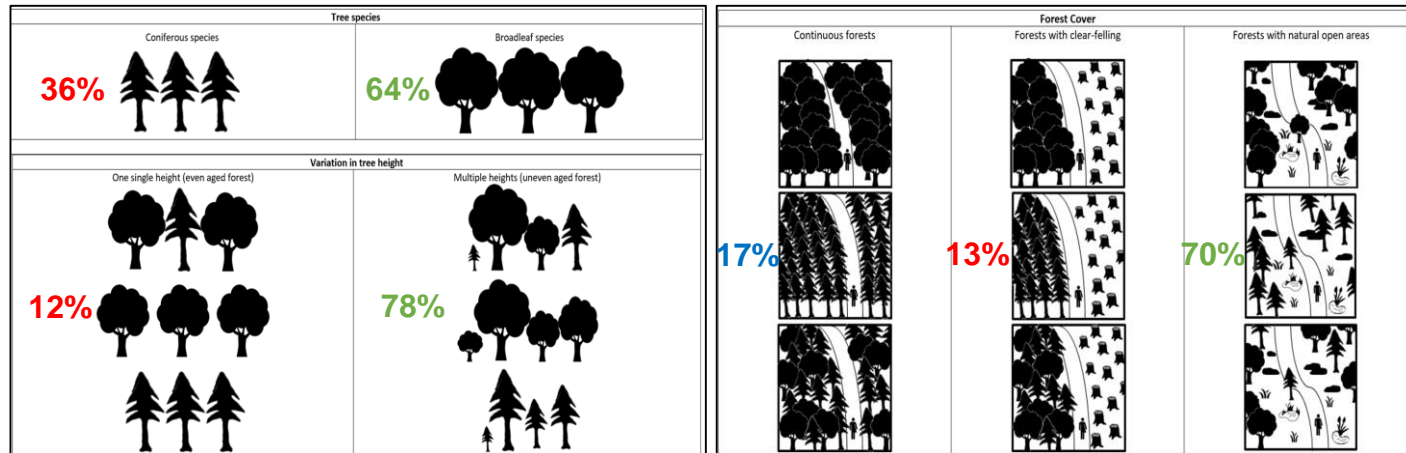


Disagree strongly
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Agree strongly



Behavior and expectations: Survey, the wider public

Results:

