



Protection and value creation – nature protection as a resource for sustainable economic development

How does one conduct business development in and around protected natural areas? This was the challenge for participants of VER-DI. The idea was to learn from and co-operate with each other in order to find the best solutions. At the same time one must keep in mind that the five participating nature areas, and the areas they are located in, are very different. From Danish cultural landscapes to deep forest areas in Norway and Sweden.

The VER-DI project had set a long list of goals within the development of attractions, activities and competencies, new access to promotion and development of local foods, goals that the project has succeeded in achieving.

Co-operation has been established between players, activities such as guided walks have been developed, competence development for guides has been carried out, in addition to a wide range of initiatives. All together, something that contributes to increasing the attractiveness of the areas for the benefit of the local population and tourists.

Fine results have also been achieved in work regarding local food. In Norway, VER-DI succeeded in getting more locally produced food on the menu in local restaurants. In Mols Bjerger, a branding concept called "Molboret" was developed in order to increase the knowledge of quality foods produced in the area.

Promotion of nature, culture and experiences is an important part of turning a visit to a nature area into an experience. In VER-DI, a mobile phone application was developed precisely for that purpose. Using it, the visitor can find exciting locations, routes and information about the park's facilities, nature and fauna.

Network and nature areas as destinations

Working with nature areas with a view to business development has been new for all participants. Particularly in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell and Fegen nature areas had prior to VER-DI not been thought of as coherent tourist destinations that could be collectively marketed.

With a greater focus on nature areas as destinations, the players in the area have succeeded in establishing co-operation across municipal boundaries and creating a local consciousness about the value and potential of the areas. In Fegen, for example, work is being done to attract tourists from the coast and many kilometres of cycle paths are currently under way.

The project will be completed this summer and there is no doubt that the work with developing the areas for the benefit of locals and tourists will continue in future.

Nature areas that participate in VER-DI are:
Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve (Norway)
Hardangervidda National Park (Norway)
Fegen Nature Reserve (Sweden)
Mols Bjerger National Park (Denmark)
The future Skjern Å National Park (Denmark)

The project has a total budget of 2.5 million Euros, half of which comes from the EU Interreg IVA Programme for transnational cooperation in the Kattegat-Skagerrak region.



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