

Green Pilgrimage - Action plan

Partner Details

Project: Green Pilgrimage supporting natural and cultural heritage

Partner organisation: National Pilgrim Centre

Other partner organisations involved: Regional Pilgrim Centre Dale-Gudbrand

Country: Norway

NUTS2 region: Trøndelag

Contact person: Are Skjelstad

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Policy Instrument

- The Action Plan aims to impact:
- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
 - European Territorial Cooperation programme
 - Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: PP8 National Pilgrim Strategy

Introduction

The National Pilgrim Centre of Norway was formally approved as the Norwegian project partner from July 1st, 2018, on request from the Trøndelag County Authority to step down due to lack of resources. The National Pilgrim Centre of Norway is a Government funded department at the Nidaros Cathedral Restoration workshop. The National Centres main function is to coordinate and manage the St. Olav Ways, an international pilgrim route and a European Cultural Route.

Following discussions in cabinet session, the Norwegian Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of the Environment, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry agreed on a joint strategy for the pilgrimage development in Norway. Due to changes in governmental structures and the division between the State and the Church, the strategy for pilgrimage development is now entirely owned by the Ministry of Culture. The strategy's overall goals are routed in four columns or themes. These are: Environment, Commerce, Church and Culture.

Partners

In Green Pilgrimage project:

Kent County Council, UK

Region Ostergotland, Sweden

National Pilgrim Centre, Norway

Institute for Tourism Research and Development, Romania

Norfolk County Council, UK

Diocese of Canterbury, UK

Puglia Region, Italy

Action Plan:

National Pilgrim Centre

Regional Pilgrim Centre Dale-Gudbrand

Oppland County Council

Gausdal Municipality

Øyer Municipality

Ringebu Municipality

Sør-Fron Municipality

Nord-Fron Municipality

Lillehammer Municipality

Pilgrim hostels

Volunteers

Project Background

The Green Pilgrimage Project is a 5-year project funded by Interreg Europe to show how growth and development policies can economically benefit and protect natural and cultural heritage. Key to this is our focus on the power of pilgrimage - recognized today as one of the fastest growing segments of the travel industry (UNWTO, 2015) with more than 300 million pilgrims every year.

In Norway, close to 1000 pilgrims received the St. Olav letter in 2015. These are pilgrims who walked at least the last 100 kilometres. The Cathedral has 400.000 visitors every year. Pilgrimage is increasing by 20 % each year. Pilgrim routes are managed by a cooperation between state authorities, regions and municipalities. It has so far mainly been the Directorate for Cultural Heritage that has been in charge through the National Pilgrim Centre with the Nidaros Cathedral Restoration Workshop.

Project Aims and Outcomes

- Policy influence on sustainable tourism policy by studying best practices, workshops and conferences with stakeholder involvement for the improvement of governance and decision making.
- Advocate a stronger communication policy to include digitalization and social media to lay grounds for new projects.
- Change of strategic direction for tourism and business development along the walking routes and the destination.
- Improved international perspective on the green benefits of pilgrimage.

Project Progress to End of Phase 1

During Phase 1 we have achieved a greater understanding of the common European heritage that pilgrimage represents. By studying best practices, we have experienced different ways of addressing common challenges and possibilities.

By creating an Action Plan for Phase 2, we seek to highlight some of the lessons learnt during Phase 1.

At the final stage of the project, we expect our achievements to be:

- Increased amount of media coverage
- Policy influence that lead to a change of governance of decision making
- Raised awareness and engagement of stakeholders that spurs on new projects
- Improved project knowledge and skills

The National Context

The pilgrimage is an environment friendly and gentle form of travel, making pilgrimage development desirable from an environment viewpoint. From a national health perspective, there is potential in pilgrimage development. The more people walk the pilgrim trails, the more people engage in physical activity. There are nine official pilgrim routes in Norway, offering a basis for several initiatives within the tourism industry. In order to market the Pilgrim's Route as a national and international tourism asset, it needs to be a continuous route of quality. Norwegian tourism is dependent on the development of experiences which support the overall Norway brand.

