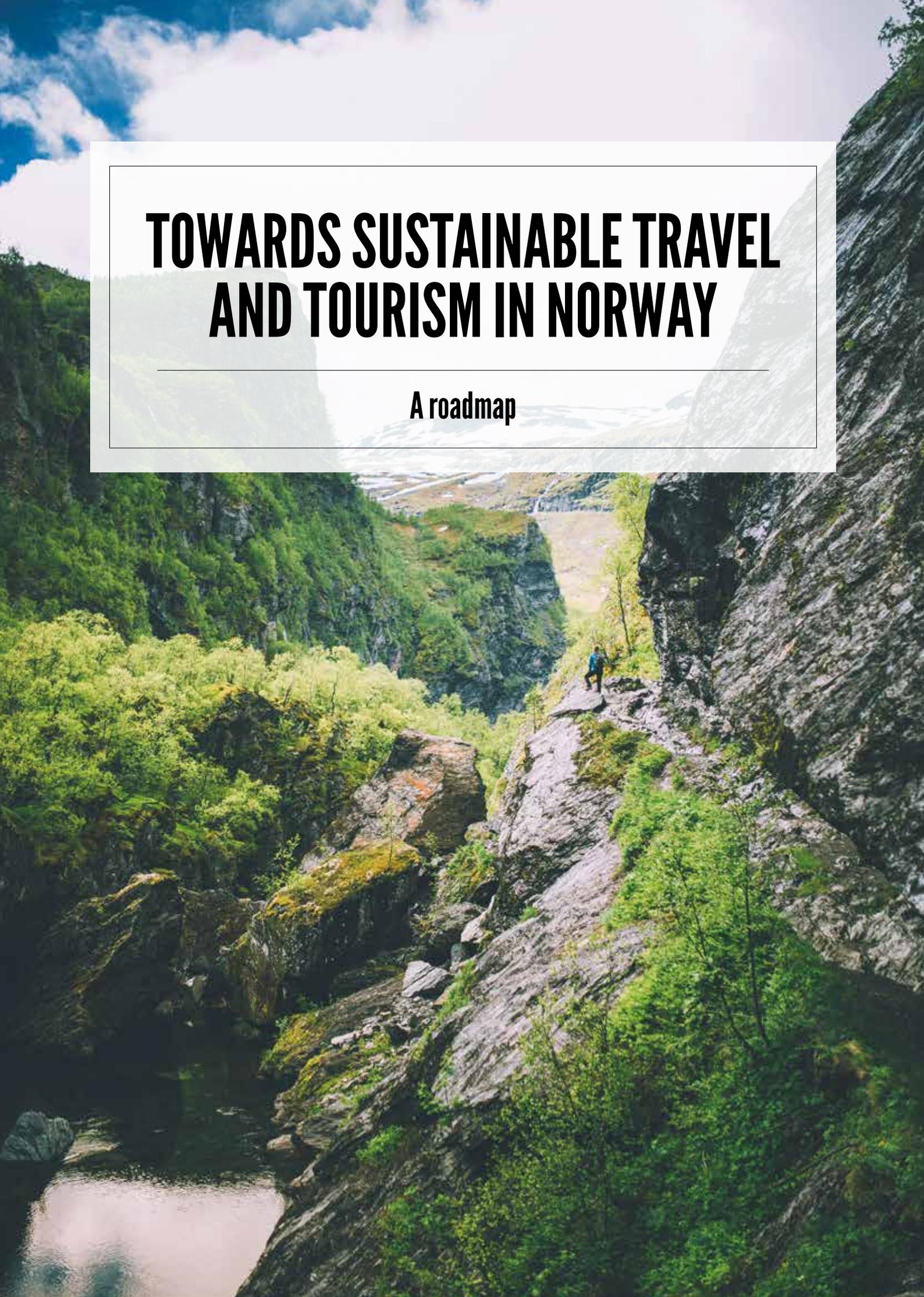


# TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AND TOURISM IN NORWAY

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A roadmap



# WHY A ROADMAP?

In Norway a great opportunity has presented itself for developing a more sustainable and profitable travel and tourism industry. The Government presented a report to the Storting (Parliament) no 19 (2016-2017) "Experience Norway – unique and adventurous". This is primarily a status thorough report. There is now a need to describe further what characterizes sustainable travel and tourism, and identify what challenges lie ahead. The Brand Norway as a travel and tourism destination demands that Norway's unique natural and cultural values must be protected for the future. The Roadmap should become an important part of the government's Strategy for Green Competitiveness across all sectors. Main reasons: the travel and tourism industry has a great built-in potential for low-emission solutions; it is labour intensive; it encompasses a number of economic sectors along its value chain; it can safeguard Norway's natural and cultural capital through a greener, cross-sectoral and experience-based destination development.

