



A Fit-Gap Analysis of Tourism Offerings and Visitor Preferences in the Alde Feanen Region

Consultancy report

By Sybren Kool

Supervised by Brigitte Nisch and Michael Chibili

7 July 2025

**A Fit- Gap Analysis of Tourism Offerings and Visitor Preferences in the Alde Feanen
Region.**

Consultancy Report for VrijetijdsRegio NoordOost Friesland

Sybren Kool

4826329

July 7, 2025

First supervisor: Brigitte Nisch

Second Supervisor: Michael Chibili

BA Tourism Management, NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences

Declaration of own work

I herewith declare that:

1. This work is composed by me.
2. This work has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree or diploma
by me or anyone else.
3. The work of which this is a record is done wholly by me.
4. Any research, of which this work is a result, was done wholly by me.
5. Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have not been used in the creation of the assessment.
6. All citations have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of my
information have been specifically acknowledged.

Name and Signature:

Sybren Henricus Jacobus Kool

Student Number:

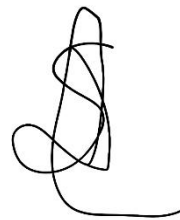
4826329

Date:

07/07/2025

Place:

Leeuwarden

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Contents

Management Summary.....	1
1.Introduction	3
2. Business environment analysis	5
2.2 External analysis	6
2.2.1 Political.....	7
2.2.2 Economic.....	7
2.2.3 Sociocultural.....	8
2.2.4 Technological.....	9
2.2.5 Environmental.....	9
2.2.6 Legal.....	10
2.3 Internal analysis.....	10
3. Theoretical framework.....	12
3.1 Destination development	12
3.2 Visitor preferences.....	13
3.3 Nature based tourism	15
3.4 Marketing communication.....	15
3.5 The Fit Gap model.....	15
3.5 Conceptual model.....	17
4.Methodology	18
4.1 Research design.....	18
4.2 Research questions.....	19
4.2.1 Relation to the problem statement.....	19
4.3 Research methods	20
4.3.1 Models used for analysing the current tourism portfolio of the Alde Feanen.....	20
4.3.2 Models used for analysing the tourism demand of the Alde Feanen	20
4.4 Interview guide	21
4.5 Research population.....	22
4.6 Sampling	22

4.7 Data analysis & Coding	24
4.8 Limitations	24
5. Diagnosis	26
5.1 Tourism Demand and Visitor Preferences	26
Improved SWOT	29
5.2 Conclusion on problem statement.....	30
6. The Gaps	31
6.1 A Seasonal Tourism Landscape	31
6.2 Limited Offerings for Younger Visitors	31
6.3 Insufficient Information.....	31
6.4 Cultural Offering	32
6.5 Low National Awareness	32
6.6 Sustainability	32
7. Recommendations	33
7.1 Recommendation 1 Marketing communication plan Off-season	33
7.2 Recommendation 2 Branding Alde Feanen as a National Park.....	34
7.3 Recommendation 3 Remote workspaces nature program	35
7.4 Recommendation 4 Plan for improved signage in the Alde Feanen	36
8. Implementation	36
8.1 Implementation plan for recommendation 1	36
8.2 Implementation plan for recommendation 4	38
References	42
Appendixes	47
Appendix A - Interview Guide.....	47
Appendix B - Color book for codes	52
Appendix C - Coding matrix.....	53
Appendix D - Interview transcriptions	58

Appendix E - Implementation tables	80
Appendix F – Vacancy	85

List of Figures

Figure 1. Jansen-Verbeke model - Alde Feanen.....	6
Figure 2. SWOT analysis (Kool, 2025)	11
Figure 3. Tourism Area Life Cycle Model	13
Figure 4. Fit-Gap Alde Feanen 2025	17
Figure 5. Research Matrix	21
Figure 6. New SWOT analysis (Kool, 2025)	29
Figure 7. Implementation table recommendation 1	38
Figure 8. How to start running ads	37
Figure 9. Implementation table recommendation 4.....	39

Management Summary

This consultancy report is written for Vrijetijdsregio NoordOost Friesland (VRNOF) to identify gaps between the current tourism portfolio of National Park De Alde Feanen and the preferences of its target audience. By performing a Fit-Gap analysis, this research provides an analysis of both current existing tourism offerings and visitors' expectations. Additionally, strategic recommendations are provided in order to support the client.

The Alde Feanen region has experienced tourism growth in recent years, but the local tourism remains primarily focused on older adults seeking rest and nature experiences such as birdwatching, boating, and cycling. The current tourism landscape is strongly seasonal, with limited activity outside the high season, and lacks diverse offerings for younger visitors and families. Research revealed several gaps: low national awareness of the park, insufficient information provision, limited cultural and creative activities, and an underdeveloped off-season offering.

A PESTEL analysis highlighted opportunities in the growing market for nature-based tourism, supported by increased demand for ecotourism and sustainable travel experiences. However, it also identified challenges, including local resistance to visitor pressure, climate impacts, and competition from better-known destinations. A SWOT analysis confirmed strengths such as the unique wetland landscapes and rich biodiversity but emphasized weaknesses like poor national recognition and limited appeal to a younger demographic.

Primary research, including interviews with visitors, local business owners, and employees of conservation organisations, confirmed that visitors appreciate the region's peace and natural beauty but desire more varied experiences, better information, and improved year-round offerings.

Based on these findings, the report proposes four key recommendations:

1. Develop an off-season marketing communications plan to spread visitor numbers more evenly throughout the year and reduce peak-season pressure;
2. Brand Alde Feanen explicitly as a national park to raise awareness and highlight its unique selling point as a national park

3. Introduce remote workspaces in nature by using empty accommodations in the off-season, attracting new visitors.
4. Improve signage and wayfinding to enhance visitor experiences and accessibility.

Implementation plans were developed for recommendations 1 and 4, providing concrete steps, budgets, and monitoring strategies.. Recommendations 2 and 3 are identified as opportunities for further research due to their broader scope.

Word Count: 12458 wrods

1.Introduction

The leisure sector in Northeast Fryslân has experienced notable growth between 2018 and 2023 (De Maatschappelijke Waarde Van Recreatie & Toerisme in Noordoost-Friesland, 2024). As a result of this growth, the organizational and operational landscape within the tourism sector has become increasingly complex. This complexity is largely due to the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, such as local governments, tourism entrepreneurs, nature conservation organizations, and inhabitants. Each of these stakeholders have different goals, priorities, and levels of power. Additionally, many different tourism-related initiatives have emerged to capitalize on the region's growing appeal. However, these initiatives often struggle to achieve long-term impact. In many cases, they are discontinued due to a lack of structural funding, limited collaboration between stakeholders, or insufficient knowledge and capacity to implement and sustain them effectively. (*Basisinfrastructuur & Regiefunctie Recreatie & Toerisme Noordoost Friesland*, 2022). External factors such as digital advancements, fluctuation in visitors due to seasonality and a shortage of employees are contributing to the chaotic tourism environment in the region. As a result Vrijetijdsregio NoordOost Friesland (VRNOF) decided to work on developing a strong sustainable infrastructure.

This consultancy report is written for the organization Vrijetijdsregio NoordOost Friesland (NOF). This organization is a network consisting of people from the four municipalities within the region, NHL Stenden, Tourism Collective Fryslân, European Tourism Futures Institute (ETFI), regional marketing organisation NoordOost Friesland and MBO institute Firda. The main goal of this organization is to develop a strong infrastructure for regional tourism in order to create and maintain a strong tourism portfolio that is sustainable for the long run. Region NOF has identified five subregions that define the tourism landscape: Elfstedenstad Dokkum, Werelderfgoed Waddenzee, Nationaal Landschap Noardlike Fryske Wâlden, Nationaal Park Lauwersmeer en Nationaal Park De Alde Feanen (Toerisme Alliantie Friesland, 2025).

In order to improve the tourism infrastructure changes need to be made in the tourism portfolio, as according to Dredge (2016), a well-aligned tourism portfolio can enhance visitor satisfaction and destination competitiveness. This research contributes to the development of the Alde Feanen region as a tourism destination by providing an overview of the current tourism portfolio, as well as an analysis of the preferences and expectations of the target market. By comparing these two perspectives, a fit-gap analysis is conducted to identify where the current tourism portfolio does not fully align with visitor needs and expectations. This is essential for

ensuring that future tourism development in Alde Feanen is sustainable and aligned with visitor demand. Based on the identified gaps, recommendations are provided to enhance the tourism portfolio in a way that strengthens the region's attractiveness, supports local stakeholders, and improves visitor satisfaction.

This research helps this process by providing an overview of the current tourism portfolio as well as an overview of the target market and their tourism preferences. Then, based on these overviews, gaps are identified and recommendations are provided. This process is conducted by using a Fit-Gap analysis. This tool is most appropriate as the purpose of this tool is to identify the current state of a product, service or situation and the desired future state (*What Is Fit Gap Analysis? A Guide for Product Managers*, n.d.). The Fit-Gap analysis identifies concrete issues (gaps) in the current tourism portfolio such as, shortcomings in infrastructure, lack of diverse activities or gaps in sustainability. This analysis also identifies the preferences of the visitors. By addressing these issues and preferences, targeted recommendations can be provided to solve these issues. Moreover, this tool was used in previous research by Oscar Vollenberg and is desired by the client, Henk Richter.

In order to achieve the goal the following objectives have been formulated:

- To make a comprehensive analysis of existing tourism portfolio in the Alde Feanen region
- To make a comprehensive analysis of the existing tourism demand in the Alde Feanen region
- To perform a Fit-Gap analysis
- To formulate strategic recommendations aimed at enhancing the Alde Feanen region's tourism.

Additionally, the following problem statement is developed:

"To identify the gaps between the current tourism portfolio in the Alde Feanen region and the preferences of the target audience with a Fit-Gap Analysis"

In the following chapters, this report begins with a business environmental analysis that outlines the internal and external factors relevant in the Alde Feanen region. This is followed by a theoretical framework that introduces and explains key concepts. The methodology chapter explains the research design, methods, and data collection approach used to analyse both the current tourism portfolio and visitor demand. The findings will ultimately lead to recommendations aimed at improving the alignment between tourism supply and demand in Alde Feanen

2. Business environment analysis

In order to gain an overview of the business environment of the Alde Feanen a business environment analysis is conducted. Firstly, the current tourism portfolio of the Alde Feanen region are identified and are showcased in figure 1. Moreover, both the internal and external environment are analysed to gain a complete understanding of the business environment. A PESTEL analysis is used to analyse the external environment by identifying and evaluating six key categories of macro-environmental factors: **Political, Economic, Sociocultural, Technological, Environmental, and Legal** (Page & Connell, 2020). This framework helps to understand the broader forces that influence tourism development and stakeholder decision-making. Additionally, a SWOT analysis is used to evaluate the internal environment by identifying the Strengths and Weaknesses of the current tourism portfolio, as well as the Opportunities and Threats present in the external environment. This provides a comprehensive overview of the business environment of the Alde Feanen.

2,1 Tourism products and components

To analyse the tourism resources of the Alde Feanen region, the Jansen-Verbeke model is applied. This model distinguishes between primary, secondary, and additional tourism elements. The model provides a structured way to examine the tourism resources in a destination. Primary elements refer to the main attractions that draw visitors, such as natural landscapes or cultural landmarks, secondary elements refer to elements that allow the tourist to stay longer such as hotels and shopping facilities. Additional elements include supporting infrastructure, amenities, and services that enhance the visitor experience (Jansen-Verbeke, 1986). This model is suitable for the Alde Feanen because it allows for a comprehensive evaluation of both the core natural assets and the supporting tourism infrastructure.

Figure 1. Jansen-Verbeke model - Alde Feanen

Primary elements	Secondary elements	Additional elements
Cultural facilities • Skütsjemuseum • It Kokelhûs Fam Jan en Sjut • Museum Ald Slot • Mineralogisch Museum Grou • Natuurmuseum Fryslân • Lancaster Exposition Rental facilities • Alde Feanen verhuur • Watersport ANJA • Boat Rental Pean Amusement facilities Physical characteristics Terrains: • Swamp • Forest • Reedlands • Shrubland • Bog • Open water Trails: • 450 different plants • It Wikelsân trail • Jan Duurds • Kindfullness route	Shops • Coop supermarket • Grocery store De Meerpaal Restaurants • Porto Casa • Grand Cafe Yn 'e Haven • Brasserie Westersail • Tuinkaffee BuitenGewoon • Princenhof Restaurant • Lunchroom Adema • De Fiskrinder • Snackbar de Meerpaal Overnight accommodations • Tiny houses or campspace Bregeham • Alde Faenen rental houses • Holidaypark It Wiid • B&B Yn 'e Haven • Pean Buiten accommodations • It Foarhus • Hotel Princenhof	Parking places • Parkingplace het Wiid • Parkingplace Kulerpaad • Parkingplace Earnewâld • Parkingplace De Alde Faenen • Parkingplace Tocristisch ovestappunt Birdwatching shed • Aldegeau • Lytse Mar

Note: Adapted from Jansen-Verbeke 1986

2.2 External analysis

To gain a more comprehensive overview of the region, external impacting factors are analysed by conducting PESTEL analysis. A PESTEL analysis is a model used to analyse the macro-environmental factors that impact an international organization (Washington State University, 2025). The model identifies Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors that have an impact on an organization. Gregoric (2014) states that “*key segments in which international organisations operate can all be analysed with the elements of PESTEL*”. Because the tourism sector also deals with invisible exports and operates within the international environment, the PESTEL analysis can be applied to organizations within the tourism industry as well as the collection of tourism supply in a destination. Therefore, the PESTEL analysis is used to analyse the tourism destination Alde Feanen.

2.2.1 Political

The Alde Feanen is a natural park which is a label that the minister of Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit (LVN) gives in name of the province. Being labelled a national park entails lots of value for the local entrepreneurs, inhabitants and visitors (*Beleidsprogramma Nationale Parken 2024-2030*, 2024). Moreover, the Netherlands have made agreements to restore ecosystems, improve biodiversity and to counter climate change. These agreements are described in the sustainable development goals (SDG) as well as the EU biodiversity strategy 2030. Additionally, the Netherlands have committed to the goal to save 30% of nature on land and sea (UN CBD COP15 in Montreal, 2022).

The Alde Feanen is part of Natuurnetwerk Nederland (NNN) and the Natura 2000-network. Parks that are part of these organizations are protected by the environment protection law and Decision General Rules, which are as of 2024 included in the Environment and Planning ACT. (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat, 2025). New initiatives are developed by relevant stakeholders of the region. The province and municipalities check these initiatives if they are approved by the law. Additionally, the province checks if the initiatives are aligned with the National Program rural area (NPLG). The organization of a national park has no legal say about what happens in the national park.

2.2.2 Economic

The ministry of LVNN is responsible for the governance and plans of the national parks in the Netherlands, and the provinces are responsible for the execution of these plans and have some freedom on how to execute these plans. These institutions are also responsible for the financing of the national parks. Therefore, the type of government is relevant for the development and management of the national parks. The current government body states that it is going to develop a nature restoration plan and invest in realising the environmental goals (*Regeerprogramma*, 2024). This of course positively affects the financial funds available for the national parks.

Tourism within the Netherlands is increasing each year. From 2012 until 2023 tourism increased each year, with the exception of the covid pandemic. In 2024 Inbound tourism increased with approximately 1% and outbound with 4.3% and both are expected to increase in the coming years according to the NBTC (2024). This increase in tourism has a positive effect on the employment rates and disposable income levels. Therefore, local residents and entrepreneurs are more likely to invest in the local tourism offerings. The tourism sector in Northeast Fryslân has

also experienced substantial growth between 2018 and 2023 as shown by various key indicators. The number of sole proprietors in the tourism industry increased by 63%, alongside significant growth in restaurants and accommodations. This increase has contributed to an 11% increase in total tourism-related employment, ultimately leading to a 5.9% economic contribution from the sector (ETFI, 2024).

This growth aligns with the broader perspective highlighted by UN Tourism (2024), which emphasizes that *“more and better-targeted investment will be key to transforming the tourism sector, creating jobs, and driving inclusive and sustainable growth.”* As the tourism industry in Northeast Fryslân continues to expand, strategic planning is essential to ensure sustainable development and economic benefits.

2.2.3 Sociocultural

One of the major current tourism trends is ecotourism, which according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) *“refers to all forms of nature-based tourism in which the key aim of the tourist is to observe and appreciate nature”*. The market size is expected to grow from 260.76 billion in 2024 to 759.93 billion USD by 2028 with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 14.31% (Statista, 2024). The Central Bureau of Investigation CBI (2023) supports this claim by stating that the demand for nature tourism is growing and that nature-based tourism makes up for a significant part of the growing tourism sector. The increase in demand for ecotourism can have a positive effect on the number of visitors to the Alde Feanen national park.

Regarding social marketing, the tourism industry has become very information-driven, and travellers have a need for reliable information to help them make travel decisions (Hussain et al., 2024). Along with this increase for information, the way of analysing this information is predominantly done via social media online communications and influencers (WTM, 2022).

A study by ETFI (2024) shows that there is an increase in perception by the inhabitants of Northeast Fryslân that tourism has a negative impact on their region. For instance, between 2018 and 2024, there has been a 10% increase in the number of residents who believe tourism negatively impacts liveability. Additionally, perceptions that tourism harms natural areas have risen by 9%, while there has also been a slight increase in concerns that tourism disrupts the regions space and peace. Lastly, National Park the Alde Feanen is the least known national park in the Netherlands, with only 5% of the Dutch population aware of its existence (Bureau voor Ruimte & Vrije Tijd, 2017).

