



Sustainable Heritage Areas:
Partnerships for Ecotourism



Northern Periphery and
Arctic Programme
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NEWSLETTER

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SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE AREAS: PARTNERSHIPS FOR ECO-TOURISM



Yes, we are moving ahead!

Welcome to the second SHAPE newsletter, which is being published just after our third partner meeting in Wester Ross, Scotland.

After a year of activity, SHAPE is very much moving forward and evolving in positive directions. Project partners in each of our SHAs have organized meetings with stakeholders to map natural and cultural heritage assets and identify possible joint initiatives.

There has been strong interest in these meetings; about 200 people have attended them. Stakeholders have used a range of different methods for mapping assets, which will all be included in our e-service, to be launched later this year.

The initiatives that have emerged from the lively discussion in the meetings fall into five main themes: trails, branding, training (especially young people), local products (in particular, those made from wool), and wildlife watching. These initiatives will be developed over the next year and also form the basis of learning journeys next spring and summer.

This newsletter provides further detail on the meetings in each SHA; the partner meeting, to which we were glad to invite representatives from five other NPA projects; and two reports prepared by Laura Ferguson, who has been an important member of our team for the past year. We hope you find much of interest!

Professor Martin Price

Director, Centre for Mountain Studies,
Perth College, University of the Highlands & Islands
Chairholder, UNESCOI Chair in Sustainable Mountain
Development

You will find detailed information about the SHAPE project on our website: <http://shape.interreg-npa.eu/>

WESTER ROSS DEVELOPS STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Wester Ross Biosphere will, among other things, use the SHAPE project to develop an overall strategy for sustainable tourism. Some stakeholders are wary of new initiatives as the present level of tourism is seen by some as not manageable

After careful consideration of the current touristic climate in Wester Ross the project group decided that the development of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the region is very much needed. Many of the stakeholders were worried about new ecotourism initiatives as they feel that the current level of tourism is not manageable.

The SHA has partnered with Visit Wester Ross, the local Destination Management Organisation as they update their development strategy from 2015, encouraging ecotourism as the focus for the future. Following this they

identified that one of the most undervalued strengths in Wester Ross is the Human History. When coupled with the ways in which past communities have used the landscape, interesting ideas for landscape-based storytelling come alive.

The local Ranger Service has been developing the idea of Heritage Routes for many years with limited resources and the theme was an important one to the core group of stakeholders, the Wester Ross Biosphere board. So, they decided to base the first stakeholder workshop on this theme. It proved a marvellous choice as many local people responded to the adverts in the press inviting them to share their stories and ideas. Several agency and NGO partners also contributed including the Forestry Commission, Highland Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, the National Trust for Scotland and Mountaineering Scotland. The group gathered a huge amount of data including ideas for walks, mountain bike trails, visitor education initiatives and themed heritage trails. - Now to analyse the input and see where the best ideas will take us, says Laura Hamlet, SHAPE Project Officer for Wester Ross Biosphere.



Stakeholders mapping out ideas for their locality in the Biosphere, Wester Ross, Scotland. Photo: Katarzyna Kowalik.

WILL USE SHAPE TO POSITION BIOSPHERE RESERVE IN AN INTERNATIONAL SETTING

Manicouagan Uapishka biosphere reserve gathered 25 tourist companies as well as the tourism board representing 600 members for the first SHAPE workshop. They see a potential in using SHAPE to position the Canadian SHA in an international circuit.

Manicouagan had a first stakeholders' meeting on the 9th of February, by attending the North Shore Tourism board meeting, which grouped over 25 regional touristic companies in the room. This association represents over 600 members in the tourism sector. The SHAPE project was presented by JP Messier and Raymond Rousselot (an Innu First Nation community leader), demonstrating that SHAPE represents a great opportunity to position the Canadian Biosphere Reserve and some touristic stakeholders in an international circuit among other Nordic designated areas.

One of the main conclusions of the meeting was that North Shore Tourism is working on the «Great North Circuit» that wants to increase partnerships among its members along the main inland road access (route 389), which includes the Uapishka Station, an ecotouristic facility owed by the biosphere. The circuit could definitely be used for the SHAPE purpose.

A second meeting happened in the Biosphere main office on April 12th, with 5 potential partners to be involved in a small circuit, to start mapping the assets.



Manicouagan Uapishka, Canada. Photo: RMBMU.

UNTAPPED OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECO-TOURISM

Stakeholder meeting at the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere identifies challenges and discovers exciting opportunities.

