

DENMARK

Local development

Location

Rudkøbing

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion and
local development

Measure

M19 – CLLD/LEADER

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 134 220
EAFRD 53 688
National/Regional 13 422
Private 4 663
Other 62 447

Project duration

2015 – 2017

Project promoter

The Association of Danish
Small Islands

Contact

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Website

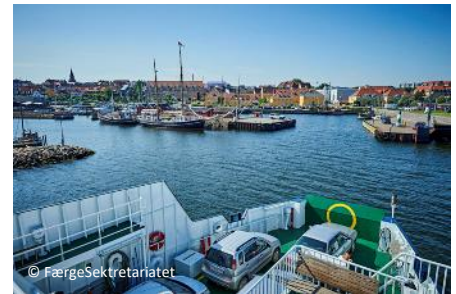
<http://lag-smaaoerne.blogspot.com/2016/06/turismeprojekt-lancerer-pas.html>

A rural business development and capacity building project with an emphasis on increasing revenue in the small-islands tourism industry of Denmark.

Summary

This business development project for the tourism industry involved a wide range of mentoring and collaboration activities, aimed at professionalizing small rural businesses on Danish islands.

The project has been a catalyst for new collective business initiatives, such as “the Island Passport”. 35 small Danish islands are included in this popular initiative, which provides visitors with maps, photos, facts and small descriptions of the experiences and sights that exist on each island.



Results

The 10 participating companies have improved their growth potential and several report that they have increased their revenue.

16 jobs, which would have been lost, have been retained, 2-3 new jobs have been created, and some part-time positions have been turned into full-time positions.

The islands enjoy an increased number of visitors and there is now increased awareness about how to offer high quality tourist services and products.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ A generic marketing initiative should not stand alone. It must be implemented in conjunction with a range of other business development activities - supported by local companies and with the establishment of new facilities and attractions - so that local communities (islands) are equipped to reap the benefits of the increased visitor flow.

Context

International holiday tourism in Denmark, outside of Copenhagen, is decreasing due to globalisation, the loss of visibility and poor price-competitiveness. One challenge is that Denmark's many high-quality nature experiences and activities are relatively uncoordinated across actors and municipal boundaries. As a result, the industry often suffers from a lack of coherence across the value chain, which makes it difficult for tourists to navigate and gain access to the many opportunities on offer. As a response, a national and regional strategy has been set in order to increase visibility through a more holistic development and marketing of the tourism industry. Increased cooperation is regarded as an essential prerequisite for development and innovation in the Danish tourism industry in the coming years.

It is within this overall framework that the development of small islands tourism has been underway in recent years. Naturally, this endeavour does not only rely upon cooperation between the 27 island members of the Association of the Small Danish Islands, but also in many cases, it requires cooperation and coordination with national and regional initiatives; particularly for projects whose objectives and target groups overlap.

Furthermore, in recent years significant financial support has been available for the improvement of coastal tourism. This gives the small islands sector a unique opportunity to initiate and / or participate in larger, interregional projects which have the potential to significantly increase their national and international visibility.

In light of these overall challenges, LAG Småøerne - a Local Action Group that covers the territories of 27 small Danish Islands with between 35 and 800 inhabitants each - has established three overall targets for the 2014-2020 programming period:

I: to strengthen business and tourism development

II: to strengthen settlement efforts

III: to strengthen cooperation efforts

Objectives

The purpose of the project 'The small islands – tourist destinations of high quality' was to support and future-proof small companies in the tourism industry located on 27 small Danish Islands and 8 larger ones.

The project aimed to increase and improve the services offered by the businesses and to encourage collaboration between them.

The project also sought to launch promotional initiatives to strengthen the small islands' brand and their capacity to be an attractive tourist destination both during and outside peak season.

Through small-business capacity building and the development of new commercial concepts, the project also aimed to increase sales and employment in the small businesses of the tourism industry.

Activities

More specifically the project has:

- selected 10 micro-companies to participate in the project as primary beneficiaries
- offered in-depth business development mentoring to these 10 small companies (conducted by a professional business consultant with specialist knowledge of this particular context) with the aim of enhancing business and service quality.
- Facilitated networking and collaboration between island companies in order to develop the concept of the islands as one common destination, and to strengthen the value chain. This focus on collaboration was also intended to provide a springboard for the development of new business ideas, and resulted in the Island Passport (Ø-Pas) (see Results).
- Strengthened visibility vis-à-vis mainland players, such as tourism organizations, tour operators, and tourism companies, to increase revenue and cooperation on both the mainland and the islands.
- Delivered specialised, visitor services training; providing insight into customer expectations and the role and responsibilities of hosts and service providers.
- Developed packaged trips to five of the islands, as well as providing development guidelines for a further two islands.
- Shared the project participant experiences, advice and tool kits via a website and e-mail magazine.

The primary intervention methods used in this project were seminars, workshops, network meetings and advisory visits to the selected companies.

The Island Passport (Ø-Pas)

The Island Passport is a printed, pocket-sized booklet that serves as an island-hopping visitor guide. Each of the - now 37 - participating islands is presented with a map, a photo and a small description, as well as information about their ferry route, size and population.

Each island's page also contains a space where visitors can collect a unique stamp. This is done by transferring a silhouette of the island using a special pen and brass cast that can only be found on the ferry, at the port or in the tourist information office of each destination. Visitors are encouraged to collect as many stamps as they can and compete with families and friends about who has visited the most islands.

The Island Passport was launched in 2016 with an initial print run of 20.000 booklets. In 2017, the concept was further developed and subsidized (by the Danish Business Authority), with 200.000 booklets printed, including a bilingual English - German version.

Main Results

The project has successfully contributed to the progress of the 10 companies involved, both economically and with regard to the quality of the tourism offer they provide. New products and initiatives have been launched and each of the companies have set out a strategic plan for their future development.

Results achieved:

- The 10 participating companies have been made aware of – and have acted upon - their growth potential.
- 16 jobs, that would have been lost, have been retained and 2-3 new jobs have been created.
- Some part-time positions have expanded to full-time.
- Several of the selected companies report that they have increased their revenue.

- There is now an increased awareness about how to offer high-quality tourist services and products.



- There is now stronger cooperation between tourism enterprises. Multiple collaborative initiatives have been set up between the different islands, or between island companies and mainland actors (such as the Island Passport, which was developed by The Association of Small Danish Islands, Danish Ferries A/S and Færgesekretariatet).
- The number of tourists is increasing.

Key lessons

Following two years of business development activities with small tourism enterprises, in parallel with the development of “The Island Passport” tourism marketing tool, it is clear that such generic promotional initiatives should not stand alone. They must be developed in dialogue with the communities they stand to serve, and implemented in conjunction with business capacity-building activities and the establishment of new facilities and attractions. Without this, local communities (the islands) and tourism companies are incapable of reaping the benefits of an increased flow of tourists and potentially ill-equipped to mitigate their impact in a way that is sustainable: “overtourism” is an important consideration.

Additional sources of information

<http://lag-smaaererne.blogspot.com/2016/12/118-mio-kr-skal-viderefre-passet-i-2017.html#more>