2.2.4 Technological

The use of technology and the increase of digital knowledge has changed the tourism landscape significantly. The booking process has changed completely due to the availability of diverse online platforms. According to a survey by Statista (2023) 72% of travellers prefer to book their travels online. Moreover, the development of the Internet of Things (IoT) has enhanced the tourist experience marginally. For example, often hotel facilities are equipped with automatic sensors that can regulate temperature. Moreover, the integration of IoT provides more personalized experiences as the internet can store previous travel preferences and travel history.

The rise of Artificial Intelligence has impacted the tourism industry on multiple levels. The use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) can serve a useful purpose for tourism organizations and tourism destinations. For example with providing more personal assistance and information, monitor and analyse statistics and streamline work processes. A study by Florido-Benítez and Del Alcázar Martínez (2024, p14) supports the claim that AI is a useful tool that *“helps manage, monitor, and analyse sales information; revenue management; minimise prediction errors; streamline operations; and develop better marketing strategies, optimising economic resources, reducing marketing costs, and responding dynamically to changing needs for tourists and residents”* Additionally, this study shows that investing in AI has a positive effect on the quality of products and services.

2.2.5 Environmental

The climate is changing, the temperatures are rising and the summer season is lasting longer in the Netherlands (*Recreatie En Toerisme*, n.d.). This rise in temperature makes outdoor activities such as hiking and biking more appealing. On the contrary, the rise in temperature means there are less opportunities for winter activities such as ice skating. Additionally, due to the rise in temperature heat distress is more likely to be prone in the region.

The change in climate also has some indirect consequences for the region. For instance, climate change impacts the quality and presence of water, due to longer dry spells the water in the region can become less available. Moreover, climate change increases changes of extreme scenarios such as floods, the Alde Feanen is also at a slight risk in case this happens according to a map by Rijkswaterstaat (2024). Lastly, due to the change in climate, the habitats of the animals change, this can cause the animals to be forced to live somewhere else, reducing the attractiveness for wildlife visitors.

2.2.6 Legal

The Environment and Planning ACT encompasses several legal aspects that are relevant for the Alde Feanen. The act provides rules and laws for governments, businesses, nature organizations and citizens on how to preserve the natural environment (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2025). Additionally, the act provides measures that are delegated to the provinces to protect the natural environment. Moreover, the 21 national parks in the Netherlands are included in the Natura 2000 network which are protected by the law nature protection.

The provinces manage most of the policies and rules for the national parks. They decide with the help of national and international laws what is allowed and what is not allowed. The provinces are also responsible for handing out permits for organizing activities in the region. Moreover, the provinces collaborate each year with nature organizations, hunters and landowners to discuss the management of the animals. Here they decide how the animals should be protected, how to manage harmful wildlife and manage rules for hunting wild animals. Lastly, most of the real park management is done by It Fryske Gea. This organization concerns themselves with preserving and managing nature and cultural heritage. Most of their work consists of mowing hayfields, marking trees and grazing cattle. If necessary Fryske Gea also works on larger projects (It Fryske Gea, 2025).

2.3 Internal analysis

According to Gierszweska & Romanowska (2002, pp. 235) a SWOT analysis provides a wide-ranging evaluation of external and internal factors which specify destinations' current status and their development potential. SWOT is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The SWOT analysis helps to assess and identify unique attributes of the Alde Feanen, address potential challenges and gain a better understanding of opportunities for the future. Network NoordOost (2019) already developed a SWOT analysis about the Alde Feanen. The SWOT analysis below is derived from the existing SWOT analysis and is updated to the current situation with desk research and results from the interview.

Figure 2. SWOT analysis (Kool, 2025)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1 Earnewald is a popular touristic hotspot for watersport and nature enthusiasts 2 The area has national park status 3 The placement is in central Fryslan and close to the capital Leeuwarden 4 Resting place for Grutto's 5 Large spectrum of landscapes	1 The Alde Feanen is the least known National Park in the Netherlands 2 Inhabitants not content with increasing tourism
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
1 Land and water rejoice in this area, which provides opportunities to blend well with Merk Fryslan campaign 2 A newly opened mindfulness route within the national park can attract a new target audience	1 Tourists primarily associate the Frisian Lakes and water sports with southwest Fryslân, known for its large water sports areas. This makes it challenging to establish a distinct regional identity compared to these well-known destinations 2 environmental preservation and overdependence on tourism

The SWOT analysis shows that there are promising strengths and also some weaknesses in the Alde Feanen. Firstly, the title National Park provides strong value for the destination. Additionally, the presence of watersports activities, beautiful nature, hiking routes and variety of wild animals including birds shows that there is a lot of tourism potential. However, these strengths are contrasted by a degree of local resistance for the increase in tourism and a lack of national recognition for the national park.

However, there are opportunities such as connecting Alde Feanen with regional branding campaigns such as the campaign by Merk Fryslan. On the other hand, there are more well-known water sports areas in Fryslan which pose a threat to the Alde Feanen.

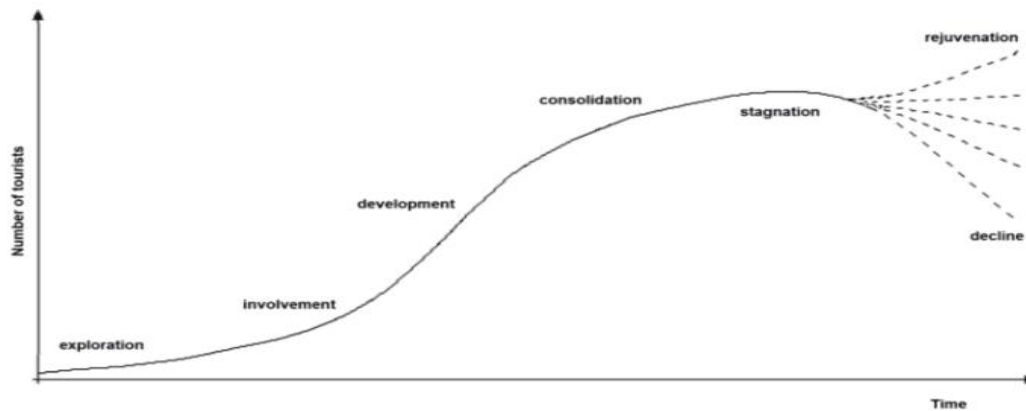
3. Theoretical framework

This research aims to align the current tourism portfolio of the Ade Feanen with the preferences of the visitors. As the problem statement outlines, there is a lack of alignment between supply and demand. To further explore this issue the concepts of Fit Gap analysis, destination image, visitor preferences and nature-based tourism are most relevant. Additionally, the concept marketing communication is explained as the SWOT analysis shows that the National Park the Alde Feanen is the least known national park within the Netherlands. Throughout the years these concepts have been studied extensively with a large variety of models, tools and frameworks. This theoretical framework aims to evaluate the most relevant existing theories on these concepts to establish a clear basis for this research. Additionally, a conceptual model is developed that serves as a fundament for research methodology.

3.1 Destination development

Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle model (TALC) is a widely recognized tool that analyses tourism development in a destination. The model claims that any destination goes through 6 different stages in tourism development, as show in figure 3. First the 1) exploration phase; tourism is minimal and social and economic benefits are small. 2) Involvement; the beginning of tourism development 3) Development; rapid increase in building, marketing and promotion 4) Consolidation; tourism grows slowly and there is a close tie between the economy and the tourism sector 5) Stagnation; the beginning of a decline in tourism 6) Decline or rejuvenation; either a destination changes positively or slowly continues to decline. This model is selected because it provides a clear and structured framework for understanding the evolution of tourism destinations over time. Compared to other models, TALC is especially useful for identifying the current stage of development in a region and anticipating future challenges or opportunities.

Figure 3. Tourism Area Life Cycle Model



(Butler, 1980, p7).

As stated earlier, the tourism sector in the region has increased marginally over the last few years, with the number of sole proprietors increasing by 63% (361) between 2018 and 2023. Therefore, the destination is most fitted with the development phase of the TALC model. The development phase present a good opportunity to increase the local economy by capitalizing on this growth. However, this phase also present several challenges, such as the need for a strong infrastructure that manages the needs of all stakeholders. The tourism organizations within the region have identified this and are developing a strong sustainable infrastructure that will form as a basis for all relevant stakeholders such as new and existing entrepreneurs and inhabitants. Another challenge is the increasing feeling of discontent by the host community as shown by a survey by ETFI (2024). Additionally, environmental preservation and overdependence on tourism are threats (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). To conclude, this phase presents an opportunity to strategically manage the growth while making sure that possible threats are managed (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004).

3.2 Visitor preferences

Tourism motivation to visit destinations can be explained with the help of the push-pull framework designed by Crompton (1979). The framework helps explain why tourist visit a specific destination rather than other destinations, the kind of experience they want and the type of activity they want to do (Said & Maryono, 2018). The framework puts forward that the reason people decide to visit a destination can be categorized into two main domains, push and pull. Whereas

push factors are described as intrinsic factors that derive from a person's personality, and pull factors relate to the features of a destination.

Previous studies that refer to this model often use different categories to identify push factors. This research simplifies the number of push factors into 4 categories: 1) Relaxation & Escape 2) Adventure, 3) Social interaction & Relationships 4) Personal Growth and Self-exploration (Said & Maryono, 2018, p2).

- Relaxation and Escape factors relate to the motive to spend time relaxing or doing activity and to the motive to escape daily life routine and activities
- Adventure factors relate to the motive to look for new experiences, seeing different cultures and experiencing excitement.
- Social interaction and Relationships factors relate to the motive to connect with others, meet new people, strengthen existing relationships and share experiences.
- Personal growth and Self exploration factors relate to the motive for self-improvement, seeking meaningful experiences or discover more about yourself.

As stated in the previous paragraph pull factors relate to the features of a destination and how tourists perceive a destination. According to Said and Maryono (2018, p4) pull factors are influenced by two factors, Destination image and perception. Firstly, 1) Destination image is largely relevant to the pull factor of a destination. According to Kotler (1993) *"A destination image represents the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions (i.e., mental representations) that individuals—usually tourists but sometimes residents as well—have about a place"* (p.14). Secondly, 2) Perception is also relevant to the pull factor of a destination as it refers to how people feel and process available information (Rossi et al., 2015, p41 - 52). These concepts can be categorized into of a few characteristics: 1) Service, 2) Nature characteristics 3) Infrastructure 4) Recreation facility.

- Service factors relate to the service provided by relevant employees of the destination
- Nature characteristics relate to the physical characteristics of the national park, such as the flora and fauna
- Infrastructure characteristics relate to the quality and availability of transportation in the destination
- Recreational facilities relate to the quality and availability of the recreational facilities of the destination

3.3 Nature based tourism

Visiting a national park, nature reserve, or any nature related destination can be defined by many definitions; nature-based tourism, eco-tourism, geotourism, sustainable tourism and many more. This research uses the term nature-based tourism as described by the International World Bank Group (2024, p10):

“Nature-based tourism (NBT) describes all forms of tourism that use natural resources, in a wild or undeveloped form. NBT is motivated by enjoying wildlife or undeveloped natural areas and may incorporate natural attractions including scenery, topography, waterways, vegetation, wildlife, and cultural heritage, and activities like hunting or white-water rafting.”

Tourism impacts the natural environment of a destination. Sometimes positive due to appreciation for the nature which can lead to increased funding, but more often tourism impacts the natural environment negatively. One of the main impacts of tourism on the natural environment is the degradation of natural environments and habitat destruction due to infrastructure development (Anderson, 2025). Other negative aspects are light and noise pollution and invasion of non-native species.

3.4 Marketing communication

Marketing communication plays a vital role in influencing visitor behaviour, shaping destination image, and increasing awareness among target audiences. As the SWOT analysis in this research has identified that National Park the Alde Feanen has a relatively low awareness within the Netherlands, the use of marketing communication is a tool for increasing visibility and attracting visitors. According to Morrison (2019), integrated marketing communication (IMC) involves the coordinated use of promotional tools such as advertising, personal selling, digital media, public relations, and direct marketing to deliver consistent messages about a destination. This communicating is especially important in tourism, where perceptions and emotional appeal influence destination choice. Wood (2020) highlights that successful marketing communication depends not only on consistency of communication, but also on selecting the appropriate channels and formats that align with the preferences and behaviour of the target audience.

3.5 The Fit Gap model

For this research the Fit-Gap analysis research method is selected to identify the current state of the tourism offerings, to identify the wants of the target audience and to find the gaps

between these two. The Fit gap analysis is the most appropriate tool for this research as this model identifies the mismatches between the current tourism offerings and the expectations of the target audience. This research method results in a structured overview of the gaps between the current state and the desired states and makes it clear what recommendations can be applied to reach the desired state (Rajesh, 2013).

The Fit Gap model in this research uses the same 6 steps as used in similar previous research by fellow student Oscar Vollenberg (2025).

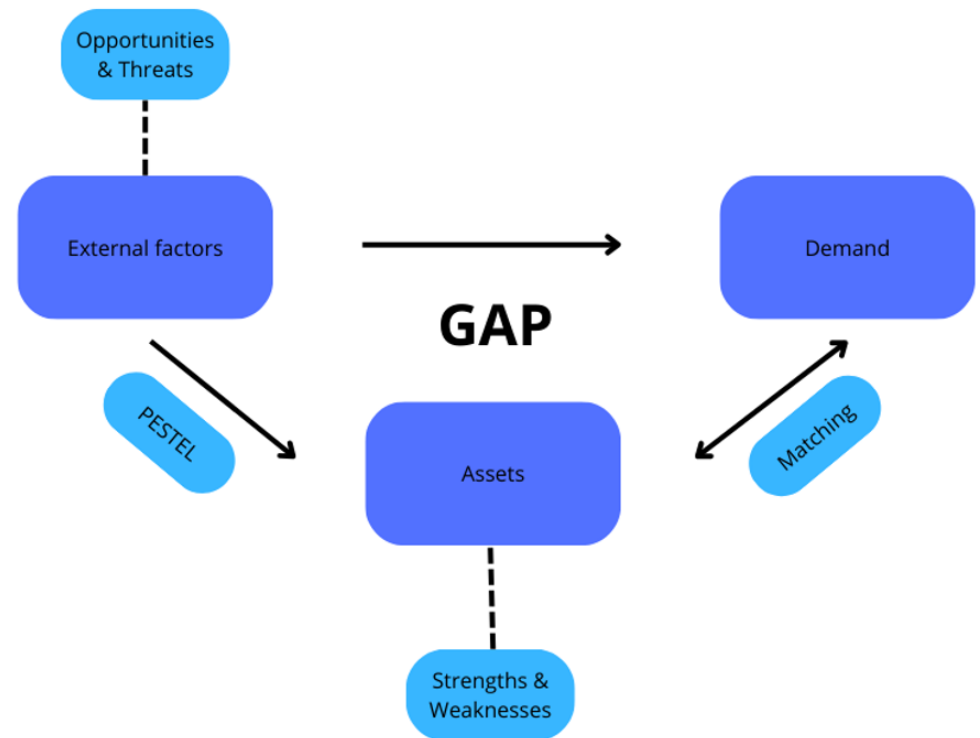
(Oscar Vollenberg, 2025, p16).

To conclude, the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model provides insights into the current stage of destination development in the Alde Feanen. It suggests that the region is in the development phase, which is a critical moment for strategic development and sustainable planning. This model helps to understand the supply side of the tourism landscape of the Alde Feanen. The demand side is explained with the help of Crompton's Push-Pull Theory, which offers a clear overview of visitor motivations and destination preferences. The model distinguishes between intrinsic motivations (push) and destination attributes (pull). Additionally, the concepts Nature-Based tourism and the Fit-gap model are thoroughly explained and justified.

3.5 Conceptual model

The conceptual model visualizes the structure of this analysis. It shows how external factors (influenced by PESTEL analysis) shape the strengths and weaknesses of the destination's assets. These assets are then evaluated in relation to tourist demand through the lens of visitor preferences. The model centers on the GAP between supply and demand, which the research aims to close through recommendations.

Figure 4. Fit-Gap Alde Feanen 2025



4.Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to solve the consultancy issue for Vrijetijdsregio NOF and to complete the set objectives. The aim of this research is to execute a Fit-Gap analysis for the Alde Feanen so that there is a clear overview of the current state of the tourism portfolio as well as an overview of the demand for this region. Additionally, based on this overview, tailored recommendations for the tourism sector in the region will be provided.

4.1 Research design

This research gathers qualitative data to answer the research questions, as it focuses on understanding visitor expectations and preferences in relation to the current tourism offerings in the Alde Feanen region. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for this study because it allows for an extensive analysis of attitudes, motivations, and perceptions factors that are important to evaluate the fit between tourism supply and demand. As Veal (2017) explains, qualitative methods are especially valuable in leisure and tourism research when the goal is to explore complex social phenomena and gain rich, detailed insights that cannot be captured through purely quantitative measures. Given that a Fit-Gap analysis relies on understanding subjective experiences and stakeholder perspectives, qualitative data such as interviews are essential for identifying meaningful gaps and formulating targeted recommendations. Both primary and secondary data is gathered for this research. Primary data is gathered with the use of interviews and secondary data is gathered with the use of desk research. The secondary data is primarily used for the business environment scan and the theoretical framework. While the primary data is primarily used for analysing the target market and their demands. However, results from the primary data can also be added to the business environment scan during this research leading to an iterative approach to this research. An iterative approach is where the contents of the report are adapted during the research (The Association for Qualitative Research, n-d). The collected primary data (transcriptions of the interview) are analysed using open, axial and selective coding methods, and linked back to the concepts from the theoretical framework. The analysed findings derived from the primary and secondary data are then used to answer the research questions. Lastly, the findings are used to provide actionable recommendations for Vrijetijdsregio NOF. These recommendations will be discussed with the client and after discussion and consideration, a selection of recommendations is made and an actionable implementation plan will be developed.