Glentworth and the Cree Valley area within the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere was the focus of the first stakeholder workshop. Around 30 stakeholders attended and through round table discussions they explored partnership working for tourism, asset mapping of both tangible and in-tangible assets and discussed future ideas for eco-tourism. Some key issues that emerged with regards partnerships were short term funding and therefore lack of continuity of the partnership when initiatives ended. More opportunities were felt needed to connect with others as there was clearly scope for more collaboration and joined up working. More knowledge of the markets to develop tourism initiatives was seen as a gap in matching up need with demand and the changes in technology in reaching those markets.

The mapping exercise was focused on identifying what's special about Glentworth and the Cree Valley area. What are its assets both tangible and in-tangible? The tangible assets focused on the physical – landscapes, heritage, wildlife and natural beauty and recreation and facilities. The in-tangible on the stories and traditions connected with the area and its communities, its culture, heritage and history.

Once the assets were identified it was clear that the region has untapped opportunities for eco-tourism existed and



From stakeholder meeting, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve. Photo: Marie McNulty.



From stakeholder meeting in Kujalleq, Greenland. Photo: Ida Kragstrup.

ideas emerged. These reflected the landscape and changes in land use in and around Glentrol and the Cree Valley area over time. From hill farming to forestry and stories of the local characters, nature-based tourism ideas, through to opportunities from the International Dark Skies designation for dark and night time activities in the forest park.

So many ideas and so many opportunities!

SUCCESSFUL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP IN QAQORTOQ IN THE SOUTH OF GREENLAND

Forty people attended the first SHAPE stakeholder workshop in Kommune Kujalleq in the South of Greenland, April 10 – 11, 2018. A successful meeting and an impressive turnout considering the distances many of the participants had to travel.

The forty participants all took active part in mapping assets and developing tourism in the South of Greenland. This was the first stakeholder meeting in the SHAPE-project, and the aim of the workshop was to identify cultural and natural assets with potential for sustainable tourism development and business.

Because of the long distances stakeholders and participants had to travel, the workshop was arranged together with AAU Arctic, The University of Nuuk and The University

of the Faroe Islands. Their topics covered themes about sustainable business and demography; critical links between gender youth and small-scale business development in fisheries and tourism in South Greenland and gender and mobility in the Faroe Islands.

South of Greenland launched tourism in Greenland in the sixties, but the tourism business declined in the nineties. Now there is an exciting development. Last summer the cultural landscape, Kujataa Greenland – Norse and Inuit Farming at the Edge of the Ice Cap, was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. With this as a basis and the SHAPE project as a tool, there is hope of rekindling sustainable tourism in the region.

The first part of the workshop focused on existing networks and collaboration between businesses. What is successful and what are the challenges that they have experienced? The main part of the workshop dealt with mapping assets for sustainable tourism. Divided into 5 groups the participants mapped infrastructure and natural and cultural assets. The result was huge amount of new information and stakeholders onboard who are eager to contribute and have many ideas for sustainable development.

The next step is to get the information into an online map – and develop a useable structure for how Greenland can manage all this information to develop attractive tourism products.



Illomantsi stakeholder workshop, Finland. Photo: Lukki Virtanen.

DESIGNING SUCCESS STORIES IN NORTH KARELIA

CEDTENK and Karelia UAS have arranged two workshops and one regional stakeholder meeting. The Finnish SHA is getting a good grip on regional challenges.

More than 20 active participants participated in the two workshops arranged by the Finnish SHAPE member. In the February workshop common challenges in maintaining the region's cultural and natural assets were identified, and potential solutions and opportunities for developing tourism were sought. Stakeholders' thoughts on tourism assets, stakeholder relationships, as well as development challenges were mapped in smaller groups.

The SHAPE stakeholders then analyzed key assets, the stakeholder networks, as well as strategic strengths and locations of PSPs in order to bridge gaps (challenges and threats) mapped during the first workshop. An analysis of the region's assets in line with Climate Change (CC) projections was also carried out to map future impact of CC on the assets.

The information was used to determine which of the activities already present in the region could be of benefit for tourism development across Northern Karelia and to develop new innovative solutions. The analysis formed the

basis for the second workshop aiming to design potential success stories.

The regional meeting in March gave more insights into areas of development and issues to consider, whereas a new workshop in April concentrated on brainstorming development of case studies, their local perspectives and feasibility. Overall, North Karelia are well on their way to success.

MAPPING ASSETS AND BUILDING NETWORKS

Nordhordland have ambitious plans for developing an online map demonstrating both local attractions and infrastructure, but at the first SHAPE stakeholder meeting, building a regional network was just as important.