## THE ROADMAP SERVES 3 MAIN PURPOSES:

- 1 It provides a vision for moving towards sustainable travel and tourism by 2050, and includes proposals for ways to achieve this for Norway's travel and tourism industry.
- 2 It serves as an input to the Governmental Green Competitiveness strategy, based on the recommendations of the Expert Commission on Green Competitiveness. It describes how the authorities should provide the framework for a green shift in the travel and tourism industry. In addition, it describes ways to strengthen and sustain the sector's competitiveness while meeting the stronger needs for strict policy measures in the context of Norway's climate and environment policy.
- 3 It is also intended as a recommendation that provides Norwegian tourism enterprises with key choices that must be made in the short and long term to move towards to a sustainable society by 2050, and how to maintain a globally competitive edge in a future where change is the order of the day.



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*Grouse, local food at Bessheim.  
Photo: Tina Stafren/Visitnorway.com*



# VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AND TOURISM TOWARDS 2030 AND 2050

**S**ustainable travel and tourism require that we take care of the nation's nature and culture capital, strengthen the social values, bolster pride in local communities while developing new jobs with a focus on value creation that makes travel and tourism economically viable. The perspective has to be long-term: The nature we enjoy today should also be future generations' privilege. It is our responsibility to ensure that it will remain as beautiful, spectacular and viable when it is our children's and grandchildren's turn to appreciate it.

By 2030 Norway should have confirmed its position as one of the world's preferred destinations for sustainable nature- and culture-based travel experiences. Towards 2050, growth of Norwegian tourism industry should primarily consist of unique tourism and travel experiences in unspoiled nature and culture settings. Transport to and from the destinations should be as climate and environmentally friendly as possible. The travel industry will, in close cooperation with the authorities and other sectors, seek out, produce and encourage travel and tourism products that are low in greenhouse gas emissions, offer local food delicacies and be infused with green values for all stakeholders.

The travel and tourism industry will direct its marketing efforts towards carefully selected target groups, based on the "High yield – Low impact" principle.



Viewpoint Snøhetta,  
Hjerlinn, Dovre.  
Photo: CH/visitnorway.com

### **Unique and adventurous experiences**

Norway as a destination should offer unique and memorable tourism and travel experiences based on exposure to imposing, beautiful varied natural attractions and a unique culture.

Active nature and cultural experiences should derive from the nation's traditional outdoor activities, where development of green experiences can be found along the entire value chain; both at sea, along the coast, in fjords, in the mountains, forests and in urban settings.

In Norway, travelers should enjoy outstanding historical building styles, unique architecture and locally produced delicacies. The country should offer authentic nature and cultural travel experiences along the coast, offshore, and in the form of cultural landscapes, giving the travelers a "sense of place" – a feeling of authenticity and proximity to unspoiled nature, complemented with culture content of high value.

To secure Norway's reputation for enjoying opportunities for unique and adventurous experiences, Norway should not present itself as a destination where crowds and mass tourism dominate.

### **A clean, pure and diverse nature**

Travelers in Norway will experience clean air, pure water unadulterated by environmentally harmful emissions and waste disposal, which reduces the destinations' attractiveness and ecological health. All waste should as a matter of principle be reclaimed, reused and recycled.

The unique quality of the Norwegian landscape should be protected, and the landscape's physical and visual nature should not be affected by interventions that reduce nature's diversity in the form of varied habitats, species and cultural landscapes. The value of an unspoiled nature should be given high priority in decision-making processes where calling for environmental interventions are being considered.

### **Sustainable transport**

Transport to and from the destination should take place with the lowest possible greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions affecting air and water purity. This calls for environmentally friendly transport and relatively long duration of visitor stays.