4.2 Research questions

The consultancy issue is formulated as a problem statement and is formulated as such “*To identify the gaps between the current tourism portfolio in the Alde Feanen region and the preferences of the target audience with a Fit-Gap Analysis*”. In order to answer this problem statement 5 research questions are formulated. Each research question is deduced from the problem statement, represents relevant concepts derived from the theoretical framework and focuses on empirical information. The 5 research questions are presented below:

- RQ1. What is the current tourism portfolio of the Alde Feanen and what are the key characteristics?
- RQ2. What external factors influence the Alde Feanen tourism portfolio?
- RQ3. What is the target market of the Alde Feanen
- RQ4. What are the key preferences and expectations of the target market?
- RQ5. To what extent does the current tourism portfolio meet the preferences and expectations of the target market, and what are the main gaps?

4.2.1 Relation to the problem statement

RQ1 Current Tourism Portfolio & Key Characteristics: This question establishes the baseline by identifying what the Alde Feanen region currently offers in terms of tourism. Understanding the existing tourism portfolio is essential for conducting a Fit-Gap Analysis, as it provides the foundation against which visitor preferences can be compared.

RQ2 External Factors Influencing the Tourism Portfolio: By examining external influences such as regulations, market trends, and environmental factors, this question supports the tourism portfolio. These factors can contribute to the gaps between the current offerings and visitor expectations.

RQ3 Target Market Identification: Defining the target market is crucial for a Fit-Gap Analysis. Without knowing who the target visitors are, it is impossible to determine whether the tourism portfolio aligns with their needs. This question ensures that the analysis is focused on the relevant target group.

RQ4 Preferences & Expectations of the Target Market: Understanding what the target market expects from a destination allows for a direct comparison with the existing tourism offerings. This is a key step in identifying recommendations for improvement.

RQ5 Identifying Gaps: This question directly addresses the problem statement by assessing how well the current tourism portfolio meets visitor preferences. It highlights the specific gaps that need to be addressed.

4.3 Research methods

The main framework used is the Fit-Gap analysis which compares supply (current tourism portfolio) with demand (visitor preferences) allowing to identify the gaps between these two and ultimately providing tailored recommendations for the Alde Feanen. The Fit-Gap analysis is conducted with assistance of other research methods and frameworks which are explained in the following chapters 4.3.1, 4.3.2.

4.3.1 Models used for analysing the current tourism portfolio of the Alde Feanen

RQ1 is analysed with Jansen Verbeke model (1986) This model provides an overview of all the relevant separate touristic components that are evident within the region of The Alde Feanen. Furthermore, RQ2 is analysed with the help of a PESTEL analysis which identifies the relevant external factors that have an impact on the destination. Moreover, the characteristics of the Alde Feanen are also analysed with the help of a SWOT analysis, which identifies the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the region. The choice of selection for these models are justified in the business environment chapter.

4.3.2 Models used for analysing the tourism demand of the Alde Feanen

RQ3 and RQ4 are both answered with the help of research interviews. Research interviews are purposeful conversations between people where the interviewer establishes rapport and asks questions and the interviewee listens actively and responds (Saunders et al., 2015). There are many different types of interviews which are more suitable for different situations. For this research, semi-structured interviews are used. This type of interview handles the relevant themes of the research and possibly some key questions, but each interview may vary due to the given context. Moreover, even though there is a provided structure and research questions, the order of the questions can vary depending on the flow of the conversation and additional follow-up questions can be asked in order to explore the research topic further. Due to the exploratory nature of this research semi-structured interviews are most suitable because it helps understand the reasons for attitudes and opinions. Moreover, semi-structured interviews allow the conversation to go into areas that I may not have considered before.

4.4 Interview guide

The contents of the interview are derived from the research questions and theoretical concepts whereas the main focus is on answering RQ3, RQ4 and RQ5, however RQ1 and RQ2 are also touched upon. Therefore, the structure of the interview mainly focusses on answering these questions and in some cases additional questions about the current tourism portfolio are asked as well. Moreover, the interview questions for the visitors of the Alde Feanen are slightly different than for the other stakeholders. This is because questions such as *What type of visitors do you want to attract to the region?* are not relevant for the visitors of the Alde Feanen. The complete interview guide can be found in the appendix. In order to test the research instrument a pilot interview is conducted first to refine the interview process or questions if necessary.

Below is shown the research matrix, here you can see the process of the interview.

Figure 5. Research Matrix

Theoretical concepts	Research questions	Information needed	Research method	Interview questions
Current tourism portfolio	RQ1. What is the current tourism portfolio of the Alde Feanen and what are they key characteristics? RQ2. What external factors influence the Alde Feanen tourism portfolio?	Current tourism offerings	Desk research Interviews	What would you consider the main attractions of the Alde Feanen? How would you describe the types of accommodations and available for visitors How would you describe the types of services and available for visitors
Visitor preferences	RQ3. What is the target market of the Alde Feanen RQ4. What are the key preferences and expectations of the target market? RQ5. To what extent does the	Demographics Travel motivations Wants & Needs	Desk Research Interviews	What type of visitors typically come to the Alde Feanen? (demographics) What type of visitors do you want to attract to the region? What activities or experiences are the visitors looking for the most in the Alde Feanen?

	current tourism portfolio meet the preferences and expectations of the target market, and what are the main gaps?			What are common complaints from visitors? Are there any missing elements or gaps in tourism services that visitors have expressed a need for? What improvements or new initiatives could enhance the visitor experience in Alde Feanen?
Nature-based tourism		Current and future sustainability measures	Desk research Interviews	How important is sustainability to visitors when choosing this destination? How important is nature conservation to visitors when choosing this destination?

4.5 Research population

The research population for this research entails visitors of the Alde Feanen and other tourism stakeholders that are involved in the tourism of the Alde Feanen. The other tourism stakeholders can include but are not limited to local entrepreneurs, employees of the municipalities, park management authorities and inhabitants of the region. This research population is selected as these stakeholders directly shape or are directly involved in the tourism sector within the Alde Feanen region. Furthermore, this population can provide valuable insights to answer the research questions and ultimately the problem statement. Therefore, the research population is categorized into two main groups:

1. Visitors of the Alde Feanen Region
2. Other stakeholders of the Alde Feanen Tourism sector

4.6 Sampling

This research uses a non-probability convenience sampling method, selecting participants based on their availability and willingness to participate. This approach is suitable as most samples are retrieved via the database from Vrijetijdsregio NOF. Additionally, due to the holiday season approaching, not every stakeholder has time available for an interview. The initial sample

size is estimated to range between 5 and 10 participants per group, as qualitative research often reaches data saturation within 10–20 interviews (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). Therefore, at least 10 visitors of the Alde Feanen or other tourism stakeholders are interviewed, which is a mix of local entrepreneurs, park management authorities and inhabitants of the region. Moreover, at least one local entrepreneur, one national park employee and one inhabitant should be interviewed to acquire a broad range of data from different perspectives.

The stakeholders that are being interviewed are gathered with the help of RMT NOF of Vrijetijdsregio NOF, as he has a rich database of suitable stakeholders such as, visitors, entrepreneurs and employees of the local municipality. All of the interviews take place in the month May and June of 2025 and take between 5 and 20 minutes depending on the flow of the interview. The location of the interview is dependent on the interviewee, face to face interviews are preferred but for convenience reasons online interviews are also an option.

Validity

According to Saunders et al. (2007) validity refers to the extent to which a data collection method accurately measures what it is intended to measure. In order to ensure the validity of the desk research, reliable and peer-reviewed literature was utilised. A large variety of sources were used to ensure that the information gathered is comprehensive and accurately matches the information needed. In order to prove the validity of the interviews, it is checked that the chosen sample accurately represents the research population. It is accomplished by conducting previous research on the interviewees as well as asking them to introduce themselves. Moreover, the questions were carefully designed in the research matrix, to make sure that they are relevant to answering the research questions.

Reliability

Reliability relates to how consistent the results of the research would be if the study was replicated at a later time or with a different group of participants. This concept is based on the natural sciences, where a replicated experiment should produce the same result as long as the test conditions are controlled properly (Veal, 2017). In this study two research methods are used, desk research and semi-structured interviews. In terms of the reliability of the interviews, the questions are developed in a clear manner to ensure that the experts interpret them correctly. Moreover, the consistency of the interviews can be kept as the interviewer makes sure that the questions cover all of the investigated issues. Moreover, the interviews are analysed with the colour coding method to interpret the retrieved data in detail by identifying patterns and themes

of the responses. Additionally, too make sure that the desk research is reliable, credible sources are used and information from various sources are cross-checked. The quality of the sources are also evaluated to enhance the credibility of the findings. In terms of the reliability of the interviews, the questions were designed in a clear and unambiguous manner to ensure that the experts interpret them correctly. Moreover, the consistency of the interviews could be kept as the interviewers made sure that the questions cover all of the investigated issues. Lastly, the interviews were analysed with the colour coding method to interpret the retrieved data in detail by identifying patterns and themes of the responses.

4.7 Data analysis & Coding

The interviews are transcribed word for word with the help of word transcribing software and are checked and corrected manually. As a result, a lot of data is gathered that needs to be analysed. According to Boeije (2010, p.76) “*Qualitative data analysis is the segmentation of [raw] data into relevant categories and the naming of these categories with codes*”. Therefore, the raw data is first segmented into relevant categories using coding methods. Coding is the process of categorizing data and naming the category with a name that summarizes the collected data (Charmaz, 2006, p.43). The coding process is as follows:

1. **Open Coding:** transcriptions are studied and pieces of the transcription with the same subject are clustered and labelled with a code
2. **Axial Coding:** Data is put back together and connections between clusters are made. This results in a list of categories
3. **Selective Coding:** Categories are linked back to theoretical concepts and definitive findings are shaped

4.8 Limitations

There are factors limiting this research, which are discussed in this chapter. The use of non-probability convenience sampling is a limitation on the representativeness of the data. Participants are selected based on availability and convenience which may cause selection bias and limits the diversity of participants.

There is a time constraint for this research as it is the aim to finish this research before July 2025, which means that the entire research only has a time frame of 4 months. This can limit the extensiveness the number of participants due to the holiday season approaching. Phillimore

and Goodson (2004b: 3–4) refer to qualitative research as being ‘prone to criticisms that it is a ‘soft’, ‘non-scientific’ and inferior approach in comparison to quantitative research

As the primary research consists of conducting interviews with individuals, it is important to secure the privacy and anonymity of the interviewees. Therefore, before each interview informed consent is obtained from the interviewees. Information such as the nature of the study and the expected outcomes are communicated. Permission to record the interview is asked before each interview. The interviews are conducted with high awareness of potential biases and misinterpretations. This means interpreting acquired data as objectively as possible.

5. Diagnosis

This chapter presents the key findings from both the interviews and the desk research. These findings answer the final three research questions as well as the problem statement:

- Who are the current visitors of the Alde Feanen?
- What are their preferences and expectations?
- And to what extent do these align with the existing tourism portfolio?

Additionally, a new improved SWOT analysis is developed based on the new insights from primary research. By combining insights from stakeholders and visitors, this chapter provides a clear overview of the tourism demand in the region of the Alde Feane. Additionally, It also helps in identifying the gaps between what the current tourism portfolio and the visitor demand.

5.1 Tourism Demand and Visitor Preferences

Visitor Segments and Profiles

The Alde Feanen attracts a variety of visitors, but their motivations and behaviours tend to follow a clear pattern. Most people come to enjoy the outdoors, unwind in nature, and experience the quiet beauty of the region. Based on interviews and supporting research by Haitsma (2021), two main visitor types stand out.

The first and largest group consists of nature lovers and peace seekers. These visitors are drawn to the wetlands, open landscapes, and rich birdlife that make the Alde Feanen unique. As one respondent puts it, *“Ik wilde graag gaan vogelen met een aantal vrienden... het gebied zelf wel heel mooi.”* This is reflected in the *Jaarverslag 2020*, which highlights the ecological diversity of the Alde Feanen, including moorland forests and colourful meadows and a lot of water of course.

The second group is made up of active visitors, cyclists, hikers, and watersport enthusiasts who are looking for movement and adventure, but still within a calm and natural setting. One interviewee mentioned, *“We hebben fietsen mee, dus we hebben een stukje gefietst, gisteren een boot gehuurd,”* while another added, *“Ik ben met vrienden een dagje gegaan om een bootje te huren en gewoon lekker het water op te gaan.”* These types of activities are also reflected in the offerings of local tourism businesses, which primarily focus on outdoor recreation such as boat rentals.

The majority of visitors are Dutch people and tend to be adults aged 50+, mostly couples or small groups. Many visit just for the day, especially those from larger cities looking for an escape in nature. According to Laura Steigenga from It Fryske Gea, this is especially common during the holiday season. As one visitor explained, *“We hebben een lang weekend genomen... vooral de natuur. Het is hier gewoon prachtig.”* Another added, *“Wij liggen hier in de jachthaven... wij doen dit haast ieder jaar.”* Families with children are also a target market that is evident in the Alde Feanen but form a smaller portion of the visitor base.

Overall, the visitor profile can be described as: visitors who value the quiet, the natural setting, and the peaceful atmosphere. The Alde Feanen serves as a peaceful retreat, and visitors appreciate that it doesn't feel overly busy.

Visitor Preferences and Expectations

While visitors were generally positive about their experience, interviews also revealed areas where improvements could be made. Their feedback highlighted both the strengths of the current tourism offer as well as several concerns and gaps.

What Visitors Appreciate

Unsurprisingly, nature was the biggest draw. People come to walk, cycle, go boating, or simply enjoy the landscape. The peace and quiet, the variety of flora and fauna, and the unspoiled character of the park were all frequently mentioned by the respondents.

Several visitors mentioned birdwatching as a highlight, while others appreciated the sense of space and openness. Respondents often made comments like *“Die openheid hè. Die weilanden, al dat water. En we hebben ook best wat mooie vogels gezien”* and *“Vooraf rust, mooie natuur en gewoon lekker buiten zijn”* came up often. Many also enjoy combining these activities with activities such as renting a boat or relaxing at a small café.

What Visitors Miss

At the same time, there were a number of elements that visitors felt were lacking. A recurring theme was the absence of offerings for the younger target market. One entrepreneur mentioned the need for more activities that appeal to children or young adults: *“Er mag best wat meer voor de jongere doelgroep komen.”* Ideas like a beach with boat access or interactive trails were mentioned as ways to make the area more attractive to families and younger visitors.

Another frequently mentioned issue was the seasonal nature of services. Many shops and hospitality facilities are not open in the off-season, leaving little to do for visitors in the off-season. As one visitor said, *“Het is heel weinig. We zitten ook in het voorseizoen, dus alles is voor de rest dicht.”* This can make the area feel quiet in a way that’s less inviting and somewhat limited. In the Alde Feanen and Earnewald most of the facilities and shops are closed. Additionally, there are much less activities and events planned during the off-season. Laura Steinenga of It Fryske Gea also said: *“wij zijn open van april tot en met september en daarbuiten in de schoolvakanties”*. So there is not much activity going on outside of the high season.

There was also a strong desire for better information provision. Visitors mentioned a lack of printed maps, route signage, and clear guidance to points of interest. *“Die zocht eigenlijk wel een kaart... dat je niet op z’n telefoon hoeft,”* said one visitor. Others mentioned missed opportunities to highlight things like the Skûtsjemuseum or the Lancaster crash site, both of which were poorly signposted or unknown.

In addition, cultural and creative activities were described as limited. One respondent (R3) said: *“Het zijn vaak dingen zoals scooter routes. Maar er is ook behoefte aan creativiteit, kunst en culturele activiteiten.”* Many visitors seemed open to more variety, as long as it complements the natural character of the park.

Hospitality offerings were also brought up. There were calls for more informal places to get a drink or rest during an outing, particularly for those spending a full day in the park. Visitors valued authenticity but felt that a few well-placed services would greatly enhance their experience.

Lastly, sustainability was mentioned less as a problem and more as a shared value. Visitors appreciate that the park is clean and well maintained, and they support efforts to preserve it like this. As one said, *“Ik vind het belangrijk dat het gebied schoon blijft.”* This reinforces the park’s alignment with the nature-based tourism market.

Improved SWOT

Based on the primary research and the previous SWOT analysis from the business environment scan, an improved SWOT analysis is developed below that entails every relevant aspect of the Alde Feanen.

There are a few additions to the SWOT. Firstly, a new identified strength is that there are several authentic Frisian cultural attractions such as the local museums. Secondly, that the Alde Feanen is the least known National Park within the Netherlands is still a large weakness. However, more weaknesses have been identified such as a lack of modern facilities, limited appeal for the younger target market and insufficient and unclear signage. Lastly, a new opportunity has emerged, this is the rising demand for nature-based and sustainable tourism (Future Market Insights, 2024).

