



● **The natural and cultural heritage as development forces**



SWEDISH NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD
RIKSANTIKVARIÉAMBITET

The natural and cultural heritage as development forces

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Cover Photo: Morten Stenak. A disused limestone quarry at Limhamn in Sweden is a nature reserve with a great potential as a recreation experience, preserving the distinctive biological, geological and historical values of the former industrial site.



Dramatized guiding in Birka, a viking age trading center, in Sweden. Photo: Bengt A. Lundberg.



Natural and cultural heritage as a Resource for Sustainable Development and Growth

Cooperation provides win-win effects and creates conditions for sustainable solutions. The Swedish National Heritage Board and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency have therefore worked together with other Nordic countries between 2008 and 2011, in a project launched by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The project's findings are useful for authorities, organizations and entrepreneurs who use the natural and cultural heritage as a way to increase people's quality of life and as a stimulus for tourism and business. Find inspiration in good examples of how the natural and cultural heritage can strengthen each other as development forces and how authorities can cooperate in practice.

Despite its industrial background, the Finnish town of Jakobstad has a long history of promoting parks and gardens to enhance the inhabitants' quality of life. Nowadays this green cultural heritage is also a way to attract visitors. The picture shows the recently restored Aspegren's Garden, a site of national significance. Photo: Maria Kurtén.





In Iceland the municipality of Garðabær has worked to preserve a 7,000-year-old lava flow as a leisure area and a scene to inspire artists. Aerial photo: Árni Geirsson.



The potential of a place

Development and growth are powered by a range of interests and factors. But perhaps the most significant potential of a place lies in its natural and cultural heritage. The nature and culture provides physical sustenance but they also afford people the opportunity for intellectual, social and spiritual growth.

Nature and culture are intertwined in the landscape as part of the common heritage, expressing not only what places have been, but also what they are and what they can become. By stimulating awareness of these values, this crucial resource becomes visible. A historical perspective can be combined with the future development of an area – for the benefit of the community and its people.



Plans are in progress to establish a national park on the island of Koltur, a valuable reflection of the Faroese natural and cultural heritage. Photo: Tórálvur Weihe.

There are many examples of how a place's natural and cultural heritage may be used for brand building and identity construction. The Faroese project on "Competitive Identity" has investigated how to project a national image in a globalized world. As part of a brand identity for the islands, eco-tourism is a major driver of business development.

The Danish municipality of Hvidovre, begins its historiography with a narrative. An artefact is then chosen to illustrate the narrative – in this case a building reflecting an architectural tradition, the dream of the welfare state. The aim is to use identified values in the municipality's future development.



Hvidovre, Denmark. Photo: Louise Straarup.

Nordic Blue Parks is a new concept combining underwater nature and culture trails and recreation as a resource for sustainable development. Some older trails have been developed for this purpose, and new ones have been established in the Nordic countries. The picture is from Axmar underwater park in Sweden, one of the world's first underwater parks that displays both natural and cultural heritage. Photo: Sjöhistoriska museet, Sweden.



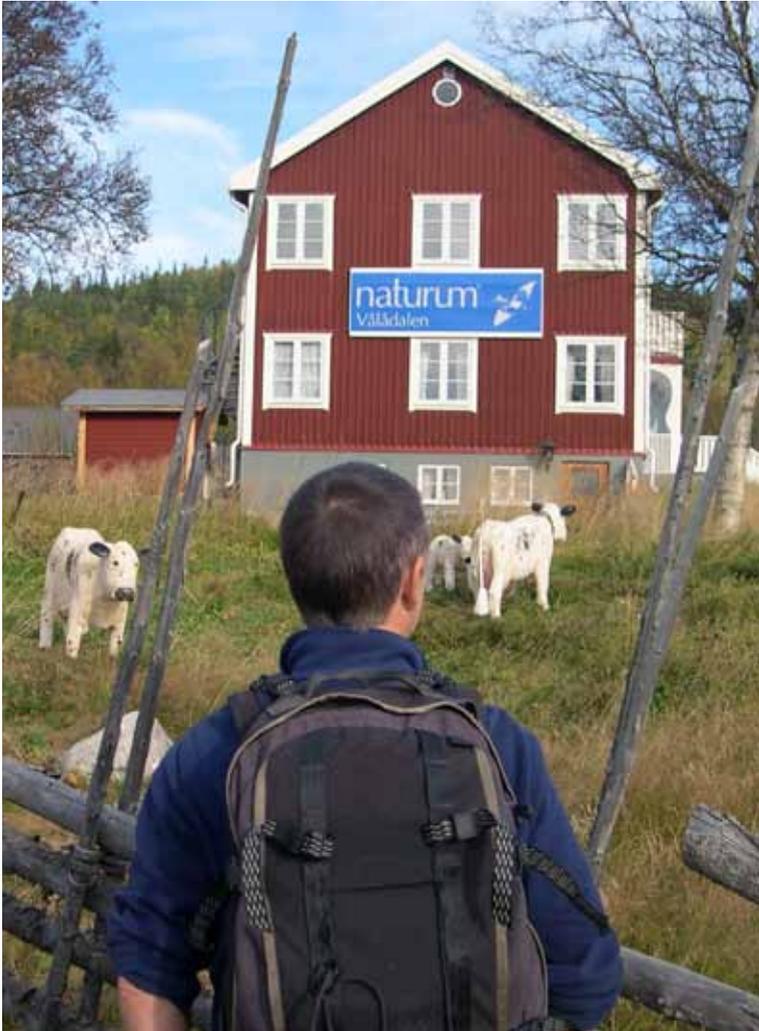


Vålådalen in Sweden. Photo: Johan Loock, Länsstyrelsen i Jämtlands län.



