

HUK-France Call for local projects 2021: Climate and Biodiversity

Application form

Applications must be submitted **online** by **Monday 20 September 2021** to UKFrancefund21@fco.gov.uk

Local authorities, including Combined Authorities and MCAs, will be notified of the outcome **by Monday 11 October 2021.**

Presentation and details of the project

1. Local authority details

UK Local authority partner

- Local/Combined authority : Helston Town Council/Cornwall Council
- Town/County : Cornwall
- Address : c/o HDTTA Plougasnou Secretary, Amberley, Monument Road. Helston Cornwall TR13 8HE
- Telephone : +441326619688
- Email : hdtasec@gmail.com
- Website : helstontwinning.org

Contact details for lead officer:

- Name: Julia Chambers
- Position: Secretary

French local authority partner

- Name : Comité de Jumelage Plougasnou - Helston
- Town/County : Plougasnou / Finistère
- Adress: 5, impasse Pierre de Coubertin, 29630 Plougasnou
- Telephone: +33 (0)2 98 67 83 87
- Email: helstonplougasnou@gmail.com

- Website: <https://jumelageplougasnouhelston.wordpress.com/>

Contact details

- Name: Christine Bon
- Position: Chair
- Email: Christine.bon@laposte.net

2. Project description

- a) Brief description of existing relationship, if there is one, between the two partners (100 words)

The Twinning between Plougasnou and Helston started in 2010. A solid friendship has developed through multiple contacts and group meetings during this decade of exchanges: thematic visits, hosted families, cultural discoveries. The municipalities are stakeholders and succeeded in involving citizens from both sides of the Channel in their most precious celebrations: Flora Day festival in Helston and the ceremonies of the resistance highlighting the role of British soldiers during WW2 for Plougasnou.

Year 2021 was marked by the realization of zoom class students exchanges from college to college thanks to the principals and teachers of Helston City College and Collège de Plougasnou.

- b) Title of the project

Best practices in sustainable development in Finistère and Cornwall: let's share our local knowledge with our friends from over the Channel.

- c) Project description (up to 400 words): What are you proposing and why?

The municipalities of Plougasnou and Helston are located in the same geographical area: the Channel coast, highly exposed to the risk of maritime or farming pollution, but also nature reserves and biodiversity sanctuaries, particularly for botanical and birds life. These two municipalities lie in comparable environments, both maritime and rural, with omnipresent farming, a small industry but with large tourism representing a major economic stake for the future. Due to the increasing demand for nature and ecotourism, this sector is being redefined. In addition, the arrival of new populations of inhabitants from large cities since the Covid pandemic leads us to be particularly concerned about the preservation of these unique, magnificent, but fragile environments.

Beyond the cultural dimension between the two regions - Brittany and Cornwall - which sometimes recognize themselves in a common identity of "Celtic Nation", the conceptual and practical differences in the fight against climate change or for the reduction of the carbon footprint are still quite significant between France and Great Britain. These differences affect our two municipalities, nevertheless located in similar physical and geographical environments and draw directions that deserve to be investigated.

The notion of sustainability, for example, albeit the recent attempt to translate it into French, only very imperfectly covers what the British mean by this term and is not satisfactory for the French either. Likewise, the "best practices" on the British side of the Channel are only called "good practices" in France ...

Our project therefore aims to discover, absorb and disseminate the knowledge of the citizens of the two communities on both sides of the Channel from their daily life practices, accurate dimensions of the fight against pollution and for sustainable development. In fact, to overcome the cultural gaps which still persist in understanding the modes of positive action displayed in the two territories to face the risks involved by climate change.

The purpose of our project is therefore to discover the best sustainable development practices in the two municipalities, and to share them, through lived experiences, exchanges, dialogue and meetings.