Nordhordland gathered nearly 30 people for the first stakeholder meeting, all of them taking active part in developing tourism in Nordhordland. The first objective was to clarify the scope and the ambition of the SHAPE project. Although Nordhordland is situated close to tourism hub, Bergen, and to the famous Sognefjord, there is not much tourism in the region. SHAPE may therefore contribute to develop more sustainable tourism activities.



Mapping assets in Nordhordland, Norway. Photo: Kari Natland.

The first section of the workshop focused on existing networks and on collaboration between businesses. Where have they succeeded and what are the challenges that they have experienced?

The main part of the workshop was dedicated to mapping assets for sustainable tourism. Divided into 5 groups, the participants mapped infrastructure and natural and cultural assets. Nordhordland has nine municipalities and all of them were represented at the meeting. When each group presented their work and thoughts it became very clear that there is a huge amount of information and that the stakeholders onboard are eager to contribute.

The next step is to get the information into an online map – and develop an operational structure for how to use all this information to develop attractive tourism activities. At the next meeting, the group will explore these possibilities and start planning their contribution to the SHAPE e-service.

FOUR WORKSHOPS AND TWO MEETINGS FOR STAKEHOLDERS IN SNÆFELLSNES

Tourism in Iceland is developing rapidly and in Snæfellsnes they will use the SHAPE project to develop an overall Destination management plan. The level of activity is impressive.



Mapping assets in Snæfellsnes, Iceland. Photo: Margrét Björk Björnsdóttir.

The growth of tourism in Iceland is vigorous. In Snæfellsnes they have therefore decided to use the SHAPE project to get a better grip on the situation and develop a complete Destination management plan. The cooperation is great both on a grassroot level, and on a more formal level involving the tourism organization.

The work started already in October in 2017 determining the status and the challenges. This was then followed by a workshop in November and two in early spring of 2018 where they established a vision for tourism in the region and started working on ways to reach that vision. They also involved a larger group cooperating with the Iceland tourist organization so that the plan may eventually encompass all of western Iceland.

The first draft of the plan is now ready, and the Iceland group is looking into ways of evaluating their efforts.

MAPPING AND MANAGING NATURAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS

A SHAPE review on mapping and managing natural and cultural assets for ecotourism development brings together current knowledge and experience on a range of topics concerning mapping and managing such assets.

Assets are features of value. There are diverse types, and they can be tangible or intangible. While mapping has typically focused on tangible, locatable assets, it is important to also include intangible features that hold

value. Intangible assets have no physical form – they cannot be touched but still exist and can be experienced. Examples might include stories, scenery, sense of tranquillity, and cultural associations.

Mapping helps to locate assets and identify both gaps and opportunities for developing or linking them. The practice of asset management planning has become increasingly participatory, providing information to both



Picture Caption: Dumfries and Galloway Wild Seasons 'Wild Routes' provide an example of asset mapping and linking.
Photo: Dumfries and Galloway Wild Seasons.

the community and area managers. Methods which can be used include focus groups, surveys and interviews, and geo-crowdsourcing. There are many approaches to asset mapping: the whole assets approach, the heritage approach, storytelling, asset clustering, mapping by theme, and mapping seasonality. Tools for mapping these assets include paper maps, online applications, databases and GIS.

The full report is accessible at:
<http://shape.interreg-npa.eu/resources/>

Once you have produced your asset map, it is important to know how to use it. The chapter on applying asset mapping in integrated management helps with this. Mapping assets is important in integrated management as it helps managers to think strategically about the resources they have, and how to plan for their sustainable use. Asset mapping is also integral to linking assets, first by visualising existing or potential links and then linking the assets in order to add value to visitor experiences and improve opportunities for local businesses and organisations. It is vital that the asset map is kept up to date so that it remains useful.

Finally, the review covers climate change in planning for the future. The potential risks of climate change are diverse and difficult to assess, but may include coastal erosion, sea level rise, water acidification, eutrophication, an increase in extreme climatic effects, flooding, drought, glacier melt, shorter snow season, species invasion, and species extinction. In addition to risks, climate change could also bring opportunities, such as an extended growing season for local producers, longer tourism seasons, and increased tourist numbers. Two management approaches to climate change are explored. Scenario planning creates positive conversations and starts a flow of ideas, while adaptive management evaluates and refines practices in use.

To learn more about any of these topics, see the SHAPE literature review *Mapping and Managing Natural and Cultural Assets*.