## Superior hotels and restaurants

Hotels and restaurants should strive to have low energy consumption, based on renewable energy sources and by making use of modern technology.

Food and beverage products served must to the extent possible be sourced locally with high quality based on environmentally friendly production methods, traditions and healthy raw materials. Norwegian agriculture and wildlife from the mountains and forests have over the years created unique food traditions. Norway, as a marine nation, offers the visitors a rich selection of tasty local delicacies from the sea.

Procurement and development of products and experiences should be environmentally friendly, using ethical guidelines. Waste management should be based on prevention, reuse, material recycling and result in a minimum of food waste.

## Use of information and communication technology

The travel and tourism industry in Norway should be characterized by use of digital solutions, social media and virtual platforms.

## A cooperative travel and tourism sector

All tour and travel operators, large and small, should cooperate and offer a variety of experiences to foreign and Norwegian travelers. The travel and tourism industry should add social and economic value to society. Norway should be marketed as a destination rich in nature and cultural attractions, thereby attracting more travelers willing to pay for visiting attractions that have been well taken care of and carefully protected.

*Stuguflåten bridge, Lesja.  
Photo: Leif Johnny Olestad -  
visitnorway.com*



# STATUS AND TRENDS

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## Creating values

The travel and tourism industry is the world's third largest export industry and one of the fastest growing economic sectors. Annual growth rate has been 3-4 per cent in recent years, and this growth is expected to continue until at least until 2030. This strong performance makes it challenging to create and maintain sustainable development in the travel and tourism sector. Increased volume adds pressure on the environment, often leading to pollution and increased contamination. Greenhouse gas emissions from the tourism sector contribute to about 5% of total global emissions, business travel included.

The travel industry is labour intensive. In Norway, the sector employs all together 160.000 people. This contributes both to the financing of welfare goods and local pride in communities throughout the country. Tourism growth in Norway is driven by international and local demand, a favorable currency exchange for foreign tourists and an industry that has over time been able satisfy a growing demand for the competitive advantages that Norway can provide in terms of relatively untouched and unspoiled nature and culture. Product development and innovation, collaboration between stakeholders and use of digital tools are increasingly becoming more sophisticated.

## Nature and culture

Most travelers find the unique Norwegian nature attractive: Fjords, mountains, waterfalls, the northern light, the midnight sun and an unspoiled environment. Norway offers opportunities for actively experiencing nature, combined with enjoyment of local food, cultural heritage, a vibrant cultural life and a wide variety of accommodation options. These scarcity values are increasing in demand globally. However, the same

values can be degraded through interventions such as the construction of hydro power plants, transmission lines, wind power parks, large road construction projects and excess use of wetlands. This threatens the very qualities the travel and tourism industry depends on. In addition, Norway has recently seen a liberalization of the rules for motor traffic in open terrain, whose noise jeopardizes the enjoyment of pure, silent nature.

Norway's reputation as a natural and environmentally friendly attractive destination is also affected by dumping of waste from mining. Moreover, the possible expansion of gas and petroleum extraction in fragile and vulnerable areas can also affect the reputation negatively. The costs linked to tourism's wear and tear of nature and culture attractions are not yet quantified, and there is a scarcity of economic models for estimating value depreciation of unspoiled nature in current decision making processes. The interests of the travel and tourism sector are too often neglected in conflicts where interventions and extractions can negatively affect the industry's viability. There is an urgent need to identify and develop methods and models documenting actual revenues and costs where a number of conflicting sectors and trade-offs are in opposition. Too frequently, tourism is on the losing side.

With a stronger global focus on conserving unspoiled nature, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, travelers' demand for destinations that can offer pure water and air, a healthy environment and sustainable stewardship of cultural and natural treasures are on the increase. Many people wish to experience spectacular views and trekking routes. As 8 of 10 persons of the world's population will be



living in cities by 2050, an increasing number of tourists will be seeking out destinations that promote and conserve a clean environment and unique nature experiences.

Marketing and a rapid increasing information flow through internet and social media make it more challenging to control tourism traffic. Some destinations have therefore experienced a strong growth in the number of visitors without being sufficiently prepared for managing visitor flows. This adds to crowding, especially is this the case near fragile tourism icons that are vulnerable to mass tourism.

