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Tourism strategy
2014-2020





Tourism strategy for Innovation Norway 2014-2020

Innovation Norway is the National and the Regional Governments' policy instrument for value-creating business development across Norway. Our mission is to increase value for Norwegian business and industry. Our goal is to give local ideas global opportunities.

The strategy defines three prioritised areas that focus on how Innovation Norway will contribute to the development of the Norwegian travel industry and to increasing the value created by tourism up to 2020.

The strategy is based on and follows Innovation Norway's main strategy. The principals of Brand Norway as a tourist destination¹ and UNTWO's principals for sustainable tourism also form the base for this initiative, ensuring that the value created is both sustainable and market oriented.

With our three-fold mandate, Innovation Norway is in a unique position. Our ambition is to be the travel industry's preferred provider of competence, development-, and marketing partner. This mandate gives us unique opportunities to implement a wide range of initiatives to strengthen the competitiveness of individual companies, individual regions and Norway as a tourist destination.

Our close relationship with individual companies combined with our international presence and competence, means we are well equipped to understand the value chain and contribute to its development from idea to market. We will actively contribute to a sustainable travel industry that balances the preservation of nature, culture, local society, food traditions and the environment whilst strengthening social values and financial viability.

Our customers are entrepreneurs, businesses, destinations, regional destination companies and networks in the travel and tourism industry.

Innovation Norway will cooperate with a wide range of networks and public sector organisations, international sister organisations and research institutions to ensure that our knowledge is up to date and that we are in a good position to develop solutions that benefit our customers and the industry as a whole.

This is how we will fulfil our threefold mandate

A provider of Competence – be visible and demonstrate insight

Innovation Norway will further develop its role as the most important competency organisation for the travel and tourism industry. We will be an independent knowledge based organisation specialising in areas that are important for the travel industry, our partners and owners. We will contribute actively using our experience, independent research and overall insight to ensure that more companies and networks succeed

¹ For more information: <http://guidelines.visitnorway.org/>

both internationally and in the domestic market and that the destinations become more competitive. This will enable us to be a competent advisor for our partners and owners.

A Development partner – presence and knowledge of local conditions

Based on our regions' business potential, we will help develop businesses that are profitable from both a commercial and socio-economic perspective. The regions and destinations differ in terms of their natural potential, local culture, potential for activities and experiences and competence and as a result have differing bases for developing attractive products for the tourists. This rich diversity is crucial for our ability to create long term value within the travel industry and to increase Norway's attraction as a travel destination. Norway has a strong position as a destination with spectacular nature and physical activities in natural surroundings, but we must strengthen our product offering and our position as a country that offers attractive cultural experiences and culinary traditions.

A Marketing partner – close to the tourist

Innovation Norway represents and acts as 'Norway' when profiling and marketing Norway as a travel destination. All marketing activities will include an overarching Norway profile as defined in Brand Norway as a tourist destination where Norway is the main brand and Visitnorway is the main response channel. Profiling activities will supplement and strengthen commercial partners' own sales and marketing activities both in the domestic and international market. Innovation Norway has a presence in selected International markets to establish relationships, develop networks with local travel trade and work actively with local media. We will have local versions of Visitnorway and be present in relevant social media and digital channels. Very few companies within the Norwegian travel industry have the ability to establish a similar international presence.

In order to contribute to value creation and business development we have prioritised three main areas; We have to be visible and demonstrate insight, have presence and knowledge about local conditions be close to the tourist.

FOCUS AREA ONE:

A provider of Competence – be visible and demonstrate insight

Our customers, owners, partners and society in general increasingly expect documentable knowledge about trends, markets, target groups, effects and value creation within the industry. There is an increased need to reduce the level of uncertainty and risk linked to development projects, for understanding how the travel industry contributes to value creation and for ensuring that our resources are spent in a responsible and cost efficient way. In order to become a provider of competence and to deliver on the premises set, Innovation Norway will provide insight that contributes to increased innovation within the industry and increased knowledge about the industry's value creation.

Innovation Norway will:

1. *Be the preferred provider of documentation about the Norwegian travel industry*
2. *Be the preferred provider of documentation on market opportunities*
3. *Provide courses and competence that increases the level of professionalism and profitability within the travel industry*

Better understanding of the companies' needs and challenges

If we are to succeed in delivering targeted services to our customers, we require a better understanding of their needs. We will investigate their needs within the innovation processes, giving us an insight into how



we can contribute to realising innovation within the travel industry. We will improve the quality of our data, make it easier to carry out analysis, systemise our expertise and make it more accessible to our customers.

A better understanding of value creation, effects and target groups

In recent years, Innovation Norway has taken measures to better document the levels of value created for the Norwegian travel industry and the effect of our marketing campaigns. We have also researched and identified our target groups among tourists and competitive environment. We aim to develop our knowledge further and will allocate more resources to communicating our findings and results to customers and partners. We will encourage the travel industry to use this insight in their innovation work and will challenge R&D communities to use the material in their research and development activities.