Figure 6. New SWOT analysis (Kool, 2025)

STRENGTHS 1 Earneewald is a popular touristic hotspot for watersport and nature enthusiasts 2 The area has national park status 3 The placement is in central Fryslân and close to the capital Leeuwarden 4 Resting place for variety of birds 6 Large spectrum of landscapes 6 Authentic Frisian cultural attractions	WEAKNESSES 1 The Alde Feanen is the least known National Park in the Netherlands 2 Inhabitants not content with increasing tourism 3 Lack of year-found modern facilities 4 Limited appeal for the younger target market 5 Insufficient and unclear signage
OPPORTUNITIES 1 Land and water rejoice in this area, which provides opportunities to blend well with Merk Fryslânlân campaign 2 A newly opened mindfulness route within the national park can attract a new target audience 3 Rising demand for nature based and sustainable tourism	THREATS 1 Tourists primarily associate the Frisian Laxes and water sports with southwest Fryislân, known for its large water sports areas. This makes it challenging to establish a distinct regional identity compared to these well known destinations 2 environmental preservation and overdependence on seasonal tourism

5.2 Conclusion on problem statement

In this section the conclusion on the problem statement is provided. The findings of the primary and secondary research show that there are gaps evident between the current tourism portfolio of the Alde Feanen and the preferences of the target audience. Visitors mainly appreciate the region's peace, natural beauty, and opportunities for birdwatching, cycling, boating and water sports in general. However, key gaps in the offering include a lack of offerings for younger audiences and families, insufficient information and signage, limited off-season activities, and weak national awareness of the park's identity. These gaps highlight what is currently missing between supply and demand. Addressing these issues with suitable recommendations will help Alde Feanen bridge these gaps.

6. The Gaps

Based on the findings in the previous chapter, this section identifies the key gaps between the current tourism offerings of the Alde Feanen and the visitor expectation. These gaps highlight areas where the region could improve to better meet demand, support local businesses, and strengthen its identity as a nature destination. Each gap presented below will be addressed in more detail through practical recommendations in the following chapter.

6.1 A Seasonal Tourism Landscape

The Alde Feanen currently operates on a strongly seasonal model, with most activity and services concentrated between May and October. Outside of this period, many facilities are closed, which reduces the area's attractiveness in the off-season. Both factors influence each other, the facilities are closed during the off-season because there are not many visitors. And this impacts the attractiveness of the off-season which causes the number of visitors to reduce. So both factors contribute to each other.

This gap presents a missed opportunity. If the Alde Feanen attracts more visitors and spreads the visitor numbers more evenly it can have a positive effect on the destination. Because the total number of visitors increases there is more money coming into the destination. Which then in turn can be reinvested in the destination.

6.2 Limited Offerings for Younger Visitors

While the Alde Feanen successfully attracts older adults, couples, and nature seekers, it offers relatively little the younger target market or families with children. Several respondents noted the lack of activities for this group, which makes it harder for families to spend a full day in the area. Ideas such as a beach area with boat access, or more interactive walking routes, were mentioned as possible solutions.

This limits the destination's appeal to a broader audience and may hinder long-term development, especially if the region aims to remain attractive for future generations.

6.3 Insufficient Information

A major frustration for visitors was the lack of clear, accessible information. Signage is limited or hard to find, and points of interest are not being marketed well enough. This can cause that sometimes visitors miss out on activities because they did not know of its

existence. Additionally, visitors expressed a desire for more help navigating the park both on the water and on land.

This issue negatively affects the overall experience. When basic information is missing, even the most beautiful landscapes can feel confusing or uninviting. Improved signage, interactive maps, and clearer wayfinding would significantly enhance the ease and enjoyment of a visit.

6.4 Cultural Offering

Although nature is the primary attraction in the Alde Feanen, visitors showed interest in cultural activities that would be an additions to the natural experience. Currently, cultural offerings are limited and not always visible or accessible.

Opportunities exist to add small-scale cultural elements such as storytelling trails, outdoor art, or heritage exhibitions that can improve the visitor experience without disrupting the quiet character of the region.

6.5 Low National Awareness

Despite its national park status, the Alde Feanen remains relatively unknown on a national level. According to research, only 5% of Dutch residents are aware of its existence (Bureau voor Ruimte & Vrije Tijd, 2017). This indicates a clear gap in branding and visibility.

Without a stronger promotional presence, the park risks falling behind other, more recognizable nature destinations. Strengthening its identity and connecting more actively to regional branding campaigns like Merk Fryslân could help increase its visibility and attract new audiences.

6.6 Sustainability

While sustainability is important to visitors and generally well handled on-site, there is little active communication about it. Visitors appreciate the park's cleanliness and maintenance, but would also like to see this reflected more clearly through educational signs, eco-friendly initiatives, or visible sustainability projects.

This represents a missed opportunity to connect with the growing number of travelers who actively seek out environmentally responsible destinations.

7. Recommendations

The primary and secondary research shows that there are gaps evident between the current tourism offerings and the visitor preferences. If these gaps are addressed and worked upon the Alde Feanen region can improve itself as a tourism destination. Firstly, a set of recommendations are developed based on the diagnosis. Secondly, these recommendations are discussed with the client. And lastly, new improved recommendations are developed and an implementation plan is developed as well in the next chapter. The recommendations below are the final recommendations based on the diagnosis and the feedback of the client.

7.1 Recommendation 1 Marketing communication plan Off-season

Currently, tourism within the region is primarily thriving during the high season, June, July, and August. While during the off-season the region is very quiet and tourism is not thriving. This is due to the region's open water landscape, which attracts visitors in the summer months when boating and outdoor recreation are more appealing and weather conditions are more favourable. However, the visitor numbers have increased over the last years and the inhabitants do experience this growth as slightly negative. This is shown in the study by ETFI (2024) that confirms that there is an increase in perception by the inhabitants of Northeast Fryslân that tourism has a negative impact on their region. Therefore, more focus on the off-season would benefit the region as the tourism would be more spread throughout the seasons. This spread tackles two issues. Firstly, the regions tourism elements are underutilized during the off-season, which limits economic benefits for local stakeholders. Secondly, increased visitor pressure during the summer has begun to negatively affect resident perceptions, as confirmed by the ETFI (2024), which reported a growing sense among inhabitants of Northeast Fryslân that too much tourism is harming regional liveability and natural areas.

Therefore the first recommendation for the Alde Feanen is to develop a market communications plan that focuses on making the Alde Feanen more appealing during the off-season. Despite the drop in visitor numbers during the off-season, several tourism activities remain available year-round including:

- Birdwatching tours, which are particularly appealing during the autumn and spring migration periods, as the region is home to diverse bird species that cross the Alde Feanen during their migration to the south.

- Hiking and nature walks are still available year-round with the exception of a few hiking trails due to the pond not being open year-round.
- Cultural attractions such as the Skûtsjemuseum and It Kokelhûs fan Jan en Sjut, which can be visited by appointment during the off-season.

By promoting these existing activities more effectively during the off-season the region can gradually build a stronger, more balanced year-round tourism economy. The communication plan could target specific target groups that have been identified in the diagnosis. Meaning mostly Dutch couples ages 50+ from all over the Netherlands. The communication plan should focus on promoting the Alde Feanen as an attractive off-season destination. Activities such as bird watching tours, hiking and nature walks and cultural attractions should be the main focus point of the marketing communication plan. Utilizing Digital channels is the best option for communicating as digital channels are the most effective option for communicating with the target audience, as recent research shows that Dutch adults aged 50 and older are highly active on social media platform platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, making these channels suitable for reaching and engaging this market (Newcom Research & Consultancy, 2025). According to a study by Newcom (2025) Instagram and Facebook are suitable social media platforms for this target market.

7.2 Recommendation 2 Branding Alde Feanen as a National Park

The Alde Feanen is the least known national park within the Netherlands (Bureau voor Ruimte & Vrije Tijd, 2017).. And often people visiting the Alde Feanen are unaware that they are walking within a national park. I

According to Morrison (2019), effective destination branding enhances destination image, reinforces unique characteristics, reduces perceived risks for visitors, and increases loyalty and recognition among tourists and stakeholders. By explicitly branding Alde Feanen. as “Nationaal Park De Alde Feanen”, the region can articulate its ambition, promise high-quality nature-based experiences, and convey a clear identity rooted in its rich wetland ecosystems and biodiversity.

Key actions:

- Develop a brand positioning strategy that emphasizes Alde Feanen’s unique selling points (USPs), such as its diverse birdlife, expansive wetland landscapes, and authentic Frisian culture to its National Park DNA (Morrison, 2019, p. 393).

- Integrate the National Park identity consistently across websites, social media, printed materials, and on-site signage, ensuring visitors instantly recognize Alde Feanen as an official Dutch National Park.
- Involve stakeholders and local communities in the brand development process, building consensus is a critical factor for sustainable destination branding success (Morrison, 2019, p. 382).
- Create engaging storytelling content that highlights Alde Feanen's protected status, unique experiences in each season, and commitment to conservation.
- Adopt a long-term approach to branding, recognizing that changing destination image takes time but brings lasting benefits in increased awareness, improved perceptions, and stronger visitor loyalty (Morrison, 2019, p. 381).

However, this recommendation is beyond the scope of this research and due to time and resource limitations it is recommended to use this recommendation as opportunity for further research.

7.3 Recommendation 3 Remote workspaces nature program

The second recommendation for the Alde Feanen is to utilize the empty recreational accommodation in the region during the off-season by renting them as workspaces in nature for companies or individuals. Often outside of the high season vacation homes and recreational accommodations are not rented as there are not many tourists visiting during this time. However, by contacting companies and organizations from nearby cities such as Leeuwarden, these accommodations can be used as a workspace for these companies and organizations. This program leverages Push-Pull Theory, as it responds to push factors like the desire among companies for flexible work environments and better work-life balance, and pull factors unique to Alde Feanen, including its beautiful landscapes. By offering this program, Alde Feanen can attract new market segments of midweek visitors, reduce high-season pressure, and support a sustainable, year-round tourism economy. Additionally, this does not interfere with weekend visitors. However, just as recommendation 2, this recommendation is beyond the scope of this research and due to time and resource limitations it is recommended to use this recommendation as opportunity for further research.

7.4 Recommendation 4 Plan for improved signage in the Alde Feanen

Interview responses clearly indicate that the current signage throughout Alde Feanen is often insufficient, making it difficult for tourists to navigate through the Alde Feanen. Additionally, visitors often overlook certain parts of the park because existing signs are unclear, inconsistent, or absent. This not only reduces visitor satisfaction but can also lead to congestion at more popular spots while underutilizing other areas that could spread tourist flows more evenly.

To address these issues, it is recommended to develop a comprehensive signage improvement plan, which can be presented to local municipalities and relevant stakeholders. However, firstly specific research should be conducted in order to make sure where the improvements need to be. After this research the plan can be made. This plan should include: the design and installation of clear, consistent, and directional signs at key entry points, Informative signs that highlight lesser-known attractions, natural features, and cultural sites

8. Implementation

After discussion with the client, it was decided that this implementation plan will focus on Recommendation 1 (developing an off-season marketing plan) and Recommendation 4 (Plan for improved signage in the Alde Feanen). For these recommendations an implementation plan is developed in the following chapter that provides concrete advice on how to realize these two recommendations.

Recommendation 2 has been identified as a valuable area for future research; however, its scope extends beyond the timeframe and resources available for this project. Recommendation 3 has not been prioritized, as it does not directly address the key gaps identified in the fit-gap analysis

8.1 Implementation plan for recommendation 1

Below is the implementation plan for recommendation 1 *“Marketing communication plan Off-season”*. This plan is complete and concrete and can be used by VRNOF to market the Alde Feanen Region in the off season. Below the table there is an elaborate explanation of each step and action.

Figure 7. Implementation table recommendation 1

Recommendation 1: Off-season marketing communication plan				
Step	Action	Details	Responsible	Deadline
1	Invite stakeholders	VRNOF/RMTNOF invites all entrepreneurs, organizations, and companies for a meeting. Attach a 1-page infographic summarizing the general campaign plan.	VRNOF	May 2026 – Send invitations before the summer holidays to secure attention and participation.
2	Initial stakeholder meeting	Organize meeting with interested stakeholders: It Fryske Gea, museum owners, and local entrepreneurs. Define & Communicate objectives Finalize and share: Objective, target group, and off-season tourism offerings (birdwatching, hiking, cultural attractions). Create and distribute a summary document. Assign two or three stakeholders as responsible for the project	VRNOF	June 2026 – Hold the meeting before peak summer starts; easier to get everyone together.
3	Create content	Recruit media students or hire professionals to produce exciting new content showcasing off-season activities. Deliver: at least 10 edited photos, 3–4 short vertical videos (reels), and 1–2 montage videos. Store in shared project folder.	Project group Media students	August–September 2026 – Shoot new photos/videos as the landscape shifts into autumn colors
4	Launch digital campaign	Set up paid ad campaigns on Facebook and Instagram. Audience: Netherlands, age 30–65, interests in nature/culture. Budget:	Project group	October 1, 2026 – Kick off paid ads and active promotion at the start of the off-season
5	Monitor KPI's	Track campaign performance by checking KPI's Monitor reach, clicks and views with Meta Business Suite Monitor visitor numbers during the off-season	Project group	Mid-October 2026 onwards – Begin monitoring and keep adjusting monthly until April 2027
Costs		Additional comments:		
Employee costs VRNOF employees receive their normal hourly wage - Estimate of 70 hours Ad costs: Minimum recommended daily budget - €10/day → €300/month Realistic daily budget for regional tourism campaign - €20/day → €600/month High-intensity daily budget for campaign peaks - €30/day → €900/month Cost breakdown CPM (cost per 1,000 views) estimated at €7–12 → with €600/month you could expect 50,000–85,000 ad impressions monthly. CPC average €0,80 → with €600/month you could buy 750 clicks to your website or landing page monthly. Recommendation Base plan: Start at €20/day (€600/month) → balanced reach + flexibility to adjust up or down. Annual budget estimate: €600 x 6 months (typical off-season) = €3,600 total for advertising.		·Resident satisfaction: It is important to monitor how the locals experience this shift in tourism, as there was a slight increase in negative perception of tourism during the high-season ·Sustainability considerations: Important to ensure that the increase in visitors does not disturb the wildlife too much. Listen to what the experts from It Fryske Gea have to say ·Content refresh: Make sure to update photos, videos and content annually in order to keep the campaign engaging.		

Step 1: Invite Stakeholders

The first action is for VRNOF to invite all relevant entrepreneurs, organizations, and companies in the Alde Feanen region for a kickoff meeting about the off-season promotion campaign. This invitation should include a one-page summary or infographic of the campaign goals and benefits, so the stakeholders can understand why their participation matters and what the added value is. Invitations can be sent via the existing WhatsApp group. Setting a clear RSVP deadline will help plan attendance.

Step 2: Initial Stakeholder Meeting

Once interested stakeholders confirm, the Alde Feanen project group should schedule a meeting with key partners such as It Fryske Gea, museums, and local accommodation providers. The purpose of this meeting is to align offerings, confirm participation, and collect ideas. It ensures that everyone is aware of the objectives and agrees on their role, which will make later steps run smoothly.

After gathering input, the project group should define the main objectives of the campaign, the target group, and the tourism products to promote. Below is what I have in mind.

The objective is to increase visitor numbers during the off-season (September–May).

The target group should focus on Dutch couples aged 30+, especially those interested in nature, birdwatching, hiking, and cultural activities.

The tourism offerings include birdwatching tours, year-round hikes (where trails are accessible), and cultural visits to places like the Skûtsjemuseum and It Kokelhûs.

Step 3: Recruit Students and Create Content

To produce exciting visuals and content of off-season activities, media students can be recruited in order to save costs. NHL Stenden is a university nearby and offers a wide selection of studies that are relevant for this task. For instance, *Communicatie & Multimedia Design*, *Content & Media Strategy*, *Online Contentcreator* and *Creative Media Professional*. The internship supervisors can be contacted and a vacancy can be put on their platform, just like how I came to this dissertation topic.

Step 4: Set Up and Launch Paid Digital Campaign

Now it is time to start running the ads on Facebook and Instagram. Below there is a 9-step guide to explain step-by-step how to do this

Step 5: Monitor KPI's

After the digital campaign goes live, the project group should monitor results weekly in Meta Business Suite and track the following KPI's

- Number of people reached
- Engagement (likes, comments, shares)
- Click-through rate to the website
- Video views

Additionally, the following off-season visitor numbers should be monitored.

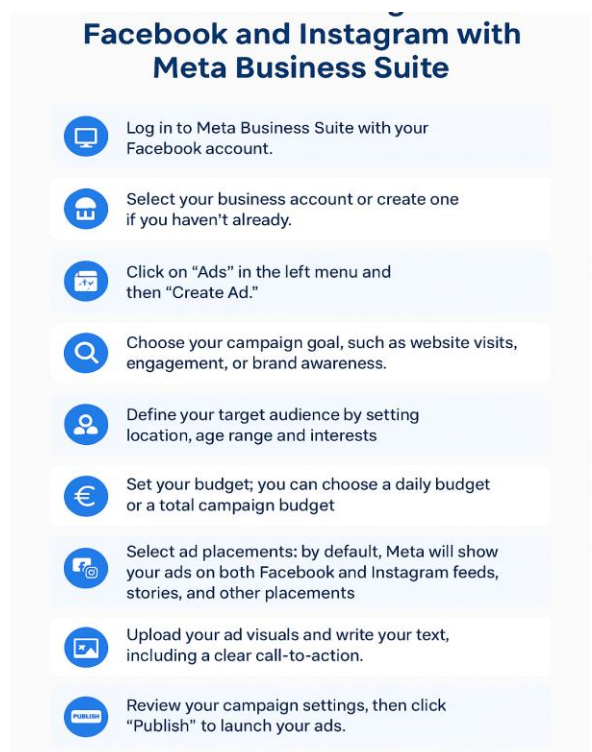
Costs

The cost for this campaign are mainly related to running the ads on Facebook and Instagram and hourly wages for VRNOF. Additionally, there are several small costs associated with organizing the meeting, such as groceries.

