

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN



Vest-Agder County Council
Norway



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Endorsement

The actions outlined in this action plan was endorsed by the regional advisory group meeting in 28 September 2019. The group consist of administrative staff (head of development, planning or cultural departments) in the following entities: Vest-Agder County Council, Aust-Agder County Council, Tvedestrand municipality, Arendal municipality, Lindesnes municipality, Farsund municipality.

At the meeting, the group also decided on the allocation of staff and financial resources available for the implementation of the action plan.

On behalf of the group and as responsible for the financial management and responsible staff resources I hereby endorse the implementation of the action plan.

Yvonne Fernmar Willumsen

Head of cultural heritage department



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Part I – general information

Project: Management of heritage in coastal landscapes; PGI00031 HERICOAST.

Partner organisation: Vest-Agder County Council

Country: Norway

NUTS 2 region: Agder og Rogaland.

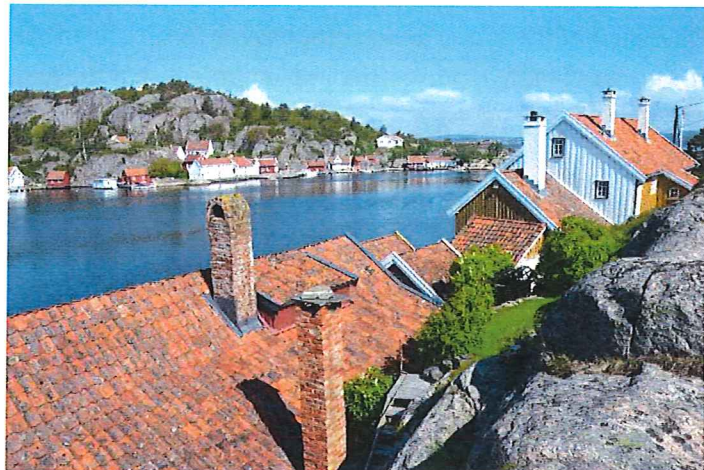
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Part II – Policy context

Existing regional policy framework

The action plan of Vest-Agder County Council aims to impact the regional development policy instrument *Strategy for cultural heritage sector in Vest-Agder (2014- 2020)*.

The policy instrument is managed by Vest-Agder County Council and was adopted by the county council in 2014.



The strategy describes eight thematic priorities. One is the historical outports on the archipelago of Agder. The strategy recognises the unique heritage value of these small townscape as defining elements in the coastal landscape. As this ensemble of coastal heritage is spread over two neighbouring counties and fourteen municipalities, the legal responsibility for protection of this heritage is divided between multiple public authorities, both local, regional and national. Consequently, the differences in how the individual outports are managed is considerable. These stem from different management traditions, professional and financial resources and differences in type and content of the development plans put into use by the municipalities. This diversity in public management is a key challenge for the protection of these heritage assets as part of the larger cultural landscape when faced with an intense demand for redevelopment of the landscape for recreational purpose. Any improvement of the heritage management must be developed in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, both public and non-public, in order to be efficient, durable and sustainable in the longer perspective.

The strategy's priority on historical outports was later elaborated in a more specific strategy for the management and development of historical outports in Agder called Worldclass Outports of Agder, 2016-2020. This strategy was made in cooperation with Aust-Agder County Council and was adapted by both institutions in 2016. The strategy contains 4 thematic priorities in need of more work and resources. These priorities are (i) strengthening local knowledge and support, (ii) preserving the historical outports, (iii) research and documentation and (iv) innovation and cooperation.

An expected impact of this regional policy framework is to influence the municipal planning framework. Through professional support and guidance of the municipalities, the county council will stimulate to development of new or revised local zoning plans for the coastal cultural environments. Key environments are Lyngør, Svinør, Merdø and Loshavn.

It is expected that the Regional Action Plan will impact on the professional capacity the county council to influence local zoning plan. This will mainly be done through developing new guidelines for improving visitor attractiveness and building an evidence base for public planning. These guidelines and evidence base will be used by the County Council in their dialogue with the municipalities when they work on revising their local zoning plans. By September 2019 local zoning plans are under revision in Merdø and Svinør.