Reinvigorating pilgrimages will contribute to the Christian faith and traditions remaining important sources of human identity and sense of belonging. The Church of Norway, in cooperation with the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations, share a common will to engage in the reinvigoration of the pilgrimage tradition. Pilgrimage can also be a way to engage with other faiths and nonreligious groups.

The Regional Context

As the cultural heritage authority, the County Councils possess the professional capacity scientific responsibility for the authentication of cultural heritage sites along the trail. It is assumed that the County Councils, as a regional developer, will continue to play a key role as coordinator and active policy instrument builder.

The Regional Pilgrim Centres are operative along the Gudbrand Valley route. They provide information, guidance, walks and maintenance.

Conclusions

The National Pilgrim Centre of Norway was formally approved as the Norwegian project partner from July 1st 2018, on request from the Trøndelag County Authority to step down due to lack of resources. In Norway, pilgrimage is increasing by 20 % each year. Pilgrim routes are managed by a cooperation between state authorities, regions and municipalities.

During Phase 1 of the Interreg Green Pilgrimage project, we have achieved a greater understanding of the common European heritage that pilgrimage represents. By studying best practices, we have experienced different ways of addressing common challenges and possibilities.

By creating an Action Plan for Phase 2, we seek to highlight some of the lessons learnt during Phase 1.

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Action Plan Summary

For Phase II of the Interreg Green Pilgrimage Project, we are planning three Action Plans. These are:

1. Waste Management
2. Long Term Plan
3. The Pilgrim Destination

With these Action Plans we plan to work for and monitor improved governance/decision making through Action Plan 1 and 2. A change of strategic focus and the possibility for new projects in Action Plan 3.

Actions

Action 1 – Waste Management

Improved governance/decision making

Description

Pilgrim Centre Dale-Gudbrand is a stakeholder to the Green Pilgrimage project and have taken part in several of the Study Visits during phase 1 of the project. The Manager at Pilgrim Centre Dale-Gudbrand, Per Gunnar Hagelien has an in-depth knowledge into modern day pilgrimage in Norway through his work at the Pilgrim Centre. He has also walked several of the pilgrim routes to Santiago de Compostela, which he visits almost every year.

Mr. Hagelien took part in the Study Visit in Galicia in Spain April 2018, where we, among other issues, were introduced to the Waste Management Plan for the Galicia region. Mr. Hagelien took particular interest in the awareness program that the Galician region had directed towards pilgrims.

In Norway, local and regional authorities have waste management plans as policy documents on how to collect, recycle and finance waste. The policy documents are directed towards local inhabitants and their daily need for renovation. It is not directed towards pilgrims on the route to Nidaros/Trondheim. Considering that the pilgrim route is partly remote, waste management along the route will always be limited.

Pilgrim Centre Dale-Gudbrand is responsible for parts of the Gudbrand Valley Route from Oslo to Nidaros/Trondheim. The centre cooperates with 6 Municipalities on the local level and with Oppland County Council on the regional level. As a way of improving local and regional governance/decision making on waste management along the pilgrim route, the Green Pilgrimage project will cooperate with our stakeholder at Pilgrim Centre Dale-Gudbrand in the launch of a similar campaign to the one we experienced in Spain. It will be a small step towards a policy change, but by showing policy makers in practice how to deal with waste management in remote areas, we hope to influence the 6 Municipalities to expand and incorporate new areas and new ways into their waste management plans.

Organisations Involved

National Pilgrim Centre, Regional Pilgrim Centre Dale-Gudbrand, Oppland County Council, Gausdal Municipality, Øyer Municipality, Ringebu Municipality, Sør-Fron Municipality, Nord-Fron Municipality, Lillehammer Municipality, Pilgrim hostels, Volunteers

Implementation plan

The improvement of this action would be the result of a change of governance/decision making on the local policy regarding renovation and the waste management along the pilgrim route.

