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SHAPE

CASE STUDY OF GOVERNANCE OF NORDHORDLAND

Sustainable Heritage Areas: Partnerships for Ecotourism
Deliverable DT 3.2.1

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1. Brief Introduction to SHA

Nordhordland Biosphere Candidate is situated on the western coast of Norway, between Bergen (the country's second largest city) and the Sognefjord (the deepest and longest fjord in Norway). The area is approx. 6 700 km² and 55 000 people are living here in 11 different municipalities.

2. SHA Vision and Core Objectives

We have been working towards nomination as a UNESCO biosphere reserve and we are aiming to get our designation in June 2019. This spring we will develop our first strategic plan and we hope that it will be ready for implementation this autumn. In our application we have set the main goal and pointed out 10 subsidiary goals. These are wide and are more pointing out directions for the work to be done in the biosphere area. The strategy process will be based on these goals and the outcome will be the prioritized activities for the first years of the biosphere area.

MAIN GOAL

Nordhordland Biosphere Reserve will be based on the best from the past and will pave the way for a future-oriented societal development that ensures the sustainable use of all types of resources for the benefit and pleasure of both the present inhabitants and future generations.

3. SHA Governance Structure

(Attach diagram and narrative explaining what organisations / people are involved, and any history of change)

Through the application period (from 2013 and still), work on the proposed Nordhordland Candidate has been organized as a project owned by the Nordhordland Regional Council (comprising the mayors of the nine municipalities in the region). The administration of the Regional Council, Nordhordland Development Company IKS (NUI), has been project managers. NUI has appointed a project working group which has been in operation since June 2013. The Regional Council appointed a steering committee for the project, with representation from central stakeholders. These are:

- Three mayors
- The manager of Nordhordland Development Company IKS (NUI)
- One representative from the University of Bergen
- One representative from the County Governor's Office in Hordaland
- One representative from Hordaland County Council
- Two representatives from industry and commerce
- One representative from NGOs

The project working group is led by NUI and consists of representatives from this company and from the University of Bergen.

We have described the organizational structure that exists today, but will emphasize that the steering committee for the biosphere project has provided guidelines for the final organization of the biosphere reserve:

- How the Nordhordland Biosphere Reserve should be organized when designated, must be viewed in direct relation to the tasks and the function of the biosphere reserve. Before the final organizational form is adopted, the purpose and statute of association of the organization shall be in place.
- The organization model must be designed to serve the purpose of the biosphere reserve on a long term base. It should be dynamic so that it can be adapted to various future scenarios.

- It is important with great transparency and that everyone (especially NGO's) is included in the management of the biosphere reserve.

4. Decision Making Process

We don't have a defined decision making process in place yet. In the period UNESCO is considering our application, we will have a process going on to get a strategic plan for the BR in place. The plan will contain:

- a vision
- goal(s) and perhaps subgoals
- strategies
- actions

The plan will be based on the work we have done in the years of planning our application and the opportunities we have identified for Nordhordland as a BR. It will be central for the work to be done and the priorities to be made.

The Biosphere candidate is based on broad engagement and involvement. In such a process, it is natural to involve municipal politicians and administrative staff, local businesses and NGO's. In addition, Hordaland County Council and the County Governor of Hordaland should be invited to take part, as well as important partners at the University of Bergen and other research institutions. It will be one stakeholder meeting/workshop in each municipality. The inputs will be summarized and prioritized in one big meeting where a representative group of stakeholder takes part.

To obtain suggestions and interest for the plan, communication through different media will be organized as part of the process. A period for open consultation will be set apart before the plan is adopted.

The strategy plan must be evaluated and updated on a regular basis. It will be decided how this should be done during the strategy process.

5. Communication

We have a website www.nordhordlandbiosphere.no where we publish information, news and share stories. We also use facebook. During the strategy process these channels will be important. We will also use our local papers to be able to reach more people. Also all the meeting with different stakeholders is a part of this communication strategy for the process.

6. Resources

From what we have experienced so far the key resources that is needed is:

- Staff – We want Nordhordland to be an active biosphere reserve, that matters for the region and that spread knowhow about sustainable development. Then we need staff, more than one! We have good access to qualified staff.
- Funding – to get funding through project is easier to get the 'corefunding' in place, but we need the corefunding to be able to deliver effective governance. This is a hard task, and we are working on how to solve this in a long term way.
- Engaged stakeholders and a good network between them - this will make it easier to implement projects and ideas. To obtain this we need to work constantly to make stakeholders involved, interested and engaged.
- Knowhow – we need to be updated on latest knowledge of the different task within the governance. This will also be an ongoing thing, to make sure that we are 'up to date'.