Regional policy framework after 2020

As the targeted regional policy framework will end in 2020 the Regional Action Plan is also expected to influence the development of the new regional policy framework that will be valid after 2020. The development of this policy framework will start in 2019 and will consist of two separate policies: The Regional Development Plan and the Plan Strategy.

From 2020 Vest-Agder County Council and Aust-Agder Council will be consolidated into one county council (Agder County Council). In 2019 Agder County Council will adopt both a new Regional Development Plan (Regionplan Agder 2030) and in 2020 a new Plan Strategy containing a priority of regional plan activity over the next four years (2020 – 2024). A part of the two new policy frameworks will be an assessment of the key objectives and planning needs for the cultural heritage sector. This will set the outline for how the county council should revise the strategy for the cultural heritage sector that will expire in 2020.

A final report summarizing the project will be presented to the politicians at the county council as a separate political proposition on generalisation of the projects results at one of their planned meetings in 2019 or 2020. Here the politicians will have the possibility to give recommendations for how to adopt the project results as part of the implementation of the Regional Development Plan, the new Plan Strategy and available funding schemes.

Regional Development plan

The Regional Development Plan (Regionplan Agder 2030) will outline the overall objective of five thematic priorities. The cultural heritage sector will be part of the priority on culture. Together with these objectives a new regional funding scheme (Regional Development Funds) is expected to be set up from 2020 with the aim to support implementation of regional development project. The regional plan is expected to be adapted by the existing county councils in June 2019.

If the results of the Regional Action Plan are positive it might influence the management of the Regional Development Plan e.g. by influencing the actions that will be set out to achieve the priorities defined in the Regional Development Plan and with that also the allocation of funds from Regional Development Funds.

The plan strategy

Following the Norwegian plan and building act, the regional plan strategy is the only mandatory plan document that the county councils have to develop and adopt. The plan strategy will decide on whether the previous strategies on historical outports should be extended, revised or supplemented with a legal binding plan document such as a regional management plan for the historical outports of Agder.



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The plan and building requires that such a plan document is adopted by the politicians at latest within one year after the inauguration of the newly elected politicians at the county council, hence every 4th year. Elections for the new county council will take place on 9th September 2019. The inauguration of the new county council will follow shortly after probably in October 2019. Following the legal requirements, the county council has to adopt the final version of the plan strategy before October 2020. However, based on experiences from previous strategy, it is expected that the county council will adopt the final version of the new plan strategy at latest at their meeting in June 2020.

The pilot action will have the possibility to influence this work by feeding the results into the knowledge base used in the development of the plan document before the political meeting in June 2020.

Funding schemes for implementation of Regional Action Plan

In June 2018 Vest-Agder County Council and Aust-Agder County Council voted for funding of additional resources in 2019. The purpose is to exploit the results achieved in Hericoast-project up until 2018.

The allocation of resources was restricted to cover only the staff costs needed to implement the actions specified in the Regional Action Plan. Reasons for this was budget limitation. Therefore, costs for external expertise needed to implement the actions has to be covered by external funding schemes. For action 1 in the Regional Action Plan, Vest-Agder County Council plan to apply for the national funding scheme for value creation and cultural heritage managed by the Directorate of Cultural Heritage. However, for action 2 in the Regional Action Plan "knowledge on public management" no relevant regional or national funding schemes are available to cover the external costs needed to transfer of the good practise from Donegal to Vest-Agder. An application to implement a pilot action has therefore been submitted to the INTERREG Europe programme.

Regional funding schemes after 2020

A new regional funding scheme (Regional Development Funds) is expected to be set up from 2020 with the aim to support implementation of regional development project. If the results of the pilot actions influence the regional policy framework after 2020 in a positive way, it is likely that the Regional Development Funds can supply financial support needed to generalise the results.

Furthermore, there is in Norway an ongoing reform on the county councils adjusting their role and responsibilities from 2020. As part of this reform the county council will gain a large role within cultural heritage management in order to secure its role in regional development. As part of this, it is expected that the county council from 2020 will increase its permanent staff resources in the cultural heritage department. Again, if results are positive it is likely that the increase in staff resources can be used in the generalisation of this work.