We are therefore applying to the 2021 UK Embassy call for projects "Climate and biodiversity" to allow a group of informed citizens from Plougasnou and Helston, of various ages, to carry out a study trip to discover and present what are these best practices on both sides of the Channel through various devices, actions, projects, initiatives from the NGOs and the local, institutional and citizen policies, in order to report them afterwards to their fellow citizens.

It is thus a question of giving a concrete base, by exemplarity and testimony, to the cross-Channel cultural references in terms of environmental preservation, contribution to the reduction of pollution, waste recycling, protection of the environment biodiversity, renewable energies, etc.

- d) Objectives (up to 400 words): What do you hope to achieve from the project in the short and long term? How will your community benefit from it?

Concretely, our project aims to enable a small heterogeneous group, of 8 to 20 people, of various ages, including officials, political leaders and NGOs chairs, as well as volunteer families with children and adolescents, who will be considered as "Plougasnou - Helston Citizen Ambassadors of Sustainable Development" to travel across the Channel to observe local practices and report back on their return to their country.

The grant - if we get it - should be used to cover the expenses related to maritime transport (Brittany Ferries), the fuel costs to get there by carpooling for 4 to 6 vehicles, the parking costs, as well as the cost of two group meals per person per stay, knowing that accommodation will be in private homes. It would also be used, on a case-by-case basis, to pay entry fees to sites (Eden Project in Cornwall, for example). Finally, it could allow us to pay young entrepreneurs, environmental educators for dedicated visits (such as Flore Loened in Plougasnou). Visits to remarkable sites and meetings with professionals and volunteers involved in sustainable development are therefore the basis of the project.

On the two pilot municipalities scale, witnesses of their own specific territory, the project should allow the strengthening of cooperation between France and United Kingdom in the short and long term on the one hand by enlightening the way of thinking, of designing positive ecological action in everyday actions and on the other hand by highlighting the practices considered to be the best in terms of participation in sustainable development.

The expected results of this project are:

- In the short term, to encourage curiosity, to arouse astonishment, to raise awareness of the difference in perception of sustainable development in action on each side of the Channel.
- In the medium term, to give back to stakeholders and decision-makers, that is to say to citizens - children and adults -, to the officials and professionals of each municipality, the discoveries made in Brittany and Cornwall.
- In the long term, to draw inspiration from the best practices observed on both sides in order to be able to reproduce models that may prove useful to the twinned communities.

Consequently, the project will concretely benefit citizens and managers of public policies by broadening the scope of possibilities in terms of sustainable development on both sides of the Channel.

- e) Evaluation (up to 400 words): How will you measure and communicate the outcomes of your project? Partners will be asked to send a project report 4 months after completion.

In terms of evaluation and communication objectives, the project could provide the following elements:

- Preparatory meetings with local authorities, association managers and targeted professionals for the optimal organization of the visits (prior summative assessment to set the objectives to achieve and the tasks to accomplish);

- Press releases in local periodicals before the trips and at each stage of the project.
- The creation of a Facebook page dedicated to the project allowing the publication of daily travel journals in the form of "surprise reports" relayed on the participants' social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, etc);
- Data collections (institutional documentation and activity reports, press kits) and testimonials from resource people on site;
- A reasoned inventory of best practices gathered from both sides of the Channel: 1) from the point of view of welcoming presenters and 2) from the point of view of "surprised" visitors.
- The edition of a directory book of sites visited and of the people met which can be used as a basis for future discussions to follow up these pioneering trips.
- A review / assessment meeting of the trip for each group within each association.
- The production of presentation materials in the form of Power Point © slideshows to attractively disseminate the findings and results of the study trips and to create incentives to go there for people who will attend the restitution conferences.
- A restitution of the outcomes by interactive conferences / debates to citizens, local authorities and professionals in sustainable development.
- Publications, such as reports of discovery visits, on the websites of the two Twinning and of the two municipalities of Helston and Plougasnou.
- Conferences in schools and colleges of the two municipalities on the discoveries made by the participants;
- Communication exhibitions on posters (with texts, photographs, comparative tables whenever possible) reporting on discoveries made during study trips;
- A communication in the program "Carnets de Campagne" on France Inter, the French national broadcasting.