Develop our range of courses and highlight Innovation Norway as the provider

We will systemize and strengthen our competence offering. We currently offer a number of courses throughout the country and since 2008 over 8,000 companies have taken part in one or more of these. The content and structure of the course portfolio will be simplified to make it a more cohesive programme. We will make it easier for course participants to gain an overview of the offering, it will become easier to combine courses and easier to choose a course that is relevant for the individual company. We will emphasise Innovation Norway as the supplier of the courses.

FOCUS AREA TWO:

A development partner - presence and knowledge of local conditions

We will contribute to the development of profitable products and services aimed at the leisure market, the business travel segment and the local market throughout the country. Brand Norway and the principles for sustainability will be coordinated so that they together provide specific guidelines for the development work that takes place locally.

Innovation Norway will:

1. *Develop a web based tool box to enable development cases to be more successful*
2. *Actively contribute to the development of more business networks within the travel industry*
3. *Establish a national collection of comprehensive experience concepts*

A toolbox for business and destination development

A significant amount of development is taking place within individual companies, business networks and destinations in the travel industry. When the need arises, it is important for us to be in a position to offer competence and information that is relevant and accessible. The development processes are often complex and time consuming for the companies involved and we will develop a web based toolbox that will make it easier for these processes to succeed. The toolbox will contain recommendations of how to carry out an efficient process, best practice cases, a facility for sharing experiences, useful market information and recommendations and references to literature. The tool box will also contain information on the criteria for succeeding as a provider and developer of sustainable products and destinations based on the accreditation system for sustainable destinations. The existing handbook for the development of destinations will be revised and we will consider whether to develop similar handbooks for other parts of the industry.

Contribute actively to the development of business networks

The travel industry is fragmented and is made up of a number of small companies. This provides challen-



ges when it comes to the development of destinations, collaboration and the ability to provide comprehensive, sellable tourism products. We will actively encourage businesses and destinations to work together in various business networks. Tourists like to visit professional destinations that offer good hospitality and have a responsible attitude to resource management whilst at the same time wanting inclusive packages that combine a number of products and providers. It is therefore important to be the driving force for the establishment and development of well-functioning networks that give added value to its participants. An important criterion for successful business networks is a good project manager and we will develop courses for project managers that will manage these networks. Important for this work is the existing business network schemes and we aim to increase the focus on these. Some of the networks will eventually develop into ARENA, NCE and GCE projects, further increasing the professionalism within the travel industry.

Research as a competitive advantage

Research and development is becoming increasingly important for the travel industry's ability to innovate and create value. Many companies within the industry are knowledge based and expertise and competence are key factors. An increasing number of businesses within the travel industry are taking part in projects where research plays a key role. We aim to be the driving force for increasing the cooperation between the industry and research communities. We will prioritize increasing the knowledge about the IFU and OFU schemes that are rarely used by the tourism industry today. Encouraging more travel and tourism business to make use of these schemes will be a priority, in order to increase the degree of innovation within the industry.

Establish a national collection of comprehensive experience concepts

We will initiate a pilot project with the intention of establishing a national collection of comprehensive experience concepts. Our aim is to make products more attractive, to increase profitability for the participants in the project and to communicate a more coherent and diverse story about what makes Norway and Norwegians unique. From the tourist's perspective, the concepts should be cohesive both physically and digitally and should create a link between individual products, experiences and destinations, making Norway more interesting both before and during their visit.

The concepts will be national and will be developed in cooperation with a handful of companies across county borders. We will link Innovation Norway's service portfolio and expertise both locally, centrally and internationally in a completely new way, demonstrating the strength of our organisation and services. The intention is to organise the concepts as business networks, defining expected levels of quality for their deliveries and offering activities that increases competence among participating companies. We will be using our internal expertise within tourism, service design and business modelling to develop and execute the project and will work alongside external research and design communities to create something completely new.

FOCUS AREA THREE

A Marketing partner – close to the tourist

In order to maintain Norway's international market share and strengthen our position as an attractive destination, it is imperative that we are present in the markets and channels where tourists seek inspiration for and information about travel. In order to be visible and get the best return on our investments, we need to understand different target groups' needs and establish effective sales and distribution channels. We need to understand the language, business culture and have a broad network within both the press and travel industry in the markets in which we operate.



