



Innlandet
fylkeskommune
County Council



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Digitourism project

Innlandet County Authority

Action plan

During the Phase 1 of the Digitourism project (June 2018 – May 2021), all partners identified interesting practices and initiatives which could be inspiring enough to lead to an improvement of public policy, or to the duplication of this experience in their territory.

Following these three years, a two year long second phase of the project is starting, when project partners will improve their policies and use the outcomes of the project. This document is the road map of this second phase.

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Partner organisation: Innlandet County Authority

Other partner organisations involved: Four regional destination management companies (DMC)

Country: Norway

NUTS2 region: Hedmark and Oppland

Contact person:

- email address: liv.bjerke@innandetfylke.no
- phone number: +47 41 47 88 16

2 IMPROVEMENT OF THE TARGET POLICY

At the application stage of the project, all partners identified a public policy which needed improvement. This section is dedicated to this target policy only.

Name of the target policy: Steering Document for the Tourist Industry 2021-2022

Nature of the target policy: Investment for Growth and Jobs programme

European Territorial Cooperation programme

Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the managing authority of the target policy: Innlandet County Authority

Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instrument:

a. Relevance to the project

Prior to becoming a partner in DIGITOURISM the tourism strategy in Oppland (and later in the merged Innlandet County), were characterized by a rather small focus on digitalization in general, and new digital realities in particular. In fact, VR/AR was not on our radar at all in relation to the tourist industry. "Digitalization" was a buzz word that needed to be filled with real, concrete content. DIGITOURISM has aided in zeroing in on this issue.

The high priority of new digital realities is a direct consequence of the County's participation in DIGITOURISM. Being a partner in this Interreg Europe project has led to an overall change of mindset about the diverse range and potential when it comes to both VR/AR technology and digitalization overall in the County.

Given the transformative and disruptive nature of the ongoing digital revolution that permeates close to every aspect of society, it becomes fairly evident that a sector as huge as tourism in Innlandet cannot fall behind. Both the County and the industry itself saw this, and the timing of both the DIGITOURISM project partnership and the elaboration of the Steering Document were advantageous. Unbeknownst to many, the public sector in Norway has historically been willing to take risk in order to advance new technologies, industries and innovations (the development of the petroleum offshore industry, the fishing industry, the maritime sector as just a few examples). In this case, Innlandet County can be this type of partner to the tourist industry and the tech industry in order to transform the sector.

Although it has been inspiring to visit and hear about the partner regions' focus and implementation of new digital realities both in practice and in their policies, Innlandet cannot pinpoint the inspiration source directly from another region. Rather, it has been the sum of the whole which has inspired Innlandet to push this agenda to the extent that it is now integrated in our steering document as one out of four priorities in the years to come.

b. Nature of the action

At the time of the application process of the DIGITOURISM project, the relevant policy for Oppland County was the following : Strategy for the tourism industry for Oppland County Authority 2012-ongoing. However, by the time DIGITOURISM was approved and the project was underway, Oppland had changed the policy document into Plan for Value Creation in Oppland County 2018-2030, which included the tourist industry.

In January 2020, Oppland County merged with the neighbouring county Hedmark to become Innlandet County as a consequence of a regional reform in Norway. Thus, all strategies from Oppland County were nullified and replaced by new strategies for Innlandet.

This included a new tourism strategy, which was adopted by the County Council in March 2020. The Steering Document for the Tourist Industry in Innlandet 2021-2022 has the characteristic of an action plan more than a strategy. The document has four priority areas:

- Moving from seasonal employment to year-round employment thanks to attractive products
- AR/VR/XR development
- Low carbon mobility (car sharing, electric buses, autonomous vehicles...)
- Skills development in the tourism industry

Including VR/AR/XR as one of the four main priorities, gives a strong signal to the industry that this must be the focus going forward. At the same time, it enables and commits the County to change the funding direction more towards new digital realities in the tourist industry. Thus, it will have a concrete impact on the industry and how they work with innovation and adaptation in order to tailor the needs of tomorrow's tourists.

c. Stakeholders involved

The process of elaborating the steering document involved a working group and a reference group. Innovation Norway and one department in the County made up the working group.

The reference group consisted of: All the destination management companies in Innlandet, three departments in Innlandet County – Culture, Societal Development and Business Development and International Cooperation and The County Governor. Business Enterprise Norway was also invited but did not participate in any of the meetings.

The role of the reference group was to give input on what topics, issues and challenges were relevant for the tourism industry in Innlandet. Based on this input, the working group assessed and prioritized these topics, and ended up with four priority areas as described above.

d. Timeframe

Estimated start date: March 2021-December 2022

Main milestones: Calls for projects April 2021, October 2021 and April 2022

Estimated Approval / enforcement date: March 9, 2021

e. Indicative costs

The total budget amounts to NOK 10M (EUR 1M)

f. Indicative funding sources:

The County funded EUR 600 000 initially, but later added EUR 400 000 partly from the County's budget due to saved costs during the pandemic, and partly due to extra funding to the County from the Ministry of Regional Government.

Date: September 27, 2021

Name of the organisation: Innlandet County Authority

Signature of representative of the relevant organisation:


**Innlandet**
fylkeskommune

Postboks 4404, 2325 Hamar
Tlf: +47 62 00 08 80
www.innlandetfylke.no