Cooperation matters

Cooperation between national authorities responsible for the natural and cultural heritage gives good conditions to work for quality of life and sustainable growth. Even broader cooperation is needed to ensure a balance between financial, social, cultural and environmental interests. Central government would arrange meeting places for the various sectors and operators involved, whether public or private.



At Vällådal-Sylarna in Sweden, people concerned with the natural and cultural heritage joined forces with representatives of sustainable growth and regional development to suggest strategic measures. This included an attempt to identify the attractiveness of protected environments, creating an infrastructure for tourism, and devising systems to reconcile conflicting goals. Sweden has focused on bringing the work of nature conservation closer to the people, which resulted in a number of government-funded local projects. Photo: Johan Loock, Länsstyrelsen i Jämtlands län.



Photo: Haldor Tuvin.

Partnership for landscape

It is obvious that public authorities have a vital role in maintaining the natural and cultural heritage and making it accessible. Authorities would invite citizens to share their views. Experience

shows that projects based on citizen participation are more robust and successful over time. This is visible in Norway in connection with the formation of a Landscape Park in Herand. Several public meetings were held, where the participants agreed that the natural and cultural heritage was a positive resource for their area. The result was a project built on collective responsibility for the future of the local environment.

Private stakeholders as well as the tourism industry are highly significant for the maintenance and development of the landscape and its values. Roughly 500,000 tourists come to Nærøyfjorden in Norway during a limited part of the year, mostly in the form of cruise passengers who admire the beautiful scenery. One of the great challenges in Nærøyfjorden is to give the community an increased share of the value generated by tourism. To this end, the Nærøyfjorden World Heritage Park has organized a form of partnership between private actors, large and small, public authorities and others.



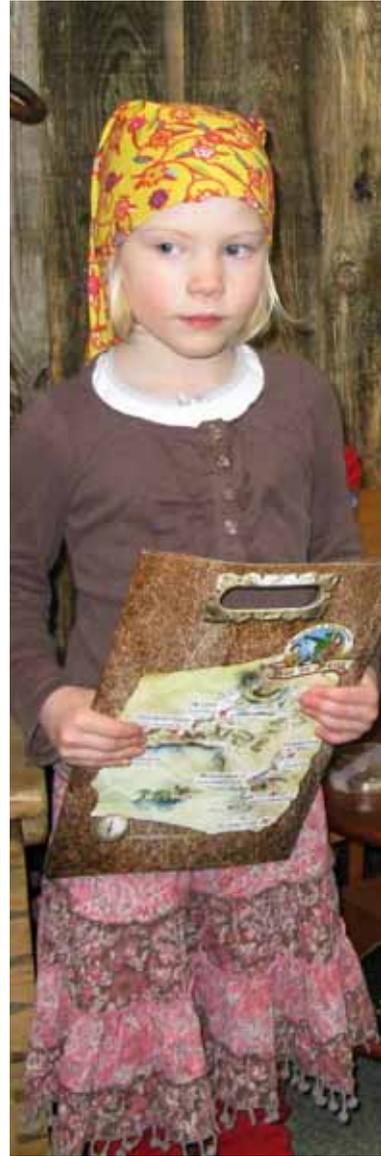
Photo: Thor Andersen.



The strength of communication

The natural and cultural values acquire their meanings when they have been mediated, made understandable and put into interaction with people. Once visitors have been attracted to a place, they need to be provided with interesting and profound experiences through information, guiding and good hosting. To meet this increased need, methods for training and guiding about the local natural and cultural heritage should be developed.

The campaign “1001 Stories about Denmark”, run by the Heritage Agency of Denmark, makes the cultural heritage visible in digital media. One aim is to get citizens to participate in writing history and using the physical heritage. Dialogue with the public takes place via platforms such as mobile telephony, the web, social media, etc. Similar projects run by the Swedish National Heritage Board have received much attention in Sweden, for example, the community Platsr, a venue with access to GPS, which allows you to add your own pictures and stories.



In the Icelandic project “Saga and Glacier”, ten tourism companies have laid on experiences for children and their families, based on nature and culture. The quality lies in the creativity of the presentation and the activation of the participants. At the first stop the children receive a map which leads them on a journey to nine other places. Photo: Guðbjörg Gunnarsdóttir.



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The project

The Nordic project **Natural and Cultural Heritage as a Resource for Sustainable Development and Growth** was financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Authorities responsible for environmental and cultural heritage management in the Nordic countries, including the Faeroes, have been represented in the project. The project has highlighted natural and cultural heritage as factors for development in many different ways. Good practice has been disseminated through four conferences, and a final report presents the conclusions and proposals resulting from the project.

It is clear that there is a great potential to work in a more integrated way with the natural and cultural heritage for sustainable growth. The project created a basis for future joint action.



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