For running the ads, it is recommended to start with a minimum daily advertising budget of €10, which amounts to approximately €300 per month. This budget level ensures a small reach to test the campaign and gather initial data. A more realistic daily budget for an effective regional tourism campaign is €20 per day, totaling around €600 per month. This level allows for wider targeting, more frequent impressions, and greater flexibility to push content during important periods. For peak times, such as local events or school holidays when you want to maximize visibility, a high-intensity budget of €30 per day can be used, resulting in approximately €900 per month in advertising spend.

Regarding performance expectations, the CPM (cost per 1,000 impressions) is estimated at €7–12 (Socialroots, 2024). With a monthly budget of €600, the campaign could achieve between 50,000 and 85,000 ad impressions per month. The average cost per click (CPC) is expected to be around €0,80, which means a €600 monthly budget could generate approximately 750 clicks to the campaign website each month.

Figure 8. How to start running ads



Based on these figures, the recommended base plan is to start with a daily budget of 10 for the first months as a testing period. When the test period is successful, when the full CPM is used you can upgrade to a higher plan. Which is a daily budget of €20 (about €600 per month). This provides a balanced reach while maintaining flexibility to increase or decrease spending based on campaign performance. For the full off-season period of six months, this results in an estimated annual advertising budget of €3,600.

Additional comments

It is important to closely monitor resident satisfaction, as earlier research showed a slight increase in negative perceptions of tourism during the high season. By making sure that locals feel comfortable with the shift toward off-season visitors is key for long-term success. Additionally, sustainability considerations must be taken into account to prevent increased visitor numbers from disturbing wildlife, especially by consulting experts from It Fryske Gea. Finally, a content refresh should be planned annually to update photos, videos, and promotional materials, keeping the campaign engaging and relevant for the target audience. This can be done by maintaining a partnership with some studies from NHL Stenden.

8.2 Implementation plan for recommendation 4

This paragraph covers the implementation plan for recommendation 4 “*Plan for improved signage in the Alde Feanen*”. This plan serves as a blueprint that can be followed step-by step in order to develop a plan to improve the signage in the Alde Feane and eventually execute this plan. On the next page is Figure 9 shown which is a table with all of the concrete steps and actions. Additionally, to support this there is a more detailed explanation of the plan and each steps

Figure 9. Implementation table recommendation 4

Recommendation 4:				
Step	Action	Details	Responsible	Deadline
1	Create vacancy for research	Create a vacancy for this specific research. Either for students from ITM for a dissertation project or contact institution such as ETFI.	VRNOF	September 15, 2025 - Put the vacancy online at the start of the new school year
2	Conduct research	Commission field research to map existing signs, identify missing or unclear signage, and analyse visitor navigation challenges. This can involve collaboration with It Fryske Gea rangers and local guides.	Students / ETFI	November 30, 2025 - Complete field research and submit initial findings
3	Develop signage concept	Based on research findings, design clear and consistent signage standards, including directional signs at entry points, informative signs for attractions, and signs highlighting lesser-known areas.	Students / ETFI	January 15, 2026 - Finish designing the signage concept with clear standards
4	Create signage plan	Compile findings and design proposals into a comprehensive signage improvement plan, including recommended sign types, materials, placement priorities, as well as an installation strategy.	Students / ETFI	Februari 15, 2026 - Create a comprehensive signage improvement plan
5	Present & coordinate	Share the plan with municipalities, It Fryske Gea, and funding partners. Collect feedback, finalize approvals, and secure funding for implementation.	VRNOF, IT Fryske, Gea	April 30, 2026 - Present the plan with a nice presentation
	Implement signage	Install new signs according to the plan, starting with critical locations identified in research.	Contractor	October 31, 2026 - Complete production and installation
	Evaluate & adjust	Monitor visitor satisfaction and navigation issues after implementation; adjust or add signage as needed based on visitor and stakeholder feedback.	VRNOF	November 1, 2026 - Keep monitoring and keep collecting yearly feedback to maintain the signage.
Costs			Additional comments:	
1) VRNOF Staff Time (Monitoring & Coordination) • 20 hours 50/hour (average including overheads) → €1,000 2) Research & Concept Development • If using students for a dissertation/internship: minimal direct cost, but budget €500 for incidental expenses (travel, materials, meetings). • If outsourced to ETFI: estimated €4,000–6,000 for a full research & concept report. 3) Production of Signs • Directional & information signs (est. 20–30 signs €200–400 each including design, printing, weatherproofing, and hardware): €4,000–10,000 total. 4) Installation • Contractor labor, transport, and equipment for installing signs (est. 3–5 days @ €1,000/day): €3,000–5,000. Total Estimated Cost Range: €9,500 – €20,000			• Stakeholder Involvement: Early and clear communication with It Fryske Gea, municipalities, and funding partners will be key to securing support and avoiding delays in approval processes. • Accessibility & Inclusivity: Consider incorporating icons, colorblind-friendly design, and multilingual options where relevant for diverse visitors. • Sustainability: Prioritize durable, eco-friendly materials for signs to minimize future maintenance costs and environmental impact. • Wayfinding Technology: Explore digital options (QR codes linking to maps or audio guides) to complement physical signs and enhance visitor experience cost-effectively. • Maintenance Plan: Include a schedule for regular checks and a small budget for repairs or replacements over time.	

Step 1: Create a Vacancy for Research

Begin by creating a clear, specific research vacancy that explains the need to improve the signage in the Alde Feanen. Target students from programs such as International Tourism Management, Communication & Multimedia Design, or Content & Media Strategy at NHL Stenden. Clearly define deliverables, timeline, supervision, and any compensation or internship credits. Alternatively, propose this research project to ETFI, which is a professional organisation. However, this will cost more money.

Step 2: Conduct Field Research

The selected students or ETFI team conducts field research by walking and cycling popular and lesser-known routes in the Alde Feanen. They should record the location and condition of existing signs, note confusing intersections, interview visitors about navigation experiences, and discuss this with It Frsyke Gea.

Step 3: Analyse Findings

After fieldwork, the researchers process all findings into a comprehensive report that includes photos, maps, and notes on specific issues. They should create a priority ranking of locations needing improvements in signage. Additionally, there should be a distinction between urgent fixes and opportunities for helping visitors by highlighting alternative routes.

Step 4: Develop Signage Concept

Using the research findings, the project group should create an attractive signage concept. This concept must reflect Alde Feanen's branding, include consistent icons and color schemes, and make sure that it is easy to read. Materials should be durable, weather-resistant, and environmentally friendly. The design should also use Dutch, English and Frysian text.

Step 5: Create Comprehensive Plan

Combine research and the signage concept into a full signage improvement plan. This plan should include:

- Maps with recommended sign locations
- Detailed sign specifications
- Installation priorities and phases
- Estimated costs per phase
- Long-term maintenance requirements

Step 6: Present Plan to Stakeholders

Organize a formal meeting with municipalities, It Fryske Gea, local businesses, and funding bodies. Present the comprehensive plan, gather feedback, and finalize the details. Clarify permit requirements, establish responsibilities, and secure financial support for production and installation.

Step 7: Produce and Install Signs

Once funding and permits are in place, contract a professional signage manufacturer to produce the approved designs. Coordinate installation, starting with the most critical locations identified in the research, followed by less urgent sites.

Step 8: Evaluate and Adjust

After the signs are installed, assess their effectiveness by collecting visitor feedback, observing navigation behavior. Use this information to make necessary adjustments, such as repositioning or adding signs, to further improve the visitor experience and manage crowd distribution effective.

References

- Anderson, L. (2025). *Impacts of tourism on natural environments*. Green Earth Publishing.
- Atlas Leefomgeving. (n.d.). *Kaarten*.
<https://www.atlasleefomgeving.nl/kaarten?config=3ef897de...>
- Boeije, H. (2010). *Analysis in qualitative research*. SAGE.
- Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (2011). Critical research on the governance of tourism and sustainability. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19(4–5), 411–421.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.580586>
- Butler, R. W. (1980). The concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution: Implications for management of resources. *Canadian Geographer*, 24(1), 5–12.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. SAGE.
- Dredge, D. (2016). *Stories of practice: Tourism policy and planning*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315610849>
- Florido-Benítez, L., & Del Alcázar Martínez, B. (2024). How artificial intelligence (AI) is powering new tourism marketing and the future agenda for smart tourist destinations. *Electronics*, 13(21), 4151. <https://doi.org/10.3390/electronics13214151>
- Goodson, L., & Phillimore, J. (2004). *Qualitative research in tourism*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203642986>
- Gregorić, M. (2014). PESTEL analysis of tourism destinations in the perspective of business tourism (MICE). *Trends in Tourism and Hospitality Industry*, 551–565.
https://www.bib.irb.hr/923319/download/923319.THI_May2014_551to565.pdf
- Gursoy, D., & Rutherford, D. G. (2004). Host attitudes toward tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 495–516. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2003.08.008>
- Haitsma, J. (2021). *Jaarverslag 2020 Nationaal Park De Alde Feanen*. Overlegorgaan Nationaal Park De Alde Feanen.
- Hannes, K., & Lockwood, C. (2011). *Synthesizing qualitative research: Choosing the right approach*. Wiley. <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1002/9781119959847>

- Jansen-Verbeke, M. (1986). Inner-city tourism: Resources, tourists and promoters. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 13(1), 79–100. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(86\)90058-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(86)90058-7)
- Johnson, G., Scholes, K., & Whittington, R. (2002). *Exploring corporate strategy: Text and cases*. <http://cds.cern.ch/record/1151366>
- Klimaatadaptatie. (n.d.). *Recreatie en toerisme*. <https://klimaatadaptatienederland.nl/kennisdossiers/recreatie-toerisme/>
- Kotler, P., Haider, D. H., & Rein, I. (1993). There's no place like our place! The marketing of cities, regions, and nations. *The Futurist*, 27, 14–21. <https://www.scholars.northwestern.edu/en/publications/theres-no-place-like-our-place-the-marketing-of-cities-regions-an-2>
- LaunchNotes. (n.d.). *What is Fit Gap Analysis? A guide for product managers*. <https://www.launchnotes.com/glossary/fit-gap-analysis-in-product-management-and-operations>
- Ministerie van Algemene Zaken. (2025, March 5). *Wetgeving voor natuurbescherming in Nederland*. Rijksoverheid. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/natuur-en-biodiversiteit/wetgeving-voor-natuurbescherming-in-nederland>
- Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat. (2025, February 25). *De Omgevingswet*. Rijksoverheid. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/omgevingswet>
- Morrison, A. M. (2019). *Marketing and managing tourism destinations* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- National University & NU Editorial Contributors. (2024, November 12). *What is qualitative vs. quantitative study?* National University. <https://www.nu.edu/blog/qualitative-vs-quantitative-study/#qualitative-research>
- Rajesh, R. (2013). Impact of tourist perceptions, destination image and tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty: A conceptual model. *PASOS: Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 11(3), 67–78. <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2013.11.039>
- Regeerprogramma. (2024). *Kabinet*.
- Rossi, S. D., Byrne, J. A., Pickering, C. M., & Reser, J. (2015). 'Seeing red' in national parks: How visitors' values affect perceptions and park experiences. *Geoforum*, 66, 41–52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.09.009>

- Said, J., & Maryono, M. (2018). Motivation and perception of tourists as push and pull factors to visit national park. *E3S Web of Conferences*, 31, 08022.
<https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/20183108022>
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2007). *Research methods for business students* (4th ed.). Prentice Hall.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2015). *Research methods for business students* (7th ed.). Pearson Education. <https://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/816026/>
- Skill Zone Ltd. (n.d.). Definition: Iterative approach. *Association for Qualitative Research (AQR)*. <https://www.aqr.org.uk/glossary/iterative-approach>
- Social Roots. (2024, July 15). *De kosten van adverteren op social media in 2024 – Social Roots*. <https://www.socialroots.nl/tips-voor-het-verzinnen-en-opzetten-van-een-nieuw-merk-2/>
- Toerisme Alliantie Friesland. (2025, March 18). *Thús – Toerisme Alliantie Friesland*. <https://www.taf.frl/>
- Van Der Heide, G. (n.d.). *Ontdek Nationaal Park de Alde Feanen*. Nationaal Park De Alde Feanen. <https://www.np-aldefeanen.nl/>
- Veal, A. J. (2017). *Research methods for leisure & tourism: A practical guide* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
- World Bank Group. (2024). *Tools and resources for nature-based tourism*. <http://appsolutelydigital.com/nbt/chapter2.html>
- WTM. (2022). *Industry report: Family, friends and social media are key influences for travel decisions*. <https://hub.wtm.com/press/wtm-london-press-releases/industry-report-family-friends-and-social-media-are-key-influences-for-travel-decisions/>

Appendixes

Appendix A - Interview Guide

This interview guide serves as a baseline for all interviews conducted as part of this research. Since the interviews are qualitative and semi-structured, there is flexibility to adapt the order of questions and to include follow-up questions when relevant.

Interviewing Techniques

To ensure the interview is well-structured and focused, I will maintain a clear role as interviewer. I will use phrases such as:

- “Sorry to interrupt...”
- “To summarize what you’ve said...”
- “Could you give a brief answer to the next question...”

These phrases help to manage the flow of conversation while keeping it respectful and professional.

To keep the interviewee motivated and engaged, I will express appreciation for their input and emphasize that their contribution is both valuable and meaningful. A bit of informal conversation at the start or during transitions may also help to create a relaxed and open atmosphere.

Non-Verbal Communication

I will also pay close attention to my non-verbal communication, including:

- Maintaining good posture: leaning back while listening, and leaning forward when asking questions
- Sustaining appropriate eye contact
- Managing voice delivery by being mindful of tone, pacing, volume, articulation, and emphasis

These elements support effective communication and help create a comfortable setting for the interviewee.

Structure of the Interview

The interview will begin with a brief personal introduction, including my name and role. I will then ask for consent to record the conversation and provide a short explanation of the interview's purpose.

The interview starts with **opening questions** that are:

- Related to the research topic
- Non-threatening
- About subjects the interviewee is familiar with and likely to feel positively about

At this stage, I will also ask the interviewee to share their name and role or connection to the region.

Following the opening, the **main content-related questions** will be asked. These are grouped by theme and generally progress from broader, neutral topics to more specific or potentially sensitive ones.

The interview questions aim to be:

- Open-ended whenever possible
- Clear and concise
- Focused on one topic at a time
- Neutral and free from bias

The interview questions

Opening questions

1. Can you introduce yourself?
2. Can you tell me a bit about your person connection to the Alde Feanen
3. What do you personally enjoy most about being in the Alde Feanen region?

Destination image

4. What would you consider the main attractions of the Alde Feanen?
5. How would you describe the types of accommodations and services available for visitors

Visitor preferences

6. What type of visitors typically come to the Alde Feanen?
7. What type of visitors do you want to attract to the region?
8. What activities or experiences are the visitors looking for the most in the Alde Feanen?
9. What are common complaints or improvement suggestions from visitors?
10. Are there any missing elements or gaps in tourism services that visitors have expressed a need for?
11. What improvements or new initiatives could enhance the visitor experience in Alde Feanen?

Sustainability

12. How important are sustainability and nature conservation to visitors when choosing this destination?

Interview vragen Nederlands

Openingsvragen

1. Kunt u zichzelf even voorstellen?
2. Kunt u iets vertellen over uw persoonlijke band met de Alde Feanen?

Bestemmingsimago

4. Wat zou u beschouwen als de belangrijkste trekpleisters van de Alde Feanen?
5. Hoe zou u de soorten accommodaties en voorzieningen voor bezoekers omschrijven?

Bezoekersvoorkeuren

6. Wat voor soort bezoekers komen er doorgaans naar de Alde Feanen?
7. Wat voor soort bezoekers zou er naar de regio toe getrokken kunnen worden?
8. Naar welke activiteiten of ervaringen zijn bezoekers in de Alde Feanen vooral op zoek?
9. Wat zijn veelvoorkomende klachten of verbeterpunten die bezoekers noemen?
10. Zijn er volgens bezoekers bepaalde onderdelen of diensten in het toeristisch aanbod die momenteel ontbreken?
11. Welke nieuwe initiatieven zouden de bezoekerservaring in de Alde Feanen kunnen versterken?

Duurzaamheid

12. Hoe belangrijk vindt u duurzaamheid van deze bestemming? Bescherming en behoud

Interview vragen bezoekers

Openingsvragen

1. Kunt u zichzelf even voorstellen?
2. Wanneer bent U naar de Alde Feanen geweest?
3. Hoe lang was dit bezoek?
4. Wat was de beweegreden voor Uw bezoek?

Bestemmingsimago

5. Wat vindt u persoonlijk het mooiste aan de regio Alde Feanen?
6. Wat zou u beschouwen als de belangrijkste trekpleisters van de Alde Feanen?
7. Hoe zou u de soorten accommodaties en voorzieningen voor bezoekers omschrijven?

