

# Sustainable destination Norway

A national program for communities  
seeking better visitor and destination  
management

# Norway associated with nature and sustainability

Strong brand:

- Monumental, beautiful and varied nature
- Modern people living in the middle of nature, traditions and activities close to nature and natural phenomenon

Settlement throughout the whole country

- 357 municipalities, 15 counties, regional cities
- DMOs represent industry/region
- DMOs mainly member based
- No national or local tourist tax
- DMOs earlier business model; marketing





# Sustainability Mandate 2008 - 2012

1. Mobilize whole tourism industry and its stakeholders in a process targeting sustainability in tourism
2. Test a concept for sustainable tourism development in destinations





# Ambitions 2008 - ongoing

- Holistic tourism development
- Long term committment
- Continous improvement
- Involving process; public/private/civil
- Transparent National Standard
- Measurable, aligned indicators
- Tools to assist process
- Relevant incentives



# Piloting 2008 - 2012

- Establish common language, values and principles for sustainable tourism
- Focus on operations, not on theory (even if theory guides operations)
- **Bottom – up**
  - Local destination and authorities consider relevance, test, and involve
- **Top – down**
  - National authorities build structure, tools, ownership, and commitment



# Visionary framework

1

## Environmental and cultural protection

1. Cultural richness
2. Biological diversity
3. GHG emissions and climate adaptation
4. Clean environment and resource efficiency

2

## Social equity and life quality

5. Visitor management
6. Local commitment and quality of life
7. Employment quality
8. Visitor fulfillment

3

## Economic viability

9. Economically viable tourism destinations through local value creation
10. Economically viable tourism enterprises



# Sustainable Destination Standard 3.0

## Sustainable destination standard

Criteria and indicators

VERSION 3.0 - 01.01.2022

### Themes, criteria, indicators

A. Destination management	2 / 5	
B. Destination strategy		3 / 7
C. Environmental/cultural sustainability	13 / 38	
D. Social wellbeing and impact	7 / 19	
E. Economic sustainability	6 / 15	

Standard 2.0 recognized by GSTC in 2018  
Standard 3.0 recognized by GSTC in 2022

# Connects to National Strategy



## National Tourism Strategy 2030

Big impact, small footprint





# Involve and commit



## Innovation Norway responsibilities:

- Head office
- Regional offices
- International offices
- Involving authorities – and other national and regional stakeholders
- Involving tourism associations and organisations
- Visibility at [www.visitnorway.com](http://www.visitnorway.com), conferences etc



