



South Funen and the islands will contribute to developing sustainable and regenerative tourism for the future.

'Nurturing Nature' is an interregional development project that, with nature and local communities at its heart, aims to pave the way for a new approach to tourism development.

In general, more and more foreign visitors are coming to Denmark, but one trend is particularly noteworthy and has been dubbed 'coolcation'. In 10 years, the number of overnight stays in Denmark by visitors from Southern Europe has almost doubled, partly as a result of climate change. This makes projects such as Nurturing Nature more relevant than ever before in ensuring that tourism development does not have a negative impact on the natural environment and local communities. With a grant of approximately DKK 10.1 million, Nurturing Nature aims to pave the way for a new approach to tourism development.

A new form of tourism: Guests and locals create value together

Nurturing Nature introduces a regenerative approach to tourism, where both citizens and visitors actively contribute to protecting and restoring nature and culture, which will also strengthen local communities and the local economy.

The goal is to make the project area Geopark South Funen Archipelago and the Baltic Sea coastal region in Schleswig-Holstein an exemplary, sustainable tourist destination that is attractive to residents, visitors and tourists alike.

"It is a great honour that the Interreg programme has chosen to support Nurturing Nature. Sustainable and regenerative tourism development is a key focus area for the Geopark, and we have succeeded in bringing

together a strong group of partners around a common direction," says Rasmus E. Casper, head of the secretariat at Geopark Det Sydfynske Øhav and project manager for Nurturing Nature.

fact box:

Nurturing Nature will:

- 1. Train local co-creation facilitators.**
- 2. Develop at least 12 sustainable tourism offerings in local communities on both sides of the border.**
- 3. Create a new marketing narrative with a focus on responsible tourism.**
- 4. Support long-term quality of life, attractiveness and sustainable growth in the region.**

Boundless challenges require groundbreaking collaborations

Support for the project comes from Interreg 6A, an EU development programme that aims to strengthen cross-border cooperation in Europe. The Interreg programme is all about identifying opportunities and solutions to cross-border challenges, such as climate change or demographic developments.

"In recent years, both here at home and in Norway, for example, we have seen examples of popular areas struggling to keep up with tourism development. We need projects and results that can show how to balance growth in the tourism industry with environmental considerations and sustainable local communities, and that is what Nurturing offers. We need projects and results that can show how to balance growth in the tourism industry with nature conservation and sustainable local communities, and that is what Nurturing Nature offers," says Mayor Hans Stavnsager (S) from Faaborg Midtfyn Municipality, who is also a member of the Interreg committee.

International cooperation strengthens the effort

With a strong project organization, Nurturing Nature brings together nine project partners from Denmark and Germany, including the NGO Bund für Umwelt- und Naturschutz in Schleswig-Holstein and the destination companies Ostsee-Holstein-Tourismus and Destination Fyn.

The educational institutions UCL Odense and Duale Hochschule Schleswig-Holstein contribute to the development and testing of new methods for developing new tourism products, including co-creation processes and a so-called Value Compass.

'We are seeing more and more tourists who want to spend time in nature, and we look forward to helping develop, test and promote the new activities,' says Nina Brandt Jacobsen, business consultant at Vis-itLangeland and one of the four Geopark owner municipalities Faaborg-Midtfyn, Svendborg, Langeland and Ærø, each of which will develop and test 2-4 Nurturing Nature activities.

The project also includes more than 20 network partners, all of whom are active in tourism, local development and nature conservation.

Caption:

Photo from Svanninge Bakker, where invasive broom must be kept under control every year. An example of a possible local regenerative tourism activity involving the maintenance of paths and viewpoints – photo: Mikkel Jezequel.

Information:

Read more about the project on the following website:

<https://www.geoparkoehavet.dk/nuna>

Further information:

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