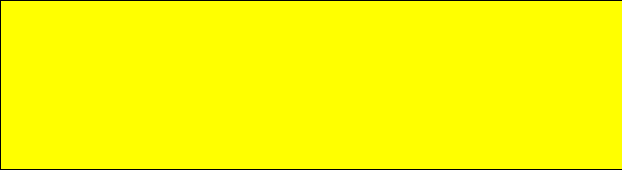
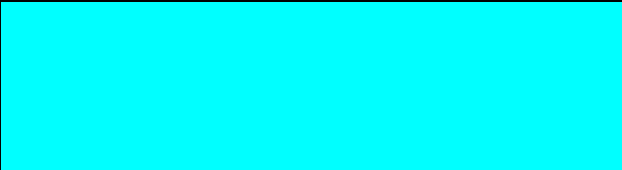
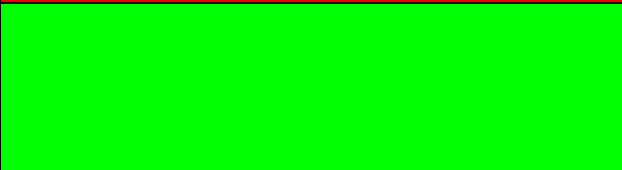
Bezoekersvoorkeuren

8. Wat voor soort bezoekers heeft U gezien tijdens Uw bezoek aan de Alde Feanen?
9. Naar wat voor activiteiten of ervaringen bent U op zoek als U naar de Alde Feanen gaat?
10. Wat zijn volgens jij verbeterpunten voor de Alde Feanen?
11. Zijn er bepaalde onderdelen of diensten in het toeristisch aanbod die volgens U ontbreken?

Duurzaamheid

12. Hoe belangrijk vindt u duurzaamheid van deze bestemming? Bescherming en behoud

Appendix B - Color book for codes

Code	Color
Tourism offerings & infrastructure	
Visitor preferences	
Perceived gaps	
Sustainability & Nature conservation	

Appendix C - Coding matrix

Topic and color	Open coding	Axial coding	Selective coding
Tourism offerings & infrastructure	"We hebben vooral dagtoeristen die een bootje huren voor een dag." (R1) "Het water en de bootjes trekken de mensen hierheen." (R2) "Wij bieden wellness en yoga-wandelingen, dat spreekt vooral toeristen aan." (R3) "Het gebied is groot, maar voorzieningen zoals het pontje waren vroeg in de ochtend dicht." (R4) "Onze vaarexcursie met de zonneboot is populair." (R5) "Het huren van het bootje ging heel makkelijk." (R6) "De jachthaven is top, met goede douches en water." (R7) "We huren een boot, nemen de fiets mee en wandelen een beetje." (R8)	- Bootverhuur en varen vormen de kern van het toeristische aanbod. - Wellness, yoga en kleine campings vullen het aanbod aan. - Er zijn beperkte voorzieningen aan wal, zoals horeca en informatiepunten.	Het toeristische aanbod in de Alde Feanen is sterk gericht op natuurbeleving vanaf het water, met eenvoudige faciliteiten en enkele aanvullende activiteiten zoals wellness.

	"We verblijven met de camper op een kleine camping, prima en netjes." (R9)		
Visitor preferences	"Bezoekers willen vooral varen, ze komen voor een dagje water." (R1) "De rust en de natuur zijn hier het mooist." (R2) "Ze zoeken rust en ontspanning, massages en yoga." (R3) "Ik kwam om vogels te spotten met vrienden." (R4) "Mensen komen hier om zelf te ontdekken met wandel- of fietsroutes." (R5) "Vooral rust, mooie natuur en buiten zijn." (R6) "We zijn dol op het vogelgebied en de oude vaarten." (R7) "We genieten hier vooral van de openheid en de natuur." (R8)	- Bezoekers waarderen de rust, natuur en kleinschaligheid. - Watergebonden activiteiten en wandelen zijn geliefd. - Wellness en ontspanning hebben een niche aantrekkingskracht.	Bezoekers komen naar de Alde Feanen voor rust, natuurbeleving en eenvoudige recreatie

	"Ik kom hier vooral voor de rust, de vogels en het water." (R9)		
Perceived gaps	"Er zou meer informatievoorziening mogen zijn, bijvoorbeeld interactieve kaarten." (R1) "Alles is dicht in de winter." (R2) "Er zijn te weinig moderne faciliteiten zoals jaarrond geopende winkels." (R3) "Er stond geen bord bij het pontje met openingstijden." (R4) "Mensen vragen om kanoroutes met paaltjes, die zijn er niet." (R5) "Duidelijkere borden over vaarroutes zouden handig zijn." (R6) "Er zijn geen bordjes die vertellen waar het museum of vliegtuig is." (R7) "Meer informatie over	- Tekort aan informatievoorziening (bewegwijzering, uitleg, openingstijden). - Horeca en voorzieningen zijn schaars en vaak seizoensgebonden. - Beperkt cultureel aanbod zichtbaar voor toeristen.	Bezoekers signaleren een tekort aan informatie en voorzieningen, met een sterke behoefte aan betere bewegwijzering, horeca en jaarrond activiteiten.

	waar je naar kijkt tijdens een wandeling." (R8) "Je mist soms een plek om wat te drinken onderweg." (R9)		
Sustainability & Nature conservation	"Er liggen nauwelijks klachten over afval; het gebied blijft netjes." (R1) "Er ligt nergens afval in de natuur." (R2) "Duurzaamheid en natuurbehoud zijn belangrijk voor de bezoekers, maar ondernemers spelen daar te weinig op in." (R3) "Ik vind het belangrijk dat het gebied schoon blijft." (R4) "De paden worden soms vertrapt, maar afval zien we niet." (R5) "Het was best schoon, weinig afval gezien." (R6) "Het gebied is prachtig, dat moet zo blijven." (R7) "Alles is netjes en verzorgd." (R8)	- Bezoekers waarderen het schone en goed onderhouden karakter van het gebied. - Er is een sterk bewustzijn over natuurbehoud en duurzaamheid.	Duurzaamheid en natuurbehoud zijn centrale waarden in de beleving van bezoekers, met een positief oordeel over de huidige staat van het gebied.

	"Het is ongerept en dat wil ik graag zo houden." (R9)		
--	--	--	--

Appendix D - Interview transcriptions

Name interviewee	Robin Doornbos (R1)
Role interviewee	Ondernemer: Sloepverhuur Alde Feanen
Date interview	05/06/2025
SK – Goedemorgen, nou hebben we elkaar eindelijk te pakken. RD – Ja, sowieso. SK – Mooi. Ik wilde graag een paar vragen stellen voor mijn scriptie over de Alde Feanen. Als u het goed vindt, neem ik het gesprek ook op. RD – Ja, dat is prima. SK – Oké, dan begin ik meteen. Kunt u zichzelf kort voorstellen en wat uw functie is binnen de Alde Feanen? RD – Ja, Ik ben robin Doornbos eigenaar van het watersportbedrijf Anja. Wij hebben een bootverhuur, een tankstation, segmenten gericht op jongeren en een jachtservice. Onze bootverhuur richt zich grotendeels op de Alde Feanen. Ongeveer 80 tot 90% van onze gasten sturen we daarheen. We geven ze uitleg over wat ze kunnen verwachten. SK – Organiseren jullie ook tochten, of is het vooral verhuur? RD – We verhuren vooral. Sinds dit jaar bieden we ook kleine rondvaarten aan, bijvoorbeeld voor koppels, door de Alde Feanen. Daarnaast doen we ook groepsactiviteiten met bedrijven. Zij maken dan een rondvaart of tocht richting de Alde Feanen. SK – Wat voor bezoekers heeft u meestal? Zijn dat vooral bedrijven of ook veel dagtoeristen? RD – We hebben voor 90% dagtoeristen. Ze komen 's ochtends, huren een bootje en zijn 's avonds weer terug. Er zijn ook mensen die langer huren, maar dat is een kleiner deel. SK – Zijn dat ook veel buitenlandse toeristen, of vooral Nederlanders? RD – Ik denk dat ongeveer 85% van onze bezoekers Nederlanders zijn. SK – Wat huren de meeste mensen? RD – Meestal huren ze een bootje voor een dag. SK – Krijgt u van bezoekers vaak klachten, bijvoorbeeld over de regio of de natuur? RD – Nee, eigenlijk niet. We horen juist veel positieve reacties. Klachten komen nauwelijks voor. SK – Uit een recent onderzoek blijkt dat het toerisme in de regio gegroeid is. Heeft u dat ook zo ervaren? RD – Ja, dat denk ik wel. We zitten een beetje aan de rand van het gebied. Ik denk dat veel mensen niet eens doorhebben dat ze een Nationaal Park in varen. Ze komen gewoon voor	

een dagje varen, niet specifiek voor het Nationaal Park.

Of het toerisme in de Alde Feanen echt gegroeid is, weet ik niet precies. In Earnewâld merk je het misschien meer. Bij ons volgt het vooral het seizoenspatroon. Maar het zal best gegroeid zijn. Het gebied is ook nog niet heel bekend bij de rest van Nederland.

SK – Zijn er volgens u diensten of toeristische voorzieningen die nog toegevoegd zouden kunnen worden in de Alde Feanen?

RD – Informatievoorziening bijvoorbeeld. Als je naar Woudsend gaat, krijg je vaak al een tour of gids mee. Er is wel eens iets geweest van de Princenhof. Dat is natuurlijk hartstikke leuk, zeker voor kinderen.

Als je een bootje huurt, zou het leuk zijn om een interactieve kaart of iets mee te krijgen. Iets wat het voor kinderen ook interessant maakt. In Earnewâld heb je een groot speeltoestel, maar bijvoorbeeld in Grou weer niet.

Gasten die van Earnewâld naar Grou varen missen daar dan wat, zoals een strandje waar je ook met de boot aan kunt leggen. Dus er mag best wat meer voor de jongere doelgroep komen.

SK – Denkt u dat het goed zou zijn voor de regio en ook voor u persoonlijk als er meer toeristen komen?

RD – Persoonlijk zeker. En voor de regio ook. Er kunnen echt nog wel meer toeristen bij. Het is hier nog niet zo druk. Natuurlijk heb je pieken en dalen, maar zelfs in de piekperiodes is er nog ruimte. Het gebied is ruim genoeg en alles verspreidt zich goe. Als je ook meer inzet op het voor- en naseizoen, dan kun je nog genoeg mensen ontvangen.

SK – Dat waren mijn vragen. Fijn dat u wilde meewerken!

SK – Uw naam komt niet in mijn scriptie tenzij u dat zelf wilt.

RD – Dat hoeft voor mij niet per se, maar je mag het natuurlijk wel gebruiken.

SK – Nou, fijne dag nog!

RD – Ja, helemaal goed.

SK – Oké, hoi hoi.

Name interviewee	Baukje Westerhof (R2)
Role interviewee	Inhabitant Earnewold
Date interview	15/05/2025

SK: Kun je jezelf even voorstellen? Wie ben je en hoe oud ben je?

B: Ik ben Boukje, ik ben 24 jaar en ik woon in Earnewoude bij de Alde Feanen, dus in de buurt.

SK: Ik ga je een aantal vragen stellen over de Alde Feanen. Die ga ik gebruiken in mijn scriptie, waarin ik onderzoek hoe het toeristische aanbod daar verbeterd kan worden. Kun je beschrijven wat volgens jou de belangrijkste trekpleisters zijn van de Alde Feanen?

B: Ja, ik denk **de beheerders van het natuurpark. Die hebben nu een restaurant overgenomen waar ze exposities houden. Ik denk dat dat wel weer veel mensen gaat trekken. En natuurlijk de horeca in Earnewoude zelf – daar gaan ook veel mensen heen. En het water met de bootjes, dat trekt ook veel bezoekers.**

SK: **Dus ook veel voor de watersport?**

B: **Ja, klopt. Vooral dat.**

SK: Wat voor bezoekers zie je vooral in de haven? Zijn het vooral jonge mensen of juist oudere?

B: **Een beetje mensen van middelbare leeftijd. Nu in het voorseizoen vooral Duitsers. In het hoogseizoen straks ook meer Nederlanders, uit bijvoorbeeld Amsterdam en Rotterdam.**

SK: Is het bezoekersaantal gelijkmatig verspreid over het jaar, of vooral seizoensgebonden?

B: **Het is echt seizoensgebonden. Nu is het best rustig, maar in juni, juli en augustus is het heel druk. Daarna wordt het weer veel rustiger.**

SK: Dus in de winter zijn er bijna geen toeristen?

B: Nee, klopt.

SK: **Hebben jullie als bewoners ook weleens last van toeristen? Dat het te druk is?**

B: **Nee, ik vind van niet. We hebben zelf ook een restaurant,** dus wij draaien juist goed in die periode.

SK: Dus voor jullie is het eigenlijk wel prettig?

B: Ja, heel fijn eigenlijk.

SK: Als je zou moeten kiezen: zou je liever meer toeristen naar de regio willen, of juist minder?

B: **Meer, absoluut.**

SK: Hoor je weleens klachten van bezoekers, bijvoorbeeld over dingen die ontbreken in de regio?

B: Niet echt. Alleen dat in de winter alles dicht is. Dan is alleen de supermarkt open, verder niets. Maar het is echt een seizoensplek, daar draait het op. Als alles in de winter ook open moet blijven, verdien je er niet genoeg aan.

SK: Zijn er volgens jou verbeteringen of nieuwe initiatieven die het toeristische aanbod kunnen verbeteren?

B: Zou ik zo even niet weten, eerlijk gezegd.

SK: In hoeverre merk je dat duurzaamheid een rol speelt bij bezoekers? Hoor je daar iets over?

B: Nee, eigenlijk niet.

SK: Wordt daar in het park zelf wel aandacht aan besteed? Bijvoorbeeld via informatieborden?

B: Ja, volgens mij wel. Best veel zelfs. Je ziet ook echt nergens afval in de natuur. Als je daar loopt, ligt er helemaal niks.

SK: Daar heb je dus geen last van?

B: Nee, totaal niet.

SK: Nou, dank je wel Boukje. Dat was het eigenlijk al.

B: Helemaal super.

SK: Als ik nog vragen heb, mag ik je dan mailen?

B: Zeker! Succes met je scriptie.

SK: Dank je wel! Doei doei.

B: Doei doei

Name interviewee	Angelique Trent (R3)
Role interviewee	Ondernemer: TALC
Date interview	04/06/2025
SK: Hi, goedemiddag, met Sybren. A: Hi Sybren, hi. SK: Mooi, heb ik je te pakken. A: Ja, ja. SK: Ik heb eigenlijk een paar vragen. Als u het goed vindt, wil ik dit opnemen. A: Ja. SK: Dan verwerk ik het in mijn scriptie. Die gaat over de Alde Feanen, en hoe we het toeristische aanbod kunnen verbeteren. Er is ook input van ondernemers nodig, die hebben daar natuurlijk goed zicht op. A: Ja. A: Mijn eerste vraag: gaat u dit ook aanbieden aan een partij straks? SK: Ja, ik werk samen met Kwaliteitsregio Noordoost Friesland. A: Oh, leuk! A: Ja, die zijn heel goed, vind ik. Ze proberen vooral veel contact te leggen tussen ondernemers, ook onderling. SK: Oké, dan begin ik met de eerste inhoudelijke vraag: kunt u uzelf kort voorstellen en vertellen wat u precies doet in de Alde Feanen? A: Ik ben Angelique Trent. Sinds 2014 heb ik een leefstijlcentrum, waarvan zeven jaar in de Alde Feanen. Ons centrum combineert alles wat met leefstijl te maken heeft: luxe, beauty, wellness, bewegen, en leefstijlbegeleiding. We zijn gespecialiseerd in functioneel bewegen en het persoonlijk maken van voeding, zonder dieet. SK: Is dat vooral gericht op mensen uit de regio, of ook op toeristen? A: We hebben bewust gekozen dat het voor beide groepen geschikt is. De meeste mensen die komen bewegen wonen in de regio. Maar de regio is vrij groot: we trekken ook mensen uit bijvoorbeeld Groningen en Steenwijk. En we krijgen veel toeristen, vooral voor de wellness. SK: Is er een specifieke doelgroep? A: Onze hoofddoelgroep is 35+, maar we hebben ook bezoekers van 90 jaar. Jongeren onder de 35 zoeken soms wel verbinding met de natuur, maar dat is minimaal. SK: Is de mindfulnessroute iets dat aan jullie verbonden is? A: Nee, die is buiten ons om. Maar wij geven al sinds 2017 yoga-wandelingen. Wij noemden dat toen al de mindfulnessroute. Dus we doen dit al jaren.	

SK: Dan kan ik dat zeker meenemen.

A: Ja, we hebben maandelijks één of twee wandelingen. In het winterseizoen zelfs wekelijks voor vaste leden.

SK: Zijn bezoekers dan vooral op zoek naar rust of uitdaging?

A: Ze zoeken rust. Mensen kiezen graag voor massages, om hun hoofd leeg te maken. Een wandeling of yoga-wandeling is confronterender. Tijdens een massage hoef je niets te vertellen. Tijdens een wandeling komt er vaak emotie los. En mensen zijn ook graag lui.

SK: Maakt u het vaak mee dat mensen zich openstellen tijdens zo'n wandeling?

A: Ja, absoluut. Ik krijg hele mooie contacten. Goede begeleiding is daarbij belangrijk.

SK: Doet u dat zelf?

A: Ja, meestal wel. Ik heb een collega die het soms overneemt, maar het is vooral mijn taak. Ik ben leefstijlcoach met een HBO-opleiding, en ik heb ook gedragskunde gedaan.

SK: Zijn de bezoekers vooral seizoensgebonden?

A: Nee, wij zijn jaarrond open. We zijn 365 *dagen per jaar beschikbaar, op een paar vrije dagen na.

SK: Denkt u dat het goed zou zijn voor de regio als er meer toeristen komen?