## Important roles

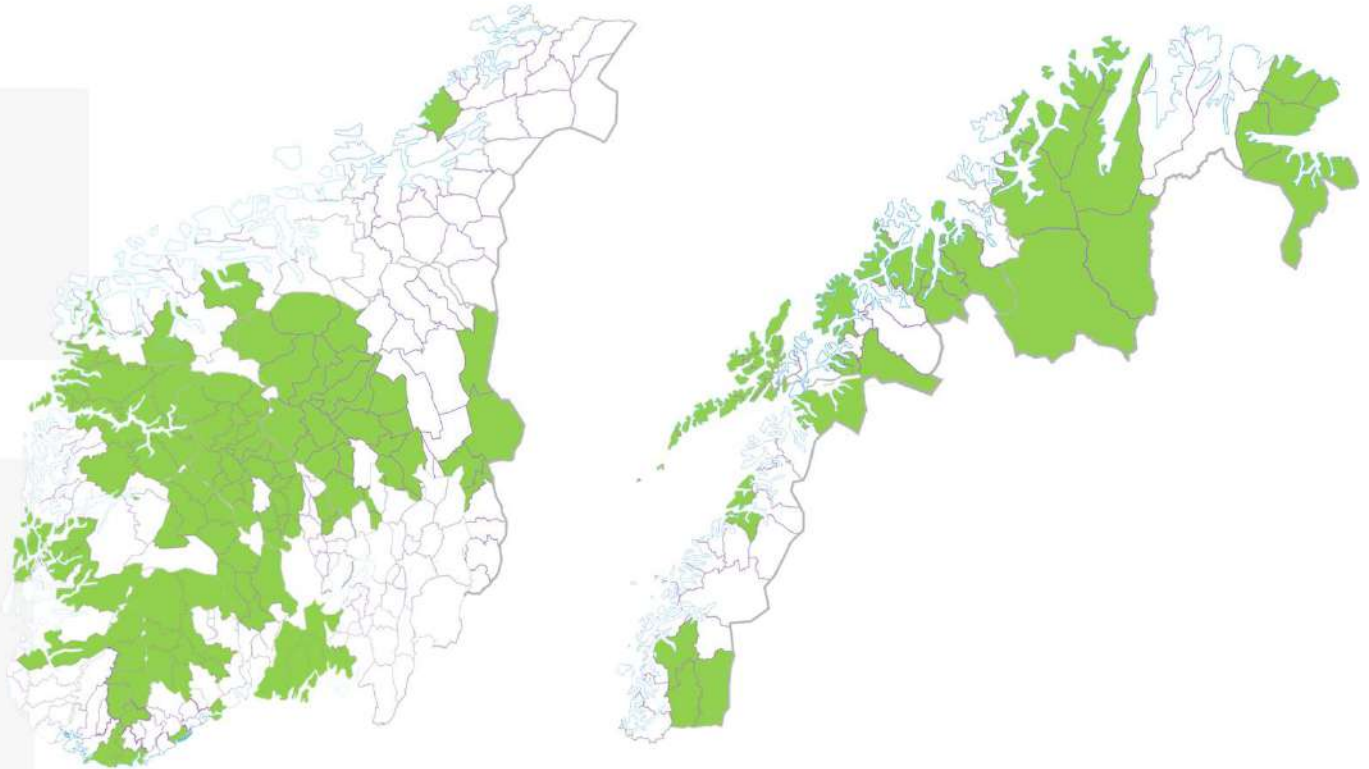
- Skilled and experienced trainers
- Independent auditors, online/ onsite audits
- Network of destinations building competence, sharing experiences, lobbying

# Outreach 2024

## Outreach april 2024:

- 38 destinations certified
- 16 destinations in progress
- 133 municipalities
- 4670 DMO members + others

- 2-3 years before first audit
- Full audit every 3 year
- Process funding available
- Minimum score
- Destination committment
- Annual reports



# Toolbox examples 2024



- **Templates**

- Member survey
- Guest/tourist survey
- Inhabitants survey
- Risk analysis for tourism destinations

- **Calculators**

- CO2rism (transport emissions)
- Consumption/spending by market
- Seasonality (GINI)

- **Digital portal & audits**

- Indicator delivery, link to data, documentation, toolbox etc
- Track progress, trainer access etc
- Audit and score