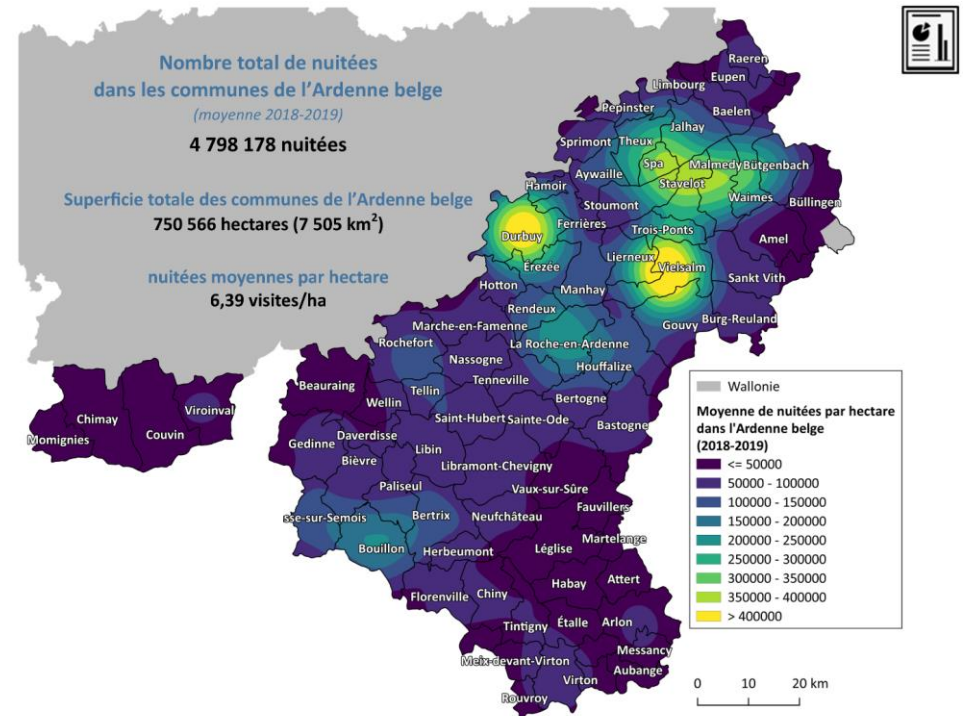


+ differences between residents and non-residents

Visitor frequencies: Traditional Statistics (BE)

Methods:

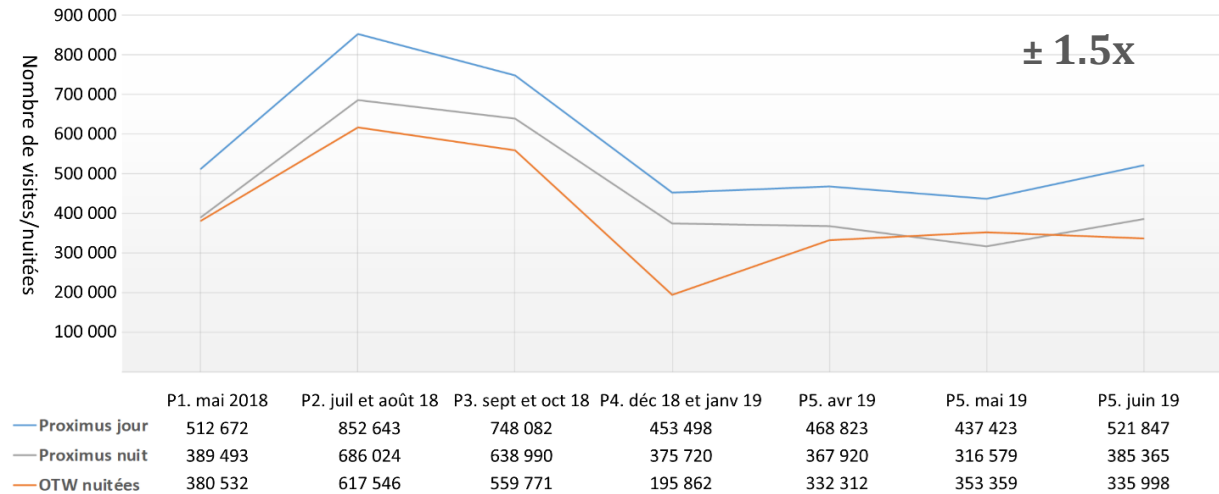
- Visitor frequencies = an important element for area managers
- Ardennes forests = Diffuse + multiple entry and exit points
- Reference data to verify reliability of new data?
- Use of the existing databases for 2018-2019 of the Walloon administration (yearly reports on tourism)
- Available Data : overnight stays (bookings) and payed entree tickets for attractions (nature pole ~zoos)



Visitor frequencies: Traditional Statistics

Results:

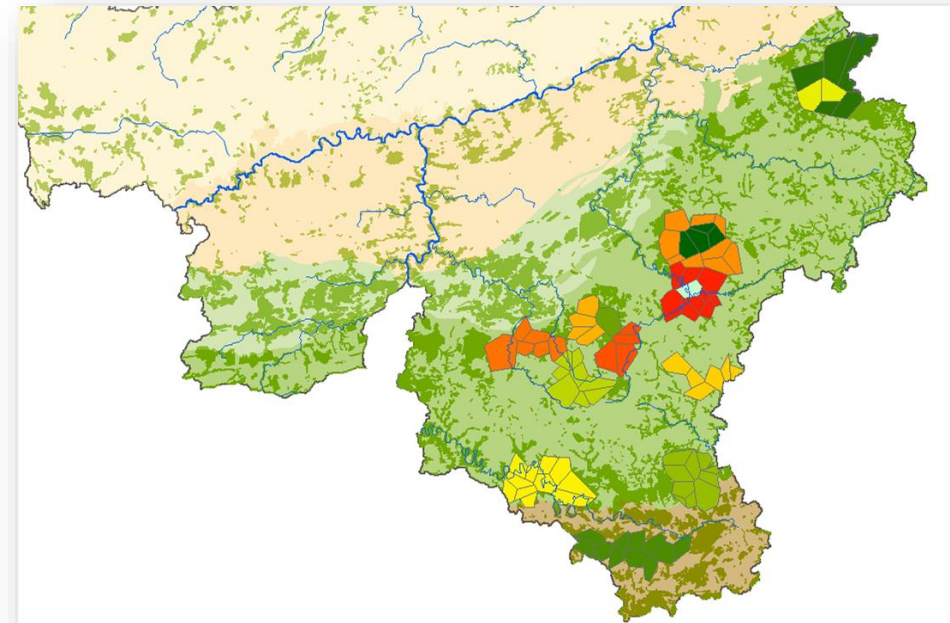
Traditional Statistics represent a **neglect** or **underestimation** of the visitor frequencies of nature areas



Visitor frequencies: Mobile Phone Positioning Data

Methods:

- Contract with Proximus (~40% of the BE market share)
- 14 pilot zones ~ 15% of the Walloon territory
- Area selection mainly based on « % of nature cover »
- 5 periods during 2018-2019 (all seasons)
- Information on visitor numbers, origin, length of visit, stay behavior