A: Ik denk dat het nu wel goed is. Niet meer of minder. Maar het zou mooi zijn als we de toerist kunnen vasthouden en laten terugkomen. Meer kwaliteit leveren, dat is belangrijk.

SK: Dat hoor ik van veel ondernemers.

A: Ja, ik snap niet dat niet iedereen dat inziet. Ik heb jaren geprobeerd dat duidelijk te maken bij de ondernemersvereniging. Onze doelgroep wil betaalbare kwaliteit. Niet luxe sterrenrestaurants, maar gemoedelijke kwaliteit met aandacht.

SK: En daar spelen veel ondernemers niet op in?

A: Nee, veel ondernemers zijn niet jaarrond actief. En er zijn ook onvoldoende moderne faciliteiten, zoals winkels die het hele jaar open zijn.

SK: U bedoelt in Earnewâld?

A: Ja. Er zijn veel vaste bewoners met vakantiewoningen, die laten hun boodschappen bezorgen door Crisp. Omdat ze hier niet krijgen wat ze gewend zijn in het westen. Ik heb er zelf ook last van.

SK: Dat is natuurlijk niet duurzaam.

A: Nee, het is schandalig. Ik zie hier elke dag bezorgers van Albert Heijn voorbijkomen.

SK: Nou, u heeft eigenlijk al mijn vragen beantwoord. Ik stuur u zeker mijn scriptie toe als hij klaar is.

A: Leuk, ik kijk ernaar uit.

SK: Heeft u nog iets toe te voegen?

/-+A: Mocht je ooit dieper onderzoek willen doen: ik heb zelf onderzoek gedaan naar de behoeften van onze bezoekers. Dat heb ik heel mooi in kaart gebracht. Ze geven duidelijk aan wat ze missen.

SK: Zoals?

A: In het toeristische hoogseizoen zijn er weinig activiteiten die iedereen aanspreken. Het zijn vaak dingen zoals scooterroutes. Maar er is ook behoefte aan creativiteit, kunst, culturele activiteiten.

SK: Dat is zeker waardevol.

A: Mocht je ooit iets specifieks willen weten, ik heb veel data over ons bedrijf en de omgeving.

SK: Dank u wel, en fijne dag nog!

A: Graag gedaan! Fijne dag, doe!

Name interviewee	Meike Besseling (R4)
Role interviewee	Visitor
Date interview	02/05/2025
SK: Goedemiddag. MB: Goedemiddag. SK: Kun je je zo even voorstellen? MB: Ik ben Meike Besseling, ik ben net afgestudeerd van de opleiding Milieukunde en ik ben recentelijk in de Alde Feanen geweest. SK: Oké, dat was mijn volgende vraag al. Wanneer ben je naar de Alde Feanen geweest? MB: Ik denk dat dat in februari was. SK: Wat was je reden voor dit bezoek? MB: Ik wilde graag gaan vogelen met een aantal vrienden en ik wilde graag het gebied verkennen, kijken welke vogels er waren. SK: Hoe lang ben je daar geweest? MB: Ik denk twee uur. SK: Twee uurtjes? MB: Ja. SK: En wat vond je persoonlijk het mooiste aan de regio? Van de Alde Feanen? MB: Ik vond het best een groot gebied. We gingen er met de auto heen en op de eerste plek waar we kwamen was een restaurant. Maar omdat het februari was en het was vroeg – het was zeven uur 's ochtends – was het pontje nog dicht. Daar baalden we van, want we hadden online een route uitgezocht die we wilden lopen, maar dat kon dus niet omdat het paadje over het pontje liep. SK: Dus je moest eigenlijk via het pontje? MB: Ja, dat was een beetje jammer, maar dat hadden we kunnen weten. Ik vond het gebied zelf wel heel mooi. SK: Was dat restaurant open omdat jullie zo vroeg waren? MB: Nee. SK: Wat zou je beschouwen als de belangrijkste trekpleisters voor mensen zoals jij? Je had het net al over vogelen. Zijn er ook andere dingen die je mooi vindt aan de regio? MB: Ik denk dat ik me daar niet echt in heb verdiept. SK: Je kwam dan vooral voor de vogels? MB: Ja, en ik wist dat er een vogelkijkhut was, en die was netjes. SK: Waren er ook specifieke vogels die je zocht daar?	

MB: Ik denk dat ik de zeearend zocht, maar dat weet ik niet meer precies. Het is alweer een flinke tijd terug. Er was wel een vuurgoudhaantje en die heb ik toen gemist.

SK: Dat was jammer. Hoe wist je dat hij er dan was?

MB: Via een geluidsapp van de Koren, dat hij daar was.

SK: Heb je ook andere bezoekers gezien tijdens je bezoek?

MB: Ja.

SK: Wat voor mensen waren dit? Waren dat oudere mensen of jonge mensen?

MB: Ja, gewoon... ik weet het niet meer precies. Ik denk dat de gemiddelde leeftijd zo'n dertig was.

SK: Waren het stelletjes?

MB: Ja, zoiets. Gewoon wandelaars, mensen die het gebied wilden verkennen. Ik heb misschien één gezin gezien met een kinderwagen.

SK: Dat is vrij divers, denk je?

MB: Ik denk het wel.

SK: Heb je ook verbeterpunten gezien voor het gebied, voor de Alde Feanen?

MB: Nou, daar kun je niet veel aan doen, maar het was heel nat. Op sommige plekken moest je echt andere stappen zetten om niet in een plas water te staan. Verder heb ik met de auto gereden, dus ik heb niet zoveel op de omgeving gelet.

SK: Zijn er nog bepaalde onderdelen of diensten in het toeristische aanbod die volgens jou ontbreken? Dat je bijvoorbeeld denkt: dit was wel handig geweest, zoals een informatiepunt of een strand dat 's ochtends al open is?

MB: Het zou handig zijn als er bij het pontje een informatiebordje stond met: "Vanaf deze datum tot en met deze datum is het pontje open." Wij hebben dat toen online moeten opzoeken.

SK: Heb je ook in het park informatieborden gezien? Informatie over bijvoorbeeld de vogels?

MB: Ja, in de vogelkijkhut stonden drie platen met informatie over vogels.

SK: Oké. Dat vond je mooi, in principe. Heb je ook dingen gezien in het park over duurzaamheid?

MB: Nee. Ik denk wel dat dat leuk zou zijn in dat gebied. Ik weet niet of het me echt is opgevallen, maar ik heb geen routes gezien die werden aangegeven. Online stond er wel een route, maar in het gebied zelf stonden geen paaltjes met een blauwe route of een rode route. Dat zie je in andere gebieden vaak wel, maar hier niet.

SK: Dus dat zou je wel prettig vinden?

MB: Ja, ik denk het wel, want nu liepen we maar wat rond en we raakten eigenlijk ook een

beetje verdwaald. We moesten toen op Google Maps kijken hoe we weer uit het gebied kwamen.

SK: Dat zou beter kunnen, ja. Nou, dat waren mijn vragen eigenlijk.

Name interviewee	Laura Steigenga (R5)
Role interviewee	Medewerker It Fryske Gea
Date interview	13/06/2025

SK: Nou, zou u kort even kunnen voorstellen wie u bent en waarvoor u werkt?

LS: Ik ben Laura Steigenga, medewerker voorlichting en educatie voor het Fryske Gea en we zijn hier in **het informatiepunt van zowel het Nationaal Park als het Fryske Gea.**

SK: Oké, en wat doen jullie precies?

LS: Wat wij doen? Nou ja, **we hebben een balie waar we inwoners van Friesland, ook veel toeristen, te woord staan over wat er qua wandelroutes, fietsroutes, excursies van het Fryske Gea te doen is. En we hebben informatie hier over het gebied, hoe het ontstaan is, welke soorten er leven.**

SK: Oké. En je doet dat voor de Alde Feanen?

LS: Ja.

SK: En wat zijn jullie grootste trekpleisters voor de toeristen?

LS: **Ik denk onze vaarexcursie. We hebben een elektrische zonneboot waarmee we in de zomer drie keer per week excursies geven. Dus dat is een grote trekpleister. En mensen komen hier ook veel omdat ze zelf het gebied willen ontdekken. Dus informatie ophalen voor wandelroutes, fietsroutes.**

SK: Zijn dat veel mensen die van ver komen?

LS: **Nou, je merkt nu wel, zeg maar juni, juli, augustus, dat mensen ook die van ver komen, die op vakantie zijn. En daarbuiten veel dagjesmensen.**

SK: Oké. En die komen hier dan een boot huren en dan gaan ze de natuur in vooral?

LS: Nou, ze kunnen hier geen boot of fiets of iets dergelijks huren, dat niet. **Maar soms zijn ze met eigen boot inderdaad. Of ze komen hier wel vragen waar ze een boot of een kano of iets dergelijks kunnen huren.**

SK: **En dat is veel seizoensgebonden denk ik? In juli, augustus erg?**

LS: **Ja.**

SK: En in de andere maanden is het dan echt helemaal niet of hebben jullie ook nog wel een stroom van toeristen?

LS: **Nou, wij zijn open van april tot en met september en daarbuiten in de schoolvakanties.**

SK: Oké.

LS: **Dus herfstvakantie, kerstvakantie, voorjaarsvakantie.**

SK: Oké. En zijn er nog dingen die toeristen vaak vragen wat jullie dan niet hebben? Van: nou, ik zou het leuk vinden als dit er bijvoorbeeld zou zijn in de regio?

LS: Ik had toevallig halverwege de week iemand die wou gaan suppen en die zocht eigenlijk wel een kaart, zeg maar, die je dan mee kon nemen, wat niet gewoon papier is, dat je niet op z'n telefoon hoeft. Om dan mee te nemen, waar hij langs zou kunnen gaan. Of dat er paaltjes in het gebied staan. In de Weerribben heb je dat wel, want kanoroutes zijn daar echt met paaltjes aangegeven. Dat is hier niet het geval. Dus dat is wel... voor de toerist zou dat misschien een mooie toevoeging zijn. Tegelijk zit je er ook mee: vanuit natuurorganisatie wil je niet te veel paaltjes en borden en dingen in je gebied. Dus dat is altijd wel weer een spanningsveld. Dus dat zou iets kunnen zijn. Verder denk ik dat er hier al heel veel is.

SK: Ik had ook een onderzoek gelezen van de provincie. Die hadden onderzoek gedaan naar de bewoners hier in Earnewâld en daarin was aangetoond dat de toeristen waren toegenomen en daardoor werden de mensen gevraagd of ze dat wenselijk vonden of niet. Je merkte toch dat het iets minder goed werd ontvangen door bewoners. Merkt u dat ook? Dat er meer toeristen komen en dat de mensen daar minder blij mee zijn?

LS: Nee, ik kan er niet echt iets over zeggen.

SK: Je hebt ook niet het gevoel dat er te veel toeristen dan bijvoorbeeld zijn op het gebied in augustus, juli?

LS: Ja, dat is altijd wel een lastige kwestie natuurlijk. Aan de ene kant wil je mensen graag het mooie gebied laten zien, maar de druk op de natuur is ook groot als je hier heel veel mensen hebt.

SK: Hebben jullie daar veel last van hier? Met rommel en dergelijke?

LS: Nee, afval niet. Nee, dat niet. Nee. Het is meer dat mensen bij slecht weer... nou zijn de paden vrij nat en dan gaan mensen hun eigen pad maken. Dus dat er wel dingen vertrapt worden. En ja, qua druk echt op flora en fauna-soorten weet ik onvoldoende van om daar goed iets van te kunnen zeggen.

SK: Oké. Ja, nou dat waren eigenlijk mijn vragen. Het was heel kort. Fijn dat je me wou helpen.

LS: Ja, geen probleem.

Name interviewee	Anoniem (R6)
Role interviewee	Visitors
Date interview	13/06/2025
SK: Goedemiddag. A: Goedemiddag. SK: Kun je je even voorstellen? A: Ik ben 23 en studeer in Leeuwarden SK: Wanneer ben je naar de Alde Feanen geweest? A: Begin juni, dus nog niet zo lang geleden. SK: Wat was je reden voor dit bezoek? A: Ik ben met vrienden een dagje gegaan om een bootje te huren en gewoon lekker het water op te gaan en van de natuur te genieten. SK: Hoe lang ben je daar geweest? A: De hele dag eigenlijk, van de ochtend tot aan het eind van de middag. SK: En wat vond je persoonlijk het mooiste aan de regio, van de Alde Feanen? A: Ik vond vooral het uitzicht over het water met al dat riet heel mooi. En de rust, dat je echt het gevoel hebt dat je er even helemaal uit bent. SK: Wat zou je beschouwen als de belangrijkste trekpleisters voor mensen zoals jij? A: Ik denk het varen. Een bootje of kano huren en het gebied vanaf het water ontdekken. Natuurlijk ook de cafetjes die je in Earnewald kan bezoeken. Lekker een drankje drinken daar na het varen. SK: Hoe zou je de voorzieningen voor bezoekers omschrijven? A: Prima. Het huren van het bootje ging heel makkelijk. We hebben ook iets gedronken bij een klein restaurantje. Langs het water zijn verder niet veel voorzieningen, maar dat vond ik niet storend. SK: Heb je ook andere bezoekers gezien tijdens je bezoek? A: Ja, vooral stellen en kleine groepjes vrienden. En een paar gezinnen met kinderen. Maar ook veel mensen zoals ik die met een paar mensen een dagje weg waren. SK: Naar wat voor activiteiten of ervaringen ben jij op zoek als je naar de Alde Feanen gaat? A: Vooral rust, mooie natuur en gewoon lekker buiten zijn. Iets als varen of een korte wandeling vind ik dan leuk. SK: Zijn er volgens jou verbeterpunten voor de Alde Feanen? A: Misschien wat duidelijkere borden over de vaarroutes, want soms wisten we niet helemaal	

zeker waar we wel of niet mochten varen. Ookal was dat misschien achteraf van te voren wel uitgelegd maar dat weet ik niet meer zeker.

SK: Zijn er bepaalde onderdelen of diensten in het toeristisch aanbod die volgens jou ontbreken?

A: **Ik vond het lastig om een plek te vinden om afval weg te gooien. En een bordje waar je een toilet kunt vinden zou ook handig zijn.**

SK: Hoe belangrijk vind je duurzaamheid van deze bestemming? Bescherming en behoud?

A: **Heel belangrijk. Het is een prachtig gebied en dat wil je graag zo houden. Al moet ik zeggen dat ik het best mee vond vallen hoeveel afval er lag. Het was best wel schoon naar mijn idee.**

SK: Nou dat waren ze al eigenlijk, dankjewel dat je even mee wou helpen.

A: Geen probleem!

Name interviewee	Onbekend (R7)
Role interviewee	Visitors
Date interview	13/06/2025
SK: Dat zijn dus precies dingen die ik wil hebben. Eerste vraag: hoelang bezoeken jullie dit gebied? I: Ja, hoe bedoel je? SK: Hoelang blijven jullie hier nu? I: We blijven ongeveer vier, vijf dagen. SK: Oh ja. Maar dit doen jullie dus vaker, naar dit gebied? I: Dit doen we haast ieder jaar. We zijn meestal twee maanden onderweg hier. SK: Waar wonen jullie normaal? I: In Alkmaar. SK: En de reden voor jullie bezoek hier, dat is...? I: Dol op Friesland. I: Dorpjes, watertjes, prachtig. Oude vaarten, weet ik veel hoe het heet. Door het gebied lopen en wandelen. SK: Is het altijd de Alde Feanen en Earnewâld? I: Dat zit er altijd wel in, ja. Maar ja, aan de overkant is het natuurlijk een dode boel geworden. SK: Ja? I: Van Earnewâld. Met dus dat grote... dat het informatiecentrum weg is. SK: Ja. I: En dat ding van die Lancaster, dat die daar ook weg is. SK: Die expositie bedoel je nu? I: Ja. SK: Dat zou nu hier zijn in...? I: Ja, en die motor is daar opgeslagen. Ja, het kan natuurlijk tijdelijk zijn, dat ze over twee, drie jaar wel weer een locatie hebben. SK: Ja, precies. Oké. En wat vinden jullie het mooiste aan de Alde Feanen specifiek of Earnewâld? Het kan ook iets algemeen zijn? I: Het gebied, het vogelgebied. SK: Vogels is ook waar jullie geïnteresseerd in zijn? I: Ja, ja, ja. Zeker.	

SK: Oké. En hoe beschouwen jullie de kwaliteit van de accommodaties hier? Ik weet niet waar jullie verblijven?

I: Wij liggen hier in de jachthaven. In de passantenhaven liggen wij.

SK: En die is goed?

I: Ja, die is gewoon top. De kwaliteit, het water, de douches, de doucheruimte.

SK: Gaan jullie altijd naar dezelfde?

I: Even gek gezegd, we weten niet zo gauw waar we anders heen moeten. Er is hier niet zoveel. Dan kom je bij particulieren terecht. Niet dat dat erg is hoor.

SK: Het is ook geen gigantisch gebied natuurlijk, dus de keuze is beperkt.

I: Nee. Maar goed, we hebben hier... Die plekken waar wij liggen dan, daar betalen we 13 euro voor een nacht. Dat is natuurlijk hartstikke mooi.

SK: Ja, dat is toch echt geen geld.

I: En vanavond gaat het vol lopen. Weekend komt eraan.

SK: Ja, in het weekend wordt het druk?

I: Ja, dit zijn allemaal mensen met vaste ligplaatsen. Daar komen wij niet tussen. Dat willen we ook niet natuurlijk.

SK: Tuurlijk. Het blijft lekker daar. Maar wat, het wordt dan druk in het weekend. Wat voor mensen zijn het dan die u daar ziet? Of is dat heel verschillend?