### **Transport, climate change and pollution**

Travel and tourism are part of the experience economy, where physical activity and engagement are on the increase. Travel and transportation lead, however, to increased greenhouse gas emissions and local pollution. Ship and airline travel, but also cars and buses are the main polluters. This is a problem, not only in view of Norway's peripheral position on the world map, but caused by the country's long transport distances domestically. The growing size of the low-priced airlines segment, and often inefficient coordination of domestic transport options when booking a holiday in Norway, adds to the problem.

Emissions from cruise ships into clean air and water cause local pollution problems, particularly in attractive destinations such as the fjords on the western coast. The number of cruise ships in the world is

increasing fast, and ports of call are often vulnerable to mass tourism and poorly prepared to accommodate a large number of travelers arriving at the same time in peak season. Several of the troubled destinations are also the most popular, located in the western fjord landscape, which is on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

### **Digitalization and coordination of the travel industry**

While increased digitalization of tourism has led to changes in the value chain, a more transparent market has given more consumers power via the internet and social media. They are better informed, have more options, will be more prepared and can book the trip on their own mobile phone.

New digital platforms have resulted in increased sharing of goods and services, which affect travel and tourism. The «selfie-syndrome» is spreading both globally and in Norway, where it is easy to find picturesque nature and culture spots. While this results in free publicity, it also increases pressure on sought-after attractions. Guiding tourism flows to equally attractive, but less known destinations becomes a challenge.

Norway's tourism and travel need to be better coordinated among a wide range of stakeholders. The yardstick for measuring success for Norway's tourism must no longer consist of counting and maximizing the number of visitors. This is not a suitable or viable strategy to promote a greener tourism for the country and its destinations.

*Skiing at Kolåstind mountain, Sunnmøre. Photo: Anders Gjengedal - Visitnorway.com*



# TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AND TOURISM SECTOR

## Strategy and pathways towards 2030 and 2050

The goal of the Norwegian travel and tourism industry will be to offer products that produce low-emissions memorable travel experiences with built-in opportunities for creating prosperity for all stakeholders, without jeopardizing the health of the planet and the local environment. The travel and tourism services industry can make better use of public funds set aside for research and social change purposes. This will lead to higher competence in the travel sector. To implement this vision, a closer cooperation and sharing of responsibility between the industry and the authorities must be encouraged. Cooperation within the travel industry must reach across destinations and geographical regions in the form of cluster enterprises or cross-sectoral networks committed to produce green solutions that will make a difference both on the bottom line and for the environment.

### Principles for sustainable travelling and green competitiveness

The travel and tourism industry will apply the principles of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Norwegian Expert Commission on Green Competitiveness to secure a sustainable development short- and long-term. 3 of the 10 principles from the Expert Commission are emphasized here:

- The Polluter Pays Principle
- External environmental impacts (also known as externalities) should be given a price value
- Green measures should be rewarded, while activities or interventions that produce high greenhouse gas emissions should be taxed or penalized

### High value creation

The Norwegian travel and tourism industry has a big potential for becoming an industry characterized by high value creation and a low ecological footprint. As such it is likely to become an important and growing industry in the green shift that is called for in Norway when the petroleum sector's role will contribute less to the GNP. There is a huge, untapped potential to increase value creation through the design of unique, green nature and culture travel experiences. This can be achieved through closer cooperation between tourism stakeholders, and between the travel industry and other sectors of society that together affect the future of sustainable tourism.

There is a need for a stronger and more holistic approach to tourism to convert the growing interest in travel to Norway into green values that at the same time safeguard the nation's many precious but environmentally fragile destinations. The government and the municipalities have to take the same course, by offering green incentives and stimulating legislation measures that benefit not only the travel and tourism sector but other parts of Norwegian society.

The cruise tourism must be developed as an integral part of the sustainable tourism industry. This implies preventing cruise ships from causing damage to nature, culture and the environment, including polluting and littering. Cruise tourism can contribute to enhanced value creation locally, but it should be monitored, due to its rapid growth, and destinations lack of on-shore capacity to accommodate growing crowds ("people pollution.") The cruise strategy re-

port for the Western Norway 2016-2020 provides a comprehensive, knowledge-based and sustainable foundation that can steer the cruise industry towards a greener role as part of Norway's total tourism activities. The recommendations from the Norwegian Maritime Authority report on emissions from ships in the World Heritage fjord should also be applied.