- Regular meetings with Pilgrim Centre Dale-Gudbrand
- Development of campaign material
- Monitor the effect of the campaign
- Evaluate campaign with local and regional authorities as a way of influence on future policy instruments

Link with policy

Pilgrimage Development Strategy, Environment:

The pilgrimage is an environment friendly and gentle form of travel, making pilgrimage development desirable from an environmentalist viewpoint.

Impact on policy

Improved local and regional policy instruments

Timeframe

2020

Costs

€500

Sustainability

This kind of policy change could have an impact on other regions as well.

Suggested Funding Sources

National Pilgrim Centre
Oppland County Council
Pilgrim Centre Dale-Gudbrand

Action 2 – Long Term Plan

Improved governance/decision making

Description

In 2017, the Minister of Culture of Norway, invited key persons from various faiths, volunteer unions, tourism and industry for a pilgrimage from Oslo to Trondheim. The pilgrimage was a planned event consisting of walks, talks, concerts, food-experiences and meetings with local communities. Following the pilgrimage, the Minister of Culture announced the need for a revision of the Pilgrimage Development Strategy, with the intention to strengthen the politics on culture and cultural heritage with a high emphasis on sustainable development and mutual collaboration between various faiths, departments, organisations and industry.

The revision was expected to be launched early 2018, but was delayed. A revised version of the Pilgrimage Development Strategy was presented by public hearing early March 2019 with a deadline of response set for 1st of May 2019.

As partner of Green Pilgrimage, we submitted a response with emphasis on the need for statistical tools to measure the amount of pilgrims, their impact on the environment, health benefits, financial benefits etc. Without proper statistics, we believe it will prove difficult to document the effect of a national investment, like the one we have in Norway. To document the pilgrim effect, so to speak, was discussed during the Green Pilgrimage Study Visit in Galicia, Spain. It is a topic we have carried with us through the project and discussed in further detail at the Study Visit in Norfolk, UK. To find a universal model for documenting pilgrim's effect on the local economy and vice versa, the pilgrimage effect on the pilgrim, is difficult. The answer is probably to study various sets of available statistics. That is why we are stressing the need for statistical material to compare with.

We were pleased to see that the revised version had embraced UN's Sustainable Development Goals, Tourism and the IY, as a foundation for future development of pilgrimage.

The proposed revision is now undergoing further adjustments after receiving approximately 50 responses. The final version will be handed over to the Governing Board of Nidaros Cathedral Restoration Workshop for a formal processing of the proposed revision, before delivering it to the Ministry of Culture in Norway. It remains to see if the Governing Board will decide to alter the proposal or pass it over to the Ministry of Culture directly.

The Ministry of Culture will in its turn decide to implement the proposal in full, partly or dismiss it all together. A final decision is to be expected in 2020.

Organisations Involved

National Pilgrim Centre, Regional Pilgrim Centres, County Councils.

Implementation plan

It is unlikely that the Ministry of Culture will dismiss the proposal for a revised Pilgrim Development Strategy all together. Nevertheless, the first step of the action will be to monitor the political debate and final decision. The decision on a revised Pilgrimage Development Strategy is expected to end in an implementation period, which we will need to follow closely. We will also need to adapt our action plan accordingly.

Link with policy

Pilgrimage Development Strategy, Commerce:

In order to market the Pilgrim's Route as a national and international tourism asset, it needs to be a continuous route of sufficient quality.

Impact on policy

Improved policy instrument for future Pilgrimage Development.

Timeframe

2020 + 2021

Costs

€2000

Sustainability

A revised Pilgrimage Development Strategy and the implementation of new actions offers a great opportunity to secure green impact on the future Pilgrimage Development.

Suggested Funding Sources

National Pilgrim Centre

Action 3 – The Pilgrim Destination

Change in strategic focus

New projects

Description

Bringing it all together.

