

Interreg Vb /Prowad Link  
WP6.5. Feasibility study, nature tourism routes around the North Sea Region  
Project description

Interreg Vb, North Sea Region  
Prowad Link project  
Feasibility study: Nature tourism route around the North Sea Region, 2019  
Project description / specification

06.02.2019

## Background

Interreg Vb, North Sea Region, project PROWAD LINK was approved end of June 2018. The 14 partners in the project from Norfolk (UK), Geiranger (Norway) and Wadden Sea (Denmark, Germany, Netherlands) are working on 6 work packages, where work package 6 (WP6) focus on development of sustainable tourism and experiences with nature as a driver for development. The project uses the NBBC-model (Nature Based Benefit Cycle), where sustainable development - economic, socio-cultural and nature-environmental viability – is a premise. Amongst the partners are national parks, world heritage nature sites and other special nature sites, so protection and prosper must go hand in hand.

There is a wish between the partners in the project to link our outstanding nature areas and sites around the North Sea Region with a route of highest international standards, which can provide modern, nature loving visitors with sustainable experiences. Local SME's who fulfill partnership criteria should be linked to the route, e.g. accommodation, local food producers, nature guides, nature centres, farm shops, events, tour boats. The intention is that the route in itself will become a brand – a must visit for those who seek heritage thematic routes. The route is to be developed with inspiration from e.g. UNESCO's classification of routes or another internationally recognized standard, where protection and prosper goes hand in hand.

Before the partners start working on the route they have decided to prepare a feasibility study to reveal whether it is realistic to establish such a route.

In practice a feasibility study covers many different kinds of studies, which vary according to the aim and content of the project and accordingly a feasibility study can be structured in many ways. Here the feasibility study contains five headlines:

1. Definition of idea, vision and product
2. Identification of market
3. Location
4. Environment and society, here under integration of partners
5. Economy

## Aim

Since it is not possible to cover all aspect in this feasibility study due to the economic frames and timelines the aim of the feasibility study is:

- To help defining the idea and product more precisely: Which kind of route could be developed.
- What routes are already out there and how successful are they
- Is there a demand for nature routes in modern tourism, hereunder which routes are the leading routes in international tourism, why these routes are the most attractive, do they fulfill certain criteria.

- A draft for the location of the route, especially which nature areas should / could be included.
- Proposal for which partners who could be linked to the route.
- An estimate for the economy of the next phases in the project and route development, if a demand for the route is documented.
- How to involve local partners in the route development

Since local politicians and SME's and other partners with little experience in international route development will be involved in the decision process, it is important that the feasibility study is structured and prepared as a usable report with relatively clear and concise language. Instead a more visual form with e.g. graphs, illustrations, photos and tables is desired.

The feasibility study will be used to decide, if the preparation of the route can move into a next stage.

## Methods and activities

The report is prepared in close cooperation with the lead partner of this work package as well as other relevant project partners.

### 1. Idea, vision and product

Initially the term 'route' must be defined, what is a route according to international standards.

Secondly the idea – the concept – must be defined and described more in details, here under:

- Vision, aim, goals and ambitions
- Core product and services – physical and digital infrastructures etc.
- Partners and advisers: Who can contribute to the route development
- Organisation: Who can organize the route during the project development phase and after – who has the skills, competences and experiences.

### 2. The market

Markets are traditionally thought of as a specific geographical place. The meaning of market is here expanded to include suppliers, buyers and competitors, and not only in a geographical sense, but also digital markets is included, e.g. Facebook has 1.9 billion users and Instagram has 1 billion users.

The feasibility study must focus on the customers:

- Is there a demand for transnational routes with a focus on outstanding nature sites
- Is there a demand for different thematic routes

- What are the potential for connecting stories to a route e.g. culture, history, gastronomy, architecture, heritage
- Who are the customers / tourists
- What are their motivations, expectations, needs and demands now and in the near future
- What is the market volume (estimate)

Secondly the feasibility study shall identify the ‘competitors’ – other similar or other routes and point important information about these routes, not in details, but main findings:

- What are the leading routes in Europe and internationally
- Which other internationally leading nature routes exists
- What characterizes these routes, e.g. tourist profiles, physical and infrastructural profiles, criteria for SME-partners to cooperate
- How are they organized, financed, managed, marketed

Sub-conclusion: Is this market attractive and if so a proposal for target groups, segments, marketing channels is drawn.

### 3. Location

Together with the lead partner of the work package and other regional project partners a proposal for a route is drawn. This could build entirely or partly on the existing North Sea Cycling Trail, but new, innovative proposals are welcome, if they have strong link to reality. A simple map with a route is prepared and if possible regional loops on the route are added. Inputs for location of the route could include reflections on:

- Which nature sites are natural to include and fulfill criteria of having outstanding values
- Proximity to towns, population centres, tourist destinations
- Proximity to markets
- Psychological perception of physical accessibility
- Combining local routes with the greater route (incentive to take detours)
- Connection to other local visitor attractions, tourism and leisure offers
- Physical infrastructure
- Local back up

### 4. Environment and society

Reflections on positive and negative impacts on local society and environment must be included. Not in details, this will come later, but overall inputs and reflections regarding effects and impacts on:

- Nature and environment: how is nature, landscape influenced by establishing a route
- Socio and local culture: how will this influence the local population and local cultures as well a synergy with local development of routes and other infrastructures in the regions

- **Economy:** What are the economic cost-benefits for the local communities, hereunder turn over, job creation, tax revenues.

## 5. Economy

Finally the feasibility study must provide an estimate on:

- Budget for further project development
- Estimated overall rough budget for construction costs
- Proposals for funding of construction
- Reflections on running costs for the routes

The preparation, structure and form of the report / study will be agreed in cooperation between Wadden Sea National Park, Denmark and the external consultant.

The timelines for the study indicates is not very long and this will of course set a limit to the level of details and information which can be collected and included in the report.

Important is that the report can be used by the partners and results are applicable as well as it has to be easily understood by local SME's in the partner regions, when they read it.

The report is written in English.

## Time

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Tender	6 February 2019
Contract	1 April 2019
Meeting with external consultant	Week 15/16 (Mid April) 2019
1. Idea, vision and product, first draft	15 May 2019
2. The market, first draft	15 May 2019
3. Location, first draft	11 June 2019
4. Environment and society, first draft	11 June 2019
5. Economy, first draft	11 June 2019
Comment from project partners	21 June 2019
Report 1. draft	27 June 2019
Meeting with external consultant	Week 27 2019
Adjust report	July/August 2019
Final report	30 August 2019
External consultant presentation report	september 2019 (date tbd)

Please see tender specifications for detailed information about conditions for this specification of requirements.

Please notice that the invoice shall be split and forwarded to four partners, cf. contract item 6.2.