Innovation Norway will:

1. *Increase the desire and intention to travel to Norway*
2. *Make it easy to choose Norway*
3. *Increase sales opportunities for commercial partners*

3a: A Marketing partner with a presence in prioritised markets

Be close to the most important international and domestic markets

We will continue to have a presence in our prioritised markets. This is important in order to secure valuable tourists and value creation for the Norwegian travel industry. In these markets we will have skilled employees with an in-depth knowledge of the local market, distribution channels and what it takes to succeed. These employees will form the basis for our work in marketing Norway and their competence and expertise will be made available to the industry. In the prioritised markets we will promote the breadth of the Norwegian travel industry which includes large and small destinations and companies that offer products that fulfil our customers' needs. We will focus on the companies and destinations that follow the principles of sustainability. We will build networks and establish relationships with the local distribution chain and will be working actively with the local press and media in order to gain editorial coverage for Norway. This ensures an international presence for the Norwegian travel industry that few other organisations are in a financial position to match.

Offer customers a digital presence on Visitnorway and in other important digital channels

Innovation Norway will ensure that Norway is perceived as an attractive, unique and relevant destination in the digital channels that consumers use to seek information and gain inspiration. These include our own channels as well as important external channels. Visitnorway will display the diversity in the Norwegian travel offering and make it easy for tourists to choose sustainable options. We will create our own content but will also gather and distribute good quality external content. All content will be tailored to the tourists' needs and interests. Prior to their trip, visitors will have easy access to interesting, spectacular and helpful content and services making it easy for them to choose Norway. During their stay, information will be available via mobile devices and by following the digital buzz, we will identify possibilities and problems that visitors might encounter on a trip to Norway. We will encourage visitors to share their experiences both during and after their visit.

Be a driving force for ambitious PR work

The PR work is an important part of the marketing mix in our prioritised markets. Independent editorial coverage through printed articles, online visibility, TV and radio programmes give Norwegian products valuable visibility in International media. Editorial coverage is perceived as more credible than paid marketing as journalists are free to shape the editorial content the way they want to and only by ensuring high quality experiences and products can we contribute to positive media coverage. The PR work is also important to reinforce the messages conveyed through paid activities and in our own channels. We will have an ambitious approach to PR with dedicated PR Managers in all prioritised markets. They will have expert knowledge about the local media landscape and an excellent network making it possible to attract significant attention to Norway and Norwegian travel products.

Create good arenas for meetings between Norwegian and international tourist industry

In order to encourage more tourists to choose Norway as a holiday destination it is imperative to have good trade contacts and a broad, local distribution network. Innovation Norway already has an extensive network, but we will strengthen and develop it by adding new operators, travel agents, incoming agents and OTA's. We will also work with other relevant distribution networks that will make Norwegian

travel products more accessible in our prioritised markets. We will continue to develop effective arenas for meetings between Norwegian suppliers and local travel trade. Norwegian Travel Market (NTW) in Norway along with local workshops, trade events and international trade fairs will continue to be the most important touch points between Norwegian and International travel trade.

Strengthen Norway's reputation by developing partnerships with other Norwegian export industries

Norway's overall reputation has an effect on how Norway is perceived as a travel destination. In order to increase the knowledge about Norway and make it a more attractive destination, we will strengthen our ties with other Norwegian export industries. Innovation Norway will be an active contributor to Team Norway² and we aim to cooperate with companies outside the travel industry that can help strengthen Norway's position as an attractive destination.

3b: A partner in marketing campaigns

Our marketing campaigns make it easier to choose Norway

We will create awareness for Norway as a travel destination among target groups that are likely to travel to Norway. Through our campaigns we will highlight experiences, activities and destinations that are relevant and attractive to our target groups and that stand out from comparable experiences elsewhere. The campaigns will strengthen the industry's own sales and marketing activities both internationally and in the domestic market.

We will work closely with commercial partners with sellable products that transport tourists to and around Norway, and with regions, destinations and activity providers that provide for the tourists when they are here. The Norwegian travel industry offers visitors good and varied products and services. They do however vary greatly both geographically and seasonally and through the various products on offer. These variations contribute to making Norway an exciting destination, but also provide challenges when it comes to communication in a consistent and recognisable manner. To enable us to get the best return on our marketing investment, it is important that we communicate in a clear, recognisable and consistent way that fulfils tourist's needs and interests across all channels and touch points, regardless of which region and destination is being promoted.

It has never been more important to communicate Norway in a consistent way, competition for customers is stronger and consumers are exposed to more commercial messages than ever before. In order to ensure consistency in our marketing communication, all Innovation Norway's marketing activities must follow the guidelines for Brand Norway as a tourist destination and its relevant communication concepts. We want to have a close, long-term relationship with our partners to develop creative solutions and communication strategies. This is imperative to ensure that our core messages are communicated and that Norway has a clearer and more prominent position amongst our target group, regardless of which products are marketed or which channels are used.

Experimental and creative marketing

It is well-documented that brands that are creative and succeed in engaging the public, increase the target group's willingness to pay and increase profitability for businesses. To alert the world to Norway as an attractive and highly relevant destination, we will allocate resources to experiment with new and creative ways of generating buzz about Norway.

² Team Norway is a collaborative platform for Foreign Affairs, Innovation Norway, Norwegian seafood council and other Norwegian companies working internationally

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