Laura Ferguson, University of Highlands and Islands

GOVERNANCE OF SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE AREAS

The second SHAPE review focuses on the governance of Sustainable Heritage Areas (SHAs), and is intended to guide the reader through an understanding of the practice of governance, towards its application in their own SHA. It also includes the findings of a survey that invited UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in the NordMAB region to contribute their knowledge and experiences of the establishment, governance and management of their Biosphere Reserves.

There are many different definitions of governance, but none is widely agreed. This can make it difficult to understand and analyse governance, so the SHAPE Governance Steering Group decided to use this definition:

“the structures and processes that determine how power is exerted, how decisions are taken and how stakeholders are included.”

SHAs have many different models of governance. Traditional hierarchical forms are still in use in some areas, while in others new collaborative forms are blurring the boundaries between the state and civil society, as well as between public and private. The second chapter of the literature review describes these models as applied to governance of various types of SHA: UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, and Global Geoparks; Natura 2000 sites; National Parks, Regional Parks, private conservation areas/privately protected areas, public-private partnerships, and commons.



Governance. Model: Laura Ferguson.

Some of the key issues and challenges in SHA governance are then discussed. One is to achieve sustainability. Transitions away from unsustainable governance structures or processes and along more sustainable pathways may require substantial, and sometimes unpopular, changes. Another issue is to secure funding and resources: a perennial challenge for most SHAs. Some acquire funding through social enterprise, reducing their dependency on grants and donations. However, reliance on profit from enterprise – and also on funding for projects – can result in a conflict of interests or ‘mission drift.’ Some SHAs turn to the private sector for funding and support, but the increasing involvement of the private sector may restrict flexibility or encourage the privileging of short-term returns over long-term sustainability. These issues are complex. Other relevant issues that are reviewed include ensuring effective stakeholder participation, managing conflict, and working towards good branding and communications.

Principles provide guidance for the establishment, best practice, and evaluation of governance processes. Principles of good governance include: participation/inclusiveness, rule of law, transparency, performance/responsiveness, conflict management/consensus orientation, fairness/equity, efficiency and effectiveness/capability, accountability, direction/strategic vision, legitimacy, resilience/adaptability, communication/connectivity, integration, and learning mechanisms. These were used to develop process indicators for governance monitoring. Monitoring, evaluating and reporting are necessary elements of governance to ensure that governance structures and processes function well. The final chapter of the review provides guidance for establishing a full set of indicators to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of governance. These will be used in the partner SHAs in the next stage of SHAPE.

Laura Ferguson, University of Highlands and Islands
The full report is accessible at:
<http://shape.interreg-npa.eu/resources/>

April 2018:

PARTNER MEETING IN WESTER ROSS, SCOTLAND

Hard work and stimulating discussions at the third Steering Group meeting

The third meeting of the SHAPE Steering Group at the Wester Ross Biosphere reserve was very productive. Sharing knowledge, discussing our common experiences and getting new inspiration in an exciting locale.

Wester Ross Biosphere welcomed SHAPE partners to Torridon House, in the heart of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve on Tuesday the 24th of April 2018. After a long journey we were treated to a very warm welcome by Hosts Felix and Sarah who played traditional music for us and provided a delicious home cooked meal.

The next morning the hard work started in Torridon Community Hall, with activity updates from all the

Sustainable Heritage Areas on their stakeholder workshops, natural and cultural heritage maps and maintaining engagement. Work package leaders updated us on progress with the Governance models, communication and the e-service.

Following our second session we set out to share best practice with our SHAPE partners, visiting Beinn Eighe Visitor Centre to see how their new exhibition communicates natural and cultural heritage to visitors and then to GALE, a community run initiative in Gairloch designed to help the community develop and realise a sustainable future. In the evening we visited one of the top ecotourism attractions in Scotland, Inverewe gardens where we learned how the estate manages some of the most diverse hectares of landcover and use in the country for visitors and local people.



SHAPE partner meeting in Torridon, Wester Ross. Photo: Timo J. Hokkanen.

Our second day was equally productive, with invited delegates from other NPA projects joining us to share their experience and associate partners from the National Trust for Scotland and Visit Wester Ross sharing their aspirations for our region. The SHAs presented the innovations, potentials and gaps identified through stakeholder engagement and a stimulating discussion ensued on which initiatives should be taken forward in each area. Happily, there were some really good common themes which developed involving routes and training programs for local guides. We departed in the evening with lots of fresh ideas for work to do at home!

Laura Hamlet, SHAPE Project Officer for Wester Ross Biosphere



Heritage routes doesn't have to be digital! Photo: Kjersti Isdal.



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