I: Ik denk dat er heel veel mensen zijn die uit de buurt komen en dan een weekendje met grote boten. Wel erg rumoerig vaak, hè?

I: Ook helemaal goed. Heel veel jeugd. Die gaan een drankje drinken.

SK: En hoe is de horeca hier?

I: Het schiet ook niet echt op hier. De horeca is ook niet echt..

SK: Is het te weinig, vinden jullie? Of is de kwaliteit...?

I: Het is heel weinig. We zitten ook in het voorseizoen, dus alles is voor de rest dicht.

I: Je hebt alleen Prinsenhof en Westerzeel.

SK: En de rest is dicht?

I: Ja.

SK: Ontbreken er nog onderdelen voor jullie in het toeristische aanbod?

I: Nee, voor ons zelf niet. Wij gaan direct weg hier en dan varen we weer naar Grou. Dat is eigenlijk een beetje hetzelfde als hier.

I: Het gaat zo slecht met de horeca. Er is gewoon te weinig. Ze verdienen te weinig.

SK: Het is ook seizoensgebonden natuurlijk, het gebied hier.

I: Ja, dat is het grote probleem.

I: Nu even gek gezegd, wij liggen daar bij een restaurant. Gisteren hebben we daar een bittergarnituur besteld en daarna hebben we gewoon gegeten. En dan vergelijken we met de dag ervoor: nou, zeker 20% meer.

SK: Echt?

I: Ja. Maar dat zegt ze ook: nu is voor ons het seizoen begonnen. Heel lullig voor u... maar u bent precies op dit moment gekomen dat het seizoen begint.

SK: Dus jullie hebben dat prijsverschil van dag tot dag meegemaakt?

I: Ja, precies. Bitterballen met mosterd en mayonaise... Dat hoeft er niet allemaal bij. Daarna had hij kip saté met friet. En die mayonaise kost dan 1,50. Dan denk ik: jonge jonge...

SK: Dat doen ze helemaal verkeerd.

I: Ja, ik snap het natuurlijk ook wel, maar het komt zo beroerd over.

I: Daardoor zijn er ook meer mensen die afhaken. Kijk, een uitsmijter van 12 euro... Ja oké, het zal nodig zijn, maar dat is wel prijzig.

SK: Dat betaal je overal, denk ik?

I: Nee, nee, nee.

SK: Jullie hadden het net over paaltjes en dingetjes die ontbreken. Hoe bedoelen jullie dat?

I: Nou, over informatieplekken. Net zoals hier aan de weg. Er staat nergens dat daar het Skûtsjemuseum is. Of dat daar dat vliegtuig uit de oorlog neergestort is. Dat staat nergens aangegeven.

I: Ik denk: waarom doen ze dat niet? We willen wel in het dorp iets van de Alde Feanen of zoiets.

I: Vroeger was er een restaurant aan deze kant, bij ons aan de andere kant. En dat is natuurlijk failliet gegaan. Dat is nu een informatiecentrum.

SK: Dat is het informatiecentrum dat voorheen op het eiland zat?

I: Ja. Het is jammer dat het zo uit elkaar is. En dat er minder belangstelling is voor het vliegtuig.

SK: Heb je dat wel gezien?

I: We hebben met de boot langsgevaren waar dat toestel is neergestort. Ze hebben daar een hele muur gemaakt met 251 zware granaatgaten erin. Het waren 251 toestellen, waarvan 9 niet teruggekomen zijn. En alle nabestaanden in Engeland hebben ook zo'n zilveren vogeltje gekregen, allemaal uit restanten van het vliegtuig.

SK: Dat vind ik bijzonder.

I: Ja, dat is ook bijzonder.

SK: En het is jammer dat het nu een beetje weggeschoven is?

I: Ja, dat zijn van die periodes. Dat doen ze dan een paar jaar en dan... Nou ja, omdat ze daar uit het pand moesten. Misschien vinden ze binnen een paar jaar wel weer een pand hoor. Als het tijdelijk is.

I: Het Skûtsjemuseum is ook hartstikke leuk. Maar als je het niet zou weten, dan kom je er niet. Het is ontzettend leuk. En het zijn allemaal vrijwilligers. Die doen het hartstikke leuk. Ze willen je alles vertellen. Kom, ga even zitten, neem een kopje thee. Dan vertellen ze je alles. Dat is fantastisch.

SK: Dat is ook wel een beetje de kracht van zulke plekken natuurlijk.

SK: Oké. Nou, dat was hem eigenlijk voor mij. Echt heel erg bedankt.

I: Nou, fijne vakantie!

SK: Ja, succes.

I: Je zult me niet zo tegenkomen hier.

SK: Nee, nou, ik ga mijn best doen. Fijne dag hè!

Name interviewee	Onbekend (R8)
Role interviewee	Visitors
Date interview	13/06/2025

I: Eh ja hoor, dat is goed.

SK: Super, dank u wel. Hoelang zijn jullie hier nu al?

I: We zijn vrijdag gekomen, dus dit is de derde dag, denk ik? Ja.

SK: En hoelang blijven jullie nog?

I: Tot morgen nog. We hebben een lang weekend genomen.

SK: En is dat iets wat u vaker doet? Naar deze regio komen?

I: Ja, we zijn hier wel eerder geweest hoor. Dit is derde keer misschien? Zoiets.

SK: Oke ja. En waar woont u normaal gesproken?

I: Utrecht.

SK: En wat is voor u de reden om hierheen te komen?

I: Ja vooral de natuur. Het is hier gewoon prachtig. En de rust ook. We hebben het best druk thuis, dus dit is dan gewoon echt even weg.

SK: Ja snap ik. En wat doet u hier vooral?

I: Nou, we hebben fietsen mee, dus we hebben een stukje gefietst, gisteren een boot gehuurd. Ja en wandelen ook een beetje. Gewoon beetje genieten.

SK: En de Alde Feanen, is dat dan echt waar u het meest voor komt of ook andere plekken?

I: Nou, we hebben ook weleens in de buurt van Sneek gezeten, maar dit is toch mooier, vind ik zelf.

SK: Wat vindt u dan het mooiste hier?

I: Ja die openheid hè. Die weilanden, al dat water. En we hebben ook best wat mooie vogels gezien.

SK: Oh mooi! En hoe ervaart u de kwaliteit van de accommodaties? Waar verblijft u nu?

I: We zitten op een kleine camping net buiten Earnewâld. Eh ja, is prima. Geen luxe of zo, maar schoon en netjes.

SK: En de horeca, hoe ervaart u die hier?

I: Ja dat is wel prima hoor. Je hebt een paar plekken, maar verder is er niet veel.

SK: En de kwaliteit?

I: Nou, wat we gehad hebben was op zich prima, maar het is allemaal vrij eenvoudig.

SK: Ziet u dingen die u mist in het toeristische aanbod?

I: Eh ja, misschien wat meer informatie. We gingen wandelen en dan staan er niet overal bordjes of zo. Ik wist soms niet precies waar we nou eigenlijk naar keken.

SK: Dus meer informatie bordjes?

I: Ja

SK: Ja. En hoe vindt u hoe het gebied onderhouden wordt?

I: Ja dat is hartstikke goed hoor. Het is allemaal netjes, het ziet er verzorgd uit. Heel weinig afval komen wij tegen.

SK: En merkt u iets van drukte of overlast?

I: Nee valt wel mee. Maar goed, we zitten nu ook nog niet in het hoogseizoen natuurlijk.

SK: Nee dat klopt. Ziet u dingen waarvan u denkt dat ze het beter zouden kunnen doen hier?

I: Eh, ja misschien toch iets meer om te doen behalve wandelen en vaten. Gewoon een plekje waar je een andere activiteit kan doen. En die bordjes dus hè van waar dingen staan of slecht staan aangegeven. Dat mis ik wel een beetje.

SK: Ja, dat hoor ik wel vaker inderdaad.

I: En ik vind het ook wel jammer dat het zo seizoensgebonden is. Veel dingen zijn dicht.

SK: Ja.

I: Je zou denken, mensen komen toch ook buiten het seizoen. Dan is het leuk als er wat meer open is.

SK: Ja dat kan ik me voorstellen. Oké nou, dat was hem van mijn kant. bedankt dat u even de tijd wilde nemen.

I: Geen probleem hoor. Succes met je onderzoek!

SK: Dank u wel, en nog een fijne dag!

Name interviewee	Anneke (R9)
Role interviewee	Visitors
Date interview	13/06/2025
SK: Dank u wel. Zou u zich even kort willen voorstellen? I: Eh ja, ik ben Anneke, 52 jaar, ik kom uit Amersfoort. SK: Oké. En hoelang bent u hier al? I: ik ben gisterochtend aangekomen, dus ja, het is nu de tweede dag. SK: En hoelang blijft u? I: Tot zondag, dus nog een paar dagen. SK: En wat was de reden dat u naar de Alde Feanen bent gekomen? I: Nou ja, de natuur vooral. Rust, vogels, varen. Ik had gehoord dat het hier heel mooi zou zijn en dat klopt ook wel, het is prachtig hier. SK: Wat vindt u tot nu toe het mooiste aan het gebied? I: Ja, toch het water en die rietkragen overal. En de vogels, dat vind ik zelf heel leuk eigenlijk haha. SK: En als u denkt aan trekpleisters, wat zou u zeggen dat de belangrijkste zijn hier? I: Nou ja, gewoon het gebied zelf hè. Je vaart hier rond of je wandelt en dat is eigenlijk al genoeg. En ik ben straks van plan om even naar dat Skûtsjemuseum te gaan. Dat lijkt me ook leuk. SK: Hoe ervaart u de accommodaties en voorzieningen hier? I: Nou, ik sta met de camper op een kleine camping hier net buiten het dorp. Dat is prima hoor, alles netjes. Ik merk wel dat er niet super veel voorzieningen zijn hier in de buurt. Maar dat hoort er ook wel een beetje bij vind ik. SK: En wat voor soort bezoekers ziet u hier? I: Eh... vooral stellen, wat oudere mensen. Mensen met boten. Van alles wat eigenlijk. SK: En zelf, waar bent u naar op zoek tijdens uw bezoek? I: Rust vooral. Lekker wandelen, een beetje varen. Ik heb net een klein bootje gehuurd voor morgen. SK: Zijn er dingen waarvan u denkt: dat zou beter kunnen hier? I: Ja, misschien wat meer plekjes waar je onderweg wat kan drinken of zo. Ik liep net een stuk en dan is er gewoon niks. Dat mis ik wel een beetje. SK: Zijn er dingen die u mist in het toeristisch aanbod?	

I: Hmm misschien meer activiteiten voor andere doelgroepen. Ik kan me voorstellen dat voor de jeugd dit gebied niet heel erg spannend is. Zoals voor mensen zoals mij kan ik lekker lopen en tot rust komen. Maar ik kan me voorstellen dat dit voor de jongere mensen niet zo leuk is.

SK: Hoe belangrijk vindt u duurzaamheid hier?

I: Heel belangrijk. Dat is ook een reden waarom ik in zo'n gebied ben. Het is nog zo'n mooi, ongerept gebied. Ik hoop echt dat het zo blijft.

SK: Dank u wel, dat waren mijn vragen eigenlijk. Heel erg bedankt dat u even de tijd wilde nemen.

I: Graag gedaan hoor, veel succes ermee!

SK: Dank u wel, fijne dag nog hier!

I: Ja, jij ook!

Appendix E - Implementation tables

Recommendation 1: Off-season marketing communication plan				
Step	Action	Details	Responsible	Deadline
1	Invite stakeholders	VRNOF/RMTNOF invites all entrepreneurs, organizations, and companies for a meeting. Attach a 1-page infographic summarizing the general campaign plan.	VRNOF	May 2026 – Send invitations before the summer holidays to secure attention and participation.
2	Initial stakeholder meeting	Organize meeting with interested stakeholders: It Fryske Gea, museum owners, and local entrepreneurs. Define & Communicate objectives Finalize and share: Objective, target group, and off-season tourism offerings (birdwatching, hiking, cultural attractions). Create and distribute a summary document. Assign two or three stakeholders as responsible for the project	VRNOF	June 2026 – Hold the meeting before peak summer starts; easier to get everyone together.
3	Create content	Recruit media students or hire professionals to produce exciting new content showcasing off-season activities. Deliver: at least 10 edited photos, 3–4 short vertical videos (reels), and 1–2 montage videos. Store in shared project folder.	Project group Media students	August–September 2026 – Shoot new photos/videos as the landscape shifts into autumn colors
4	Launch digital campaign	Set up paid ad campaigns on Facebook and Instagram. Audience: Netherlands, age 30–65, interests in nature/culture. Budget:	Project group	October 1, 2026 – Kick off paid ads and active promotion at the start of the off-season

5	Monitor KPI's	Track campaign performance by checking KPI's Monitor reach, clicks and views with Meta Business Suite Monitor visitor numbers during the off-season	Project group	Mid-October 2026 onwards – Begin monitoring and keep adjusting monthly until April 2027.
---	---------------	--	---------------	--

Costs

Employee costs

VRNOF employees receive their normal hourly wage

- Estimate of 70 hours

Ad costs:

- Minimum recommended daily budget

€10/day → ~€300/month

- Realistic daily budget for regional tourism campaign

€20/day → ~€600/month

(this allows for wider targeting and more impressions, especially in months when you want to push more content)

- High-intensity daily budget (for campaign peaks)

€30/day → ~€900/month

(useful for specific events or school holidays)

Cost breakdown

- CPM (cost per 1,000 views) estimated at €7–12 → with €600/month you could expect 50,000–85,000 ad impressions monthly.
- CPC average €0,80 → with €600/month you could buy 750 clicks to your website or landing page monthly.
- **Recommendation**
- Base plan: Start at €20/day (€600/month) → balanced reach + flexibility to adjust up or down.
- Annual budget estimate: €600 x 6 months (typical off-season) = **€3,600 total for advertising.**

Additional comments:

- Resident satisfaction: It is important to monitor how the locals experience this shift in tourism, as there was a slight increase in negative perception of tourism during the high-season
- Sustainability considerations: Important to ensure that the increase in visitors does not disturb the wildlife too much. Listen to what the experts from It Fryske Gea have to say
- Content refresh: Make sure to update photos, videos and content annually in order to keep the campaign engaging.

Recommendation 4 Improve Signage

Step	Action	Details	Responsible	Deadline
1	Create vacancy for research	Create a vacancy for this specific research. Either for students from ITM for a dissertation project or contact institution such as ETFI.	VRNOF	September 15
2	Conduct research	Commission field research to map existing signs, identify missing or unclear signage, and analyse visitor navigation challenges. This can involve collaboration with It Fryske Gea rangers and local guides.	Students / ETFI	November 30
3	Develop signage concept	Based on research findings, design clear and consistent signage standards, including directional signs at entry points, informative signs for attractions, and signs highlighting lesser-known areas	Students / ETFI	Januari 15
4	Create signage plan	Compile findings and design proposals into a comprehensive signage improvement plan, including recommended sign types, materials, placement priorities, as well as an installation strategy.	Students / ETFI	Februari 15
5	Present & coordinate	Share the plan with municipalities, It Fryske Gea, and funding partners. Collect feedback, finalize approvals, and secure funding for implementation.	VRNOF, It Fryske Gea	April 30
6	Implement signage	Install new signs according to the plan, starting with critical locations identified in research.	Contractor	October 31
7	Evaluate & adjust	Monitor visitor satisfaction and navigation issues after implementation; adjust or add signage as needed based on visitor and stakeholder feedback	VRNOF	November 1

Costs

1) VRNOF Staff Time (Monitoring & Coordination)

- 20 hours 50/hour (average including overheads) → €1,000

2) Research & Concept Development

- If using students for a dissertation/internship: minimal direct cost, but budget €500 for incidental expenses (travel, materials, meetings).
- If outsourced to ETFI: estimated €4,000–6,000 for a full research & concept report.

3) Production of Signs

- Directional & information signs (est. 20–30 signs €200–400 each including design, printing, weatherproofing, and hardware): €4,000–10,000 total.

4) Installation

- Contractor labor, transport, and equipment for installing signs (est. 3–5 days @ €1,000/day): €3,000–5,000.

Total Estimated Cost Range: €9,500 – €20,000

Additional comments:

- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Early and clear communication with It Fryske Gea, municipalities, and funding partners will be key to securing support and avoiding delays in approval processes.
- **Accessibility & Inclusivity:** Consider incorporating icons, colorblind-friendly design, and multilingual options where relevant for diverse visitors.
- **Sustainability:** Prioritize durable, eco-friendly materials for signs to minimize future maintenance costs and environmental impact.
- **Wayfinding Technology:** Explore digital options (QR codes linking to maps or audio guides) to complement physical signs and enhance visitor experience cost-effectively.
- **Maintenance Plan:** Include a schedule for regular checks and a small budget for repairs or replacements over time.

Research project in Alde Feanen

Improve visitor signage

Project description:

The Alde Feanen National Park is a unique nature area attracting thousands of visitors annually. However, interviews and observations show that unclear or missing signs make it difficult for visitors to navigate the park, causing frustration, uneven visitor flows, and underuse of certain attractions. As part of a regional effort to



What we want:

- Conduct field research in the Alde Feanen to map existing signage
- Identify unclear, inconsistent, or missing signs
- Comprehensive research report with visual documentation (photos/maps)



Interested

Please send a short motivation letter to:

Henk@rmtnof.nl

☎ [00.0]

Applications accepted until [application deadline, e.g., June 30, 2026].