The final report of the experience, co-written by the participants under the supervision of the two presidents of the Twinning in Helston and Plougasnou which will highlight the most astonishing experiences on both sides.

- f) Bilateral cooperation (up to 400 words): how will this project reinforce **environmental cooperation** between the UK and France?

But then how can two small towns at the end of the world help to change the world? This could be the preliminary questioning which leads to the realization of our project.

While it's generally accepted that ecological progress is made by acting locally while having a long-term global vision ("Think global, act local"), we are very poor at knowing how environmental issues and the ethics of respect of biodiversity are regarded by our neighbours who nevertheless live in very similar geophysical and natural environments to ours.

But how do our neighbours deal with these issues? this is the specific question that our project should answer to. On the scale of two modest municipalities, one - Helston - with 11,560 inhabitants and the other, much smaller, with 3,000 inhabitants - Plougasnou -, environmental cooperation between France and the United Kingdom could begin in relying on the trusting relationships established over the past 10 years between our two municipalities.

If it is too early to already foresee the possible consequences of our project, we can however imagine continuing in the future the action by putting in contact specific associations of the non-profit sector ("Charity shops" in the United Kingdom - very present in Helston - and solidarity recycling in France - very interesting in the vicinity of Plougasnou), or even established trades (farmers, artisans, fishermen...) so that best practices solutions for preserving biodiversity, environmental resilience and the fight against global warming can be shared and widely disseminated in our countries.

Finally, the idea is that environmental cooperation between France and the United Kingdom must begin at the level of the inhabitants before being built at the levels of local, regional and national policies in order to persist in the long term. The relay of our experience in the national radio broadcasting (France Inter, in the program "Carnet de Campagne", with a 1.5 million audience for example) could encourage other communities to carry out exchanges of local environmental knowledge based on the same pattern of sustainable twinning between France and the United Kingdom.

Incidentally, we are also convinced that such an exchange, based on benevolent curiosity in a perspective of absolute reciprocity, could have a beneficial effect in re-enchanting the prospects of Franco-British exchanges after the deleterious effects of the Covid pandemic and the fears that Brexit has generated in terms of the sustainability of relationships on both sides of the Channel.

- g) Actions (up to 400 words): Please describe briefly the practical steps you will need to take to implement this project including a rough project plan.

Rough project plan:

The preparatory actions for each municipality will be set in a preliminary phase to create the Project Steering Committees including active volunteers from the two twinnings and to select the people wishing to share in the trip on the basis of volunteering and real commitment in the project. Particular attention will be paid to the participation and involvement of young people, with, for example for Plougasnou, involving the Municipal Youth Council.

Initially, it will be interesting to make an inventory of observable good practice sites and then to cast the places of visits and interesting local sites from the perspective of sustainable development, protection of biodiversity and the fight against climate change. Secondly, it will be necessary to identify the responsible resource persons and organize the conditions for visits and meetings.

Concretely, our project "Good sustainable development practices in Finistère and Cornouailles: sharing our local knowledge with our friends from across the Channel" should take place according to the following schedule:

1 - Spring 2022: Plouganists' "Go" visit to Helston for a week, including 2 days devoted to travel and installation and 5 days of site visits and discoveries of sustainable development actions.

This visit is prepared and organized in advance, either independently for places that the group of travelers can discover on their own (Eden project for instance) or following the advice of Helston correspondents.

Design of study trip evaluation and feedback tools.

2 - "Return" visit of the Helstonians in autumn 2022 for the same duration, with a program of visits organized for them.

This trip is prepared and organized in advance, with the help of correspondents from Plougasnou who prepare all site visits and organize meetings with local resource persons.

Design of study trip evaluation and feedback tools.

Assessment of the project carried out jointly by the two teams and production of the final report to be submitted to the British Embassy in Paris.