Tour operators can capitalize on the increased interest in experiencing Norway's nature by offering a larger product diversity to a growing number of target groups. An example is the widening menu of green activities and excursions offered by Hurtigruten: in addition to its use of more environmental friendly fuel leading to lower emissions, the ships offer more healthy and more locally sourced food, and the company has implemented marketing measures in off-season that promotes the seasonal diversity of the Norway Brand.

Innovation Norway should in cooperation with the travel industry develop a national strategy based on the "High yield-low impact" model, instead of maximizing number of guests. This does not mean that all products should be expensive, but that the travel experiences should have a green signature. Volume tourism should be replaced by a more sophisticated marketing approach based on segmentation of goals, geographic destinations, seasons and target groups.

The authorities have an important role to play in stimulating changes to Norway's travel and tourism. Legislation and economic instruments can effectively encourage performances on the part of all stakeholders, including use of incentives to reward pro-green innovation and penalties for damage caused to unspoiled nature. Global agreements, such as regulation of international aviation, are also important to put in place.

### **Respecting nature, environment and culture**

To secure a sustainable development of the travel and tourism industry, nature and cultural values need to be safeguarded. At times, interventions threatening to cause damage to nature have to be managed or prevented, while ancient cultural heritage and food traditions demand constant vigilance. The

travel industry must at the same time play an active role to help Norway achieve its goals of 40% emission reduction by 2030, and become a low emission society by 2050.

The travel industry must cooperate closely with the authorities in developing a tourism policy based on the conservation of natural and cultural values, and the industry must exclude enterprises that impair Norway's nature and culture capital.

The travel industry must operate according to the precautionary policy principle, ie. prevent actions that may lead to abuse of untouched nature, cultural treasures or growth that is not sustainable, and are not in accord with the green competitiveness criteria.

Norway's *Allemannsrett* must be upheld, securing free access for all to nature, according to *Friluftsloven*. However, it will be necessary to find acceptable ways to regulate particularly valuable and vulnerable areas.

### **Transport and climate change**

Transport to the destination shall take place with the least possible emissions of greenhouse gases and other emissions into air or water. Public transportation is the preferred mode. Transport carriers should be filled up to reduce the environmental impacts from each passenger. For all modes of transport used by the tourism industry, preference should be given to vehicles and boats that provide the lowest possible energy consumption, or use electrical propulsion. This is in particular important for cars and ferries. Airplanes should be equipped with energy efficient engines, apply the best sustainable alternative fuels or be electric driven, or hybrid, and buy emission reductions from other sectors as a supplement in order to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions. Ships should be driven by batteries, or use gas or hydrogen.

The travel industry must adapt to climate changes, focus on prolonging the holiday and shoulder seasons, anticipate more powerful precipitation, changed conditions for food production and increasing vulnerability, especially at Spitsbergen.

*Opposite page:*  
Rock carvings in Alta.  
Photo: CH - Visitnorway.com  
Soup at Fossheim Hotel, Lom.  
Photo: Tina Stafrén/Visitnorway.com  
Southern Norway seaside.  
Photo: Niels Jørgensen/Visitnorway.com



# WHAT THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY WILL DO

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**CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**, and their implication for tourism activities, have to be high on the agenda for the private and public sector across the board, from the administration to trade union representatives. This means adapting the tourism and travel business to changes in the climate, developing strategies and innovative green initiatives to meet these challenges.

**MEASURES TO CREATE** higher competence and better understanding of matters pertaining to the environment and sustainability should be implemented by all companies.

**THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY** should carry out eco-labelling or environmental certification. As part of the certification process, enterprises should monitor its own CO<sub>2</sub>-footprint and identify opportunities for energy efficiencies and other resource savings.

**AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING** of designing and operating outdoor travel and tourism experiences must be improved, and the industry must be conscious of its responsibility to protect nature by practicing conservation. This implies that the development of new products, processes and services should not detract from the nature and culture capital.