- **Handbook**

- Process of Destination development

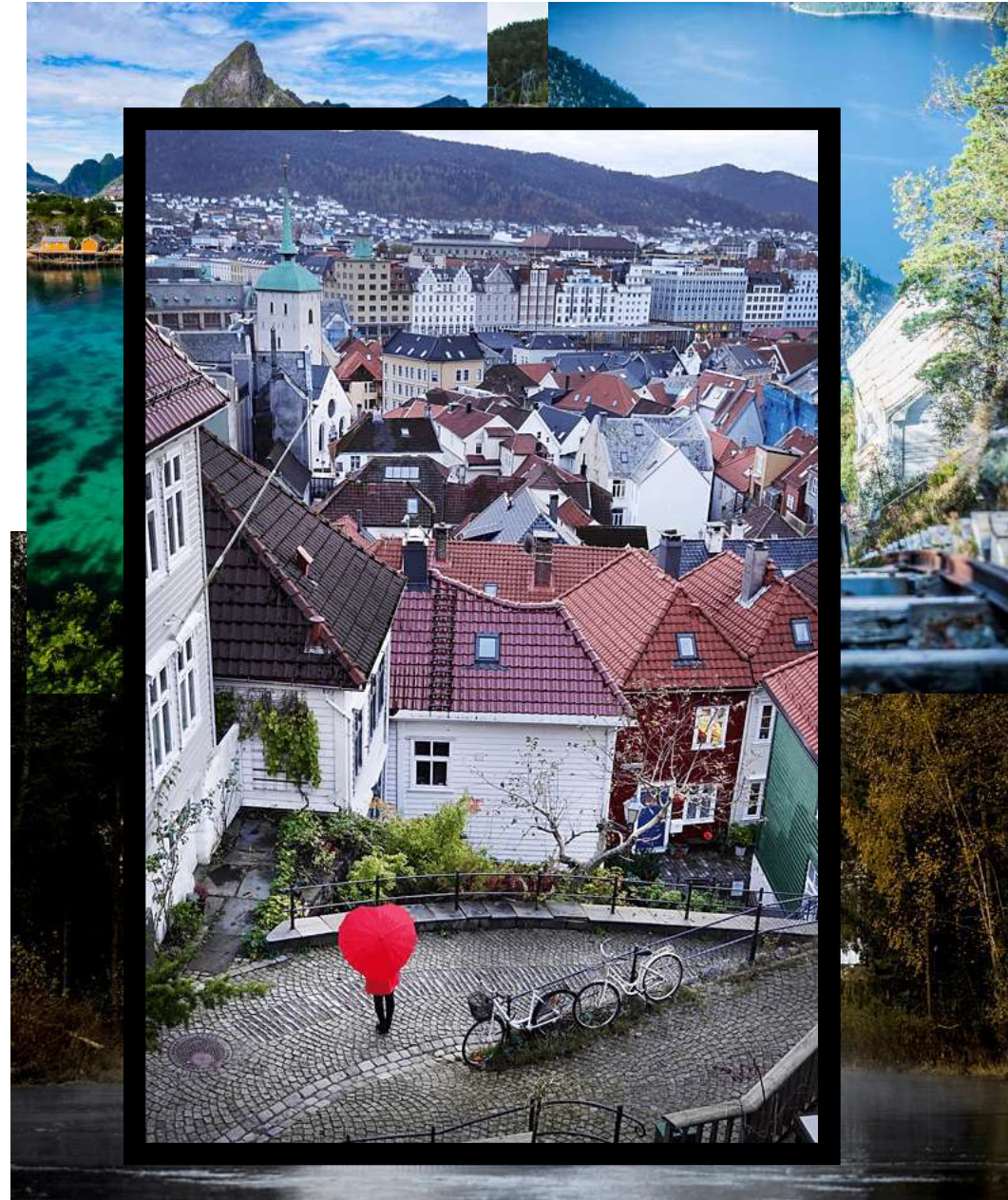
- **Competence & network**

- Annual gatherings all destinations
- Network organisation established



# Destination stories

- **Eastern Norway:** Destination development through regional destination development councils
- **Suldal:** Provides an extensive training program on sustainable tourism for all tourism businesses locally, sharing knowledge with other destinations
- **Lofoten:** Local DMO building a green strategy, and actions on Sustainable destination standard
- **Lysefjorden:** Building first class visitor management with relevant tools to operate tourism volumes in vulnerable natural areas
- **Bergen:** Local DMO partnering with cruiseport for better cruise & destination management, and targeting climate friendly markets



# Meeting challenges

- Broadens national and local collaboration on tourism
- Provide agenda for public/private/civil involvement
- Defining measures, monitoring and benchmarking
- Advances difficult dialogue on dilemmas
- Builds a strong, independent competence network
- Connects all to an international agenda (GSTC)

## However;

- Challenges business models of DMOs (DMO vs DMMO)
- Exposes weak mandate on tourism management
- Challenging to build, and keep, competence over time





# Thanks

Ingunn Sørnes

Innovation Norway

<https://www.innovationnorway.no>



Industry embraces program:

*Quote:*

“... the "Sustainable Destinations" branding scheme is today seen as the premise and the very basis for the development of the tourism industry in and across destinations in the whole country”

*Statement from network to the Ministry of Trade and Fisheries,  
April 2024*