In most study visits we have taken part in a walk, a short pilgrimage to sample the local route. The focus has been on maintenance, way-marking, infrastructure and service points. This was also the case in Norway when it was our turn to host our European partners.

One of our stakeholders that has taken part in several of the study visits, is Nidaros Pilgrim Centre. They function as a pilgrim reception and play a key role in the development of the pilgrim destination – Trondheim and Nidaros Cathedral. How they greet and meet pilgrims is essential for the overall pilgrimage sensation.

Together with Nidaros Pilgrim Centre and Trondheim Municipality, we would like to change the strategic focus from route infrastructure to pilgrim destination in order to:

- Identify Trondheim as a pilgrim city
- Engage with local businesses for the development of pilgrim offers
- Strengthen the collaboration with local authorities, schools, church and volunteers.

Organisations Involved

National Pilgrim Centre, Nidaros Pilgrim Centre, Trondheim Municipality.

Implementation plan

The art of storytelling is essential for modern pilgrimage. It conceptualizes the tourist attraction, appealing to the tourists' interests and preferences. Consequently, tourists themselves have a role in the production of a tourist attraction. It is for this reason that a tourist attraction is often understood as a system which consists of various components, the tourist being one of them.

The implementation of this action will depend on the response from Trondheim Municipality and local businesses when presented to the idea of strengthening a pilgrim identity for the city. If the city itself doesn't identify with the concept "Pilgrim City" as a destination for pilgrims, the implementation will fail.

Link with policy

Pilgrimage Development Strategy, Commerce:

The pilgrimage tradition can form the basis for a number of initiatives within the tourism industry. Norwegian tourism is dependent on the development of experiences which support the overall Norway brand.

Impact on policy

Creating new projects to enhance the pilgrim destination.

Timeframe

2020 + 2021

Costs

€10 000 (Without pilot funding)

€100 000 (With pilot funding)

Sustainability

Enhancing the identity as a pilgrim city will have an impact on non-pilgrims, new to the idea of sustainable tourism.

Suggested Funding Sources

Pilot Action
National Pilgrim Centre
Nidaros Pilgrim Centre

Conclusions and Monitoring

In Norway, local and regional authorities have waste management plans as policy documents on how to collect, recycle and finance waste. The policy documents are directed towards local inhabitants and their daily need for renovation. It is not directed towards pilgrims on the route to Nidaros/Trondheim. Considering that the pilgrim route is partly remote, waste management along the route will always be limited.

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Monitoring:

- Meetings
- Production of campaign material
- Distribution of material
- Feedback on implementation
- Territorial impact

In 2017, the Minister of Culture announced the need for a revision of the Pilgrimage Development Strategy, with the intention to strengthen the politics on culture and cultural heritage with a high emphasis on sustainable development and mutual collaboration between various faiths, departments, organisations and industry.

The proposed revision will be handed over to the Ministry of Culture in Norway. The Ministry of Culture will in its turn decide to implement the proposal in full, partly or dismiss it all together. A final decision is to be expected in 2020.

Monitoring:

- Change in organizational structure
- Future model of finance
- Interact with new stakeholders

In most study visits the focus has been on maintenance, way-marking, infrastructure and service points. This was also the case in Norway when it was our turn to host our European partners.

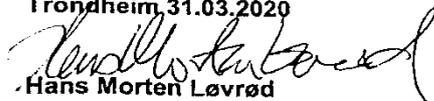
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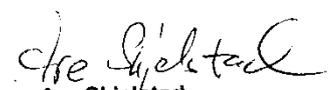
- Identify Trondheim as a pilgrim city
- Engage with local businesses for the development of pilgrim offers
- Strengthen the collaboration with local authorities, schools, church and volunteers.

Monitoring:

- Development of Nidaros Pilgrim Centre
- Co-operation with Trondheim Municipality
- Change in marketing strategy
- Interaction with Visit companies

Trondheim, 31.03.2020


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Are Skjelstad
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