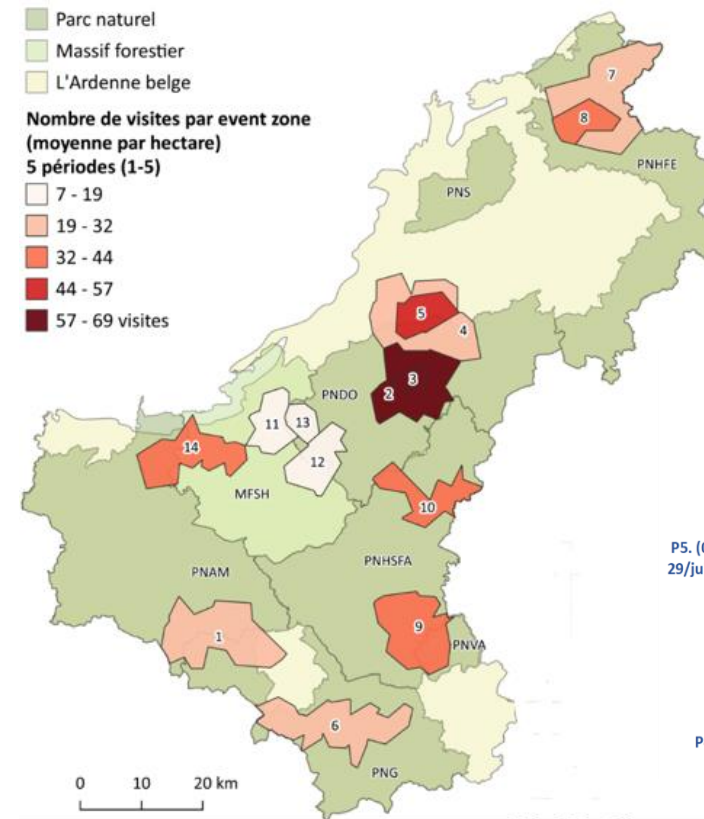
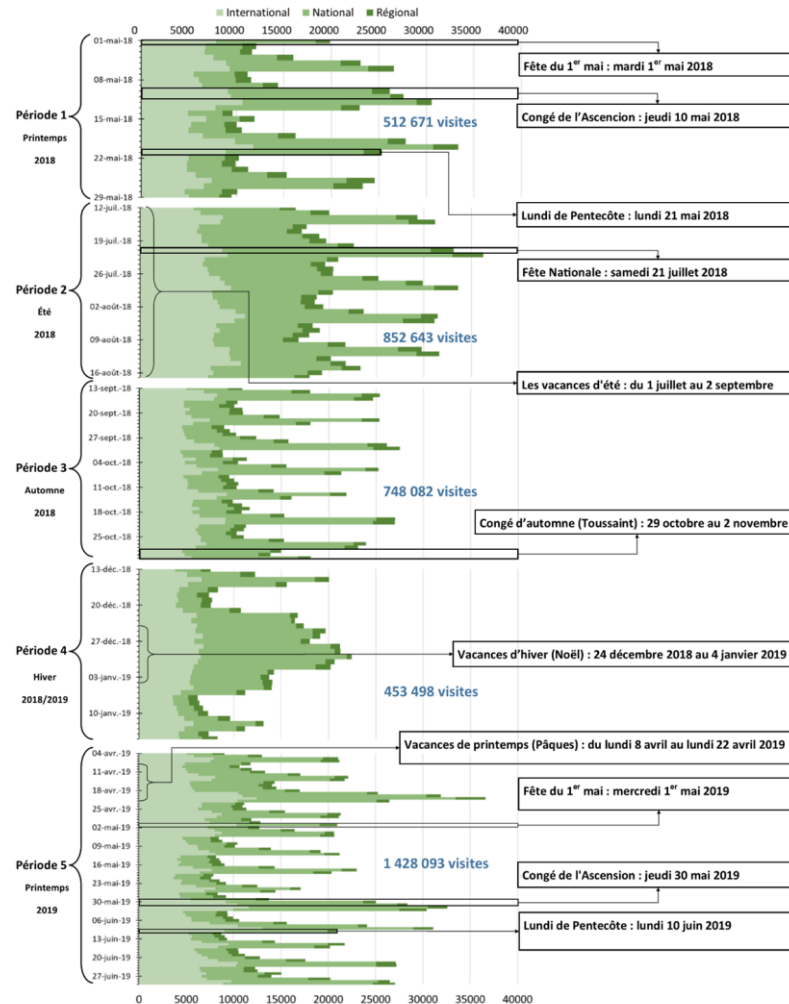


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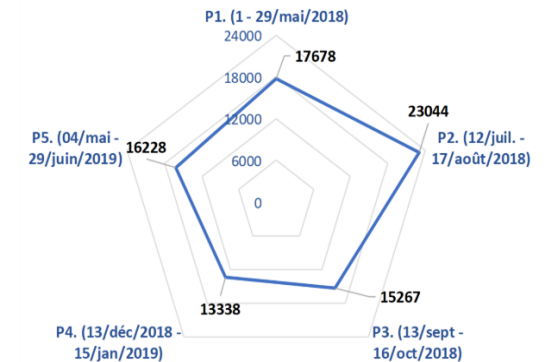
Visitor frequencies: Mobile Phone Positioning Data

Results:



~4 million of visits overall

Moyenne de visites/jour



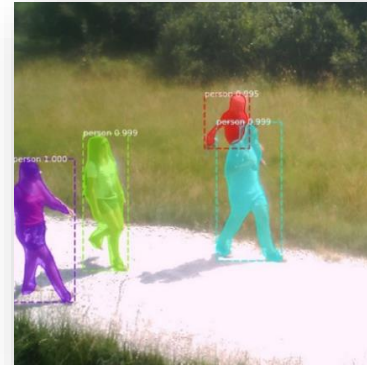
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Visitor frequencies: Camera Traps

Methods:

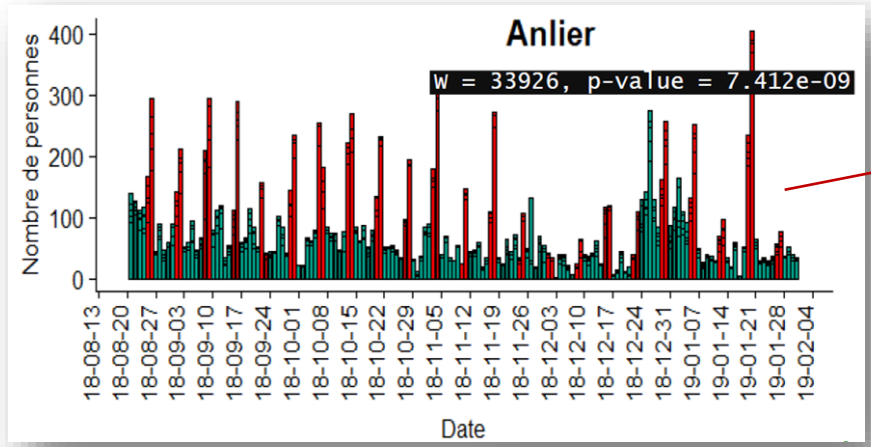
- 20 cameras placed in 4 forest areas
- At 3-4 m height on touristic trails
- Collaboration with the forest agents of the site
- Movement detection, 2 shots, 3 MP
- 1 year round monitoring (- external or technical gaps)
- Automatic detection and counting of persons, bikers, horseman, motorized vehicles and dogs
- Anonymisation by blurring of detected individuals



Visitor frequencies: Camera Traps

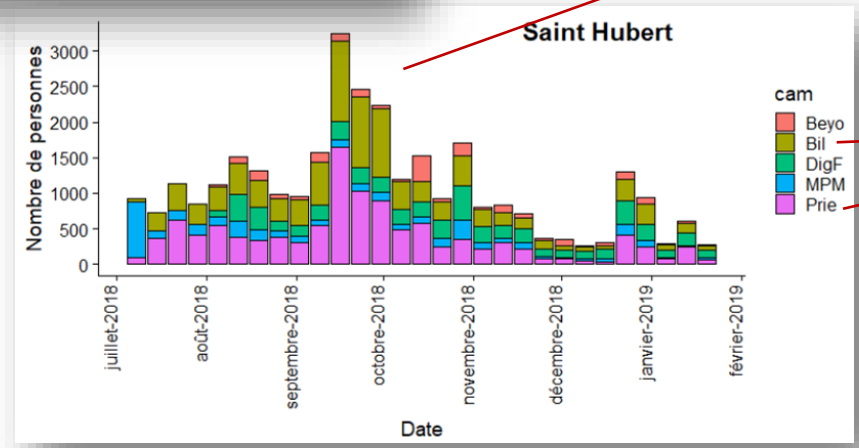
Results:

- 778 996 Images
- Ongoing analysis



Weekdays,
Weekends
and holidays

Roaring of
deer



Observation

Towers

Economic Evaluation – Survey Results

Methods:

- Stated Spendings (on-site visitors)
- WTP – Willingness to Pay
(tourist operators and on-site visitors)
- TCM – Travel Cost Methods
- DCE – Discrete Choice Experiments

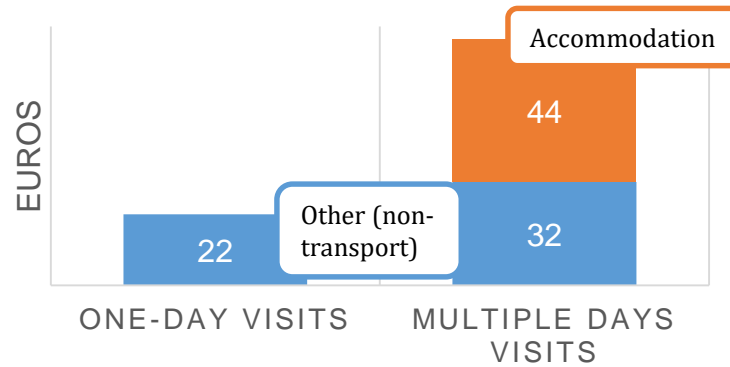


Economic Evaluation – Survey Results

Results:

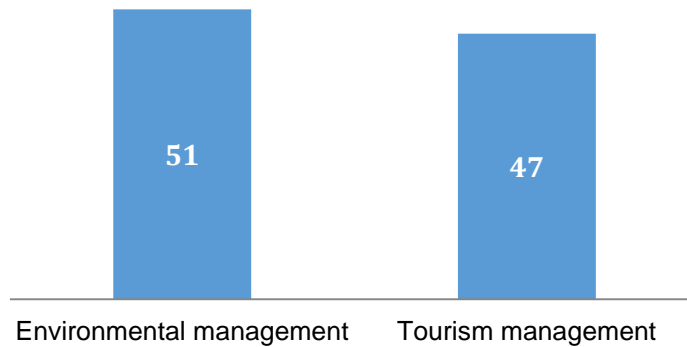
✓ Expenses per visitor per day

N = 562 (on-site survey)

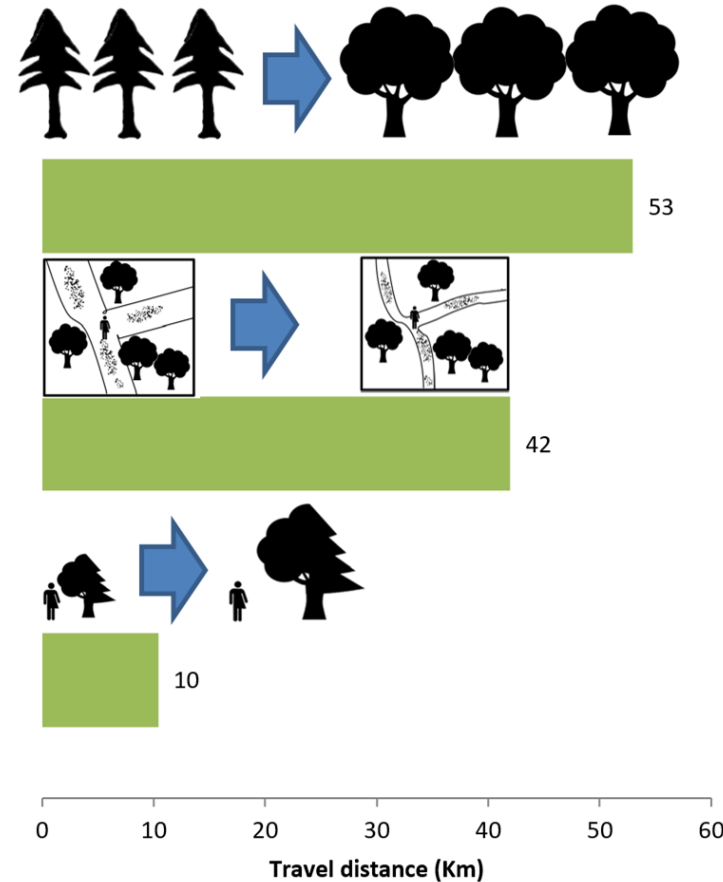


✓ WTP per employee per year

WTP of the enterprise (survey tourism operators)



✓ Willingness to travel more if



Conclusions

- Nature is the main motor of tourism in the Ardennes
- The attractiveness of landscapes increases with their degree of naturalness
- Allowing landscapes to be more « wild » would meet as well nature's as the general public's interests



- This research provides nature managers with concrete and tangible arguments to allow a transparent and legitimate transition towards a more nature-oriented management of nature areas in the Ardennes

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Available reports

Operators



[Read](#)

Wider Public



[Read](#)

On-site survey



[Read](#)



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SOON available reports

Visitor Frequencies



Economic Evaluation



Key Results – Summary Report



✓ Available in English

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