For Plougasnou and its immediate region, for example, the following devices and programs can be presented:

- The "Dark corridor" project for the protection of bats with the renovation of urban lighting.
- The agreement with the Bird Protection League (Plougasnou is the only rural and coastal town in France to have such an agreement) and a presentation of bird protection areas.
- The "tide boxes" made from recycled pallet wood which allow walkers on the long-distance hiking trail along the coast (GR 34) to deposit plastic waste and sea refuse found during walks.
- Summer environmental events for tourists, very successful, as well as the Nature Festival for the local population (with intergenerational workshops and dedicated walks).
- Dedicated nature tours by Flore Loened and the environmental initiation center of Lanmeur (CPIE) and its flora and fauna discovery programs (otters, seals, torda penguins, puffins, etc.) .
- The "Healthy and sustainable canteen" plan, which could give rise to a presentation by elected officials and cooks followed by a collective meal at the college in the presence of the students. Upstream, a visit to the local organic farms that supply the village canteens can be made.
- District heating equipment (gymnasium equipped with solar panels, schools and town hall benefiting from biomass pellet boilers, etc.).
- Local environmental protection associations and their specific actions.
- The "zero waste" program implemented by the community of municipalities which allows the discovery of multiple local actions (training and workshops for the production of cleaning or hygiene products without synthetic chemicals, drying of foodstuffs, cooking workshops, etc.) or to visit crucial places in terms of sustainable development (waste reprocessing plant, "Cellaouate" factory for recycling paper and old newspapers as insulation materials).

For Helston and its immediate region, for example, the following devices and programs may be presented:

- A tour and talk about the extensive work of the Helston Climate Action Group which has pledged to make Helston carbon neutral by 2030 and has already set up the following initiatives:
 - Incredible Edible Helston (Community Garden)
 - Helston Footprints (supporting individuals and groups to assess and reduce their carbon footprints)

- Helston Repair Café
 - Forest for Helston (community tree planting programme with 2,000 trees already planted)
 - Nature Restoration (enhancing green spaces, eg wildflower meadow in the local park)
 - Local Food Hub (Click and collect Farmers' Market)
 - Helston Community Larder (redistribution of surplus food)
- Helston Town Council has set up a Plastic Free initiative "Plastic Free Helston" to educate and encourage Helstonians to reduce plastic use. How has it done this and what advice can the Council give?
 - How local farms are adapting their methods to protect the natural environment, for example a visit to Roscuick Farm, St Martin, an organic farm, powered by renewable energy with farming methods designed to aid carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat creation and to Roskilly's Dairy Farm, which uses its own organic milk to make ice-cream.
 - How Cornwall Council is reducing waste going to landfill by encouraging re-use, recycling and composting and using waste left over to generate power through its partnership with SUEZ at the energy recovery centre at St Dennis
 - How the National Trust is restoring wetland, managing the diverse woodland habitat and bringing Cornwall's largest natural lake back to life at the Penrose Estate in Helston
 - There are a number of local industries committed to producing quality goods without impacting the environment, including Fourth Element, a company making diving and swimwear from waste plastic bottles and Yemaya Collections who make bracelets from ghostnets.
 - Will you be able to spend the funding by 28 February 2022?

Yes	X
No	

We plan to incur the main expenses (round trip ferry costs estimated at around £ 170 per person, bookings at Eden Project which have an entrance fee of £ 30 per adult, etc.) before 28 February 2022 for stays scheduled to take place in spring and fall 2022.

- h) If you were only to receive part of the money you bid for, would you be able to use other funds available to you to make up the deficit?

Our two twinning associations have very modest own funds, which mainly depend on membership fees and fundraising actions organized on various occasions. However, the impact of even partial funding from the Embassy of the United Kingdom to support this project could perhaps convince the local authorities to supplement the funding for this new kind of exchange.

The Department of Finistère and the Cornwall Council are engaged in a long-term partnership, which could help the project in the event that no other co-financing could be found.