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Regional Development Policies

Regional development plan *Regionplan Agder 2020*. To be revised in 2019.
Improved cultural experiences for inhabitants and visitors as one of five priorities.
Managed by Vest-Agder County Council & Aust-Agder County Council

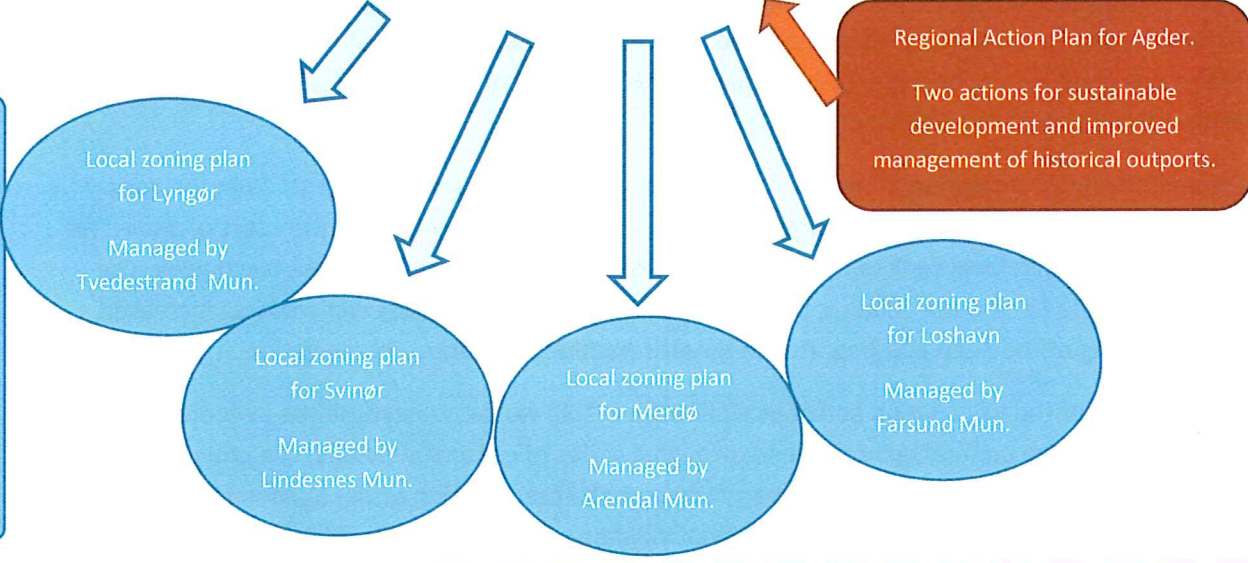
Regional
planning
strategy 2019-
2023. To be
revised in
2019-2020

Strategy for cultural heritage sector in Vest-Agder
Kulturarv 2020.
Improved management of historical outposts as one
out of eight priorities.
Managed by Vest-Agder County Council

Strategy for cultural heritage sector in Aust-Agder
Et godt varp 2014- 2017.
Improved management of historical outposts as
one priority.
Managed by Aust-Agder County Council

Regional strategy for preservation and development of historical outposts *Uthavner i verdensklasse*.
4 thematic priorities in need of more work and resources. These priorities are (i) strengthening local knowledge and support, (ii) preserving the historical outposts, (iii) research and documentation and (iv) innovation and cooperation.
Managed by Vest-Agder County Council & Aust-Agder County Council

Local Development Policies



Funding schemes

Regional Development Programme. Funding scheme for implementation of priorities for the Regional Development Plan.
Funding staff costs for action 1 and 2.
Funding shared between Vest-Agder County Council and Aust-Agder County Council, 60 / 40 %.

INTERREG EUROPE-programme. Funding of Pilot Action.
Possible funding external costs for action 2.

Vest-Agder County Council.
Funding 25% of external costs for action 1.

Aust-Agder County Council.
Funding 25% of external costs for action 1.

Programme for value creation and cultural heritage. Funding 50% of external costs for action 1.
Managed by the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage.

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

Action 1 – improving attractiveness

The background

The University of Molise implemented the project Life + Maestrale from 2015 to 2018. The Policy Learning Platform has adopted the project as an expert-validated good practise.

The coastal environments with special dunal habitats along Molise region are characterised by a fragile biodiversity and high attractiveness for leisure activities.

The good practice Life + Maestrale adopts an integrated approach for both enhancing and protecting this fragile coastal environment. Through three years, the University of Molise collaborated with local communities and public authorities on specific conservation and valorisation activities.



The small cultural environments along the coast of Agder can also be considered as fragile but highly attractive components of a coastal landscape. For the public authorities (both county councils and local municipalities) improving access to these assets without compromising their qualities and visitor attractiveness has been a major challenge.

Through the implementation of Action 1 Vest-Agder will seek to transfer elements from the good practice Life + Maestrale to the management of the cultural environments on the coast of Agder. As in Molise, Vest-Agder will seek to combine a series of conservation and valorisation activities. The overall rationale behind the action is that increased access and awareness will entail an increased understanding of the need and importance for preservation measures and regulation.

The objective of the valorisation activities (action 1.1 – 1.3.) will be to increase the awareness of the unique value of the cultural environments through a series of cultural activities. The objective of the conservation activities (action 1.4-) will be to improve the preservation of the build heritage through a series of education activities on the traditional building techniques and materials.

In the same manner as it was done in Molise, Vest-Agder will seek to establish a cooperation with key stakeholder in order implement the awareness-raising activities. Where the key stakeholder in Molise was the university, the key stakeholder in Vest-Agder are the regional art museum (SKMU Sørlandets Kusntmuseum) and the regional tourism network USUS. The regional art museum posits a great knowledge about the cultural history (in particular art) related to the outports as well as experience in doing educational and awareness-raising activities with visitors and local population. The regional tourism network USUS posits on their side a great knowledge on how to facilitate cultural experiences for visitors with the purpose of increasing the general visitor attractiveness. A key competence in on the digitalisation of culture content.

Key output and policy impact

The key output of the action will be a set of guidelines for improving visitor attractiveness in the historical outports.

Impact on existing policy framework

The guidelines will improve the capacity of the county council to provide guidance to the municipalities in their development and management of their local zoning plans.

Impact on policy framework after 2020

The guidelines will also provide suggestions for how the county council, municipalities, museums and tourism network can continue working on the topic. As such, the guidelines will serve as an input when the Regional Plan will be specified into concrete actions.

Actions

- 1.1. Dissemination and information: improvement of visitor's travel itinerary and stimulating desire for travel. WP1 includes actions such as (i) historical outports on VisitNorway, VisitSørlandet based on photo, film, histories; (ii) packaging of visitor/travel products in the online national database Tellus; (iii) information using suitable GPS-based digital technology; (iv) design manual for signs and other physical installations.
- 1.2. Stimulating to increased activity with the aim of increasing public awareness of historical outports and engaging new user groups. WP2 includes action suchs as (i) facilitating an art exhibition in and about the historical outports; (ii) involvement of public culture school (Kulturskolen) in order to create activity around the theme historical outports; (iii) seminar for young artists about new cultural expressions linked to the theme historical outports.
- 1.3. Implementing 1 – 2 pilots on physical facilitation, dissemination and experiences at 1 – 2 historical outports.
- 1.4. Increasing awareness of cultural heritage values and maintenance of buildings and cultural environments amongst private owners and craftsmen. WP4 includes seminars for private owners and craftsmen in the historical outports.
- 1.5. Summarising results in a set of guidelines for how to improve visitor attractiveness and dissemination the results to the key municipalities.

Players involved

SKMU Sørlandets Kunstmuseum. The museum covers the entire region of Agder. This means that the museum is a regional resource centre in the art field. SKMU Sørlandets Kunstmuseum is engaged in a wide range of activities, which include displaying its art collection and temporary exhibitions with Norwegian and international art. In addition the museum has an extended educational program. SKMU will be a key partner in WP 1 – 3.

USUS is a network devoted to enterprises operating in the travel, experience and culture industries in the Agder (Sørlandet) and Telemark regions in Norway. USUS is dedicated to focusing on repeat business and the value of existing customers. USUS will be a key partner in WP 1 – 3.

Timeframe

2018 – 2019.

Costs

Staff costs for 1 person in 15 months. October 2018 – December 2019.

The overall budget for external costs for 1.1. – 1.4 is 2 000 000 NOK. The regional steering group for the action plan implementation will decide the final allocation in a meeting in 28 September 2019.

Funding sources

National funding has been obtained from the national programme for value creation and cultural heritage managed by the Directorate of Cultural Heritage. For activities in 2018/2019 Vest-Agder County Council has been allocated 1 000 000 NOK.

Regional funding has been obtained through three political decisions:

1. Staff resources for October to December 2018 cf. FT-decision, December 2017, 62/17 *Årsbudsjett 2018*
2. The allocation of national funds was supplemented by additional 1 000 000 NOK from regional funds from Vest-Agder County Council and AUst-Agder County Council, cf. FU-decision, June, 83/18;
3. Additional regional funding for staff resources for year 2019 from the Regional Development Fund, cf. FT-decision, June 2018, 44/18 *Uthavner i verdensklasse – statusoppdatering*.

Action 2 – building an evidence base

The background

The good practise Seascape Character Assessment is implemented by Donegal County Council from 2014 and onwards. The good practise uses digital tools for spatial planning to collate data to inform analysis of the marine and coastal environment. The practice is a positive example of carrying out an assessment process parallel to the Landscape Character Assessment but focused on the attributes and features that combined inform the seascape of the costal landform and adjoining marine area.



In addition, the practice demonstrates the usefulness of digital solutions for adopting better informed and objective approach towards planning and managing coastal heritage assets. The practice is also interesting for the integrated approach to spatial planning and can provide helpful insight and inspiration to other coastal regions motivated to better preserve and manage their heritage.

The public authorities in Agder has a lack of comprehensive knowledge about the coastal landscape and its cultural environments. This challenge the public planning and their dialogue with the local communities. A particular concern for Agder is a diverse range of user from leisure activities, domestic housing, commercial aquaculture and culture and nature preservation.

Agder will seek to transfer the good practise of seascape assessment to Agder through development of a methodology for assessing the cultural environments and their surrounding coastal landscape based on a strong involvement of local communities.

The methodology used by Donegal will contribute with new layers of knowledge about these zones. Currently the most widely used methodology for heritage mapping in Norwegian context is the DIVE-analysis (<https://www.riksantikvaren.no/Tema/Byer-og-tettsteder/DIVE-kulturhistorisk-stedsanalyse>). However, this methodology is mainly appropriate for more clearly defined build environments and has a more exclusively focus on cultural heritage values. We consider this method insufficient for our current purpose as we aim to map the larger surrounding landscape in which the historical outports are situated. This also includes all the diverse user interests and values also including natural, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions.

If the action proves successful, the methodology can be transferred to other geographical areas as part both regional and local planning. The primary beneficiaries will be the Vest-Agder County Council and local coastal municipalities. The region will achieve a better balance between exploitation & preservation measures when redeveloping coastal landscapes.

Key output and policy impact

The key output will be the data on the nature of the coastal landscape obtained through the action. The data will also be summarised into a guideline for how to adopt the methodology on a larger scale.

Impact on existing policy framework:

The data obtained through the pilot action will provide new evidence base that the county council can use in their guidance for the municipalities when developing their local zoning plans.

Impact of policy framework after 2020:

The guideline will also be a qualitative assessment of how the methodology can be integrated into a Norwegian public planning context by providing a method for collecting and putting together knowledge on landscape, heritage, user interests and values that is more profound and efficient than the existing knowledge base and other methods for collecting data (see also section 1.A for these considerations). The action will furthermore give a good understanding of the resources need to adopt the method on a larger scale in a Norwegian context. The qualitative assessment will therefore be weighed against those needs. Together with the evidence base this guideline will make part of the knowledge needed by the administration to finalise the proposition on a new plan strategy for the new regional county council to be adopted in 2020.

Action

The Pilot Action will entail the following key activities:

- A staff exchange to Donegal in order to get to know in detail how the methodology has been used.
- Stakeholder meetings in order to both plan and evaluate the results of the mapping.
- Mapping of selected parts of the coastal zones in Agder.

An analysis of the area will give us a greater understanding of the complexity of the area and improve the regional authorities' ability to manage different interests in a comprehensive and sustainable manner. For example, the historical harbours do not only have a rich history and a considerable cultural heritage. Within the mapping area, we also find one maritime national park and several conservation areas that are meant to safeguard vulnerable and threatened ecosystems. This demonstrates the complexity of the area and the need for a comprehensive management.

The detailed work plan is as follows:

Semester 1:

1. Initial meeting with partners from Donegal. The purpose of this meeting is not to learn about the method, but more to get their advices on organization and progress. The meeting can be held using skype or telephone.
2. Assess the need for external help / consultancy services and establish cooperation with a consulting company with proper expertise.
3. Second meeting / workshop with partners from Donegal. The purpose of this meeting is to learn as much as possible about their project, the method and tools. This meeting will find place in Donegal, and we assume that we will need 2-3 days.
4. Arrange first stakeholder meeting with selected representatives from regional and local government, the County Governor and the regional museums.
5. Establish workgroup and make a more detailed plan for the project, based on experience from the first stakeholder meeting and advices from partners in Donegal.
6. First meeting in phase 2 for the regional advisory group. Discussing results from 1st workshop with Donegal CC and 1st stakeholder meeting with local and regional stakeholders. Giving input on implementation of field studies and local involvement.

Semester 2:

1. Field studies and mapping of selected area:
The historic outports of Agder are located between Flekkefjord in the west and Risør in the east. Some are located on the mainland, but many of them are on islands. We wish to have a comprehensive mapping of the historic ports along this stretch. As an initial survey, tools such as maps and orthophotos could be used, but it will also be necessary to do field studies along this stretch of historical ports to get an overview of landscape and heritage. For areas of great cultural historical relevance, the mapping will be carried out extensively. Estimated time for field studies will be 8 - 10 days.
2. Involvement of the local communities and public participation:
In order to ensure that we receive the necessary information about the historical ports and to anchor the analysis thoroughly, we will hold meetings or focus group interviews, involving both local and regional authorities, resident representatives and voluntary associations.

Since the geographical area of the study is large, we will not have the opportunity to hold meetings in each small harbour, but we will divide the area into four slightly larger geographic units and hold meetings in these.

3. Results from mapping and interviews are documented along the way using digital maps (GIS). This activity will not include technological / technical development costs, since we already have the necessary digital tools.
4. 2nd meeting in phase 2 for the regional advisory group. Discussing results from field studies and local involvement activities. Giving input to analysis of information and planning of final seminar and final report.

Semester 3

1. Analyze and process information from field studies and meetings with stakeholders. Summarize the results in a report and in a digital map, using tools for spatial planning. The report shall contain a description of the landscape and cultural heritage of the area, and particularly pay attention to important and vulnerable areas.
2. Present the results of the analysis and the academic conclusions at a final seminar. This implies that we give our recommendations on further management, based on the results of the study, which in turn must be politically reviewed by politicians in the county council.
3. Coordination and administration of project, writing final report.
4. Finalisation of political proposition for the county councils on generalisation of the project results.
5. 3rd meeting in phase 2 for regional advisory group. Discussing results from final seminar, final report and political proposition.

Players involved

The pilot will be implemented by Vest-Agder County Council. Key stakeholders will be local municipalities and private owners.

Timeframe

2019 – 2020.

Costs

The total budget for the action is 74 950 EUR.

Funding sources

Approx. half of the budget will cover staff costs and will be covered by the Regional Development Fund. The other half of the budget needed to cover external experts needed to translate the GP will be applied for to the INTERREG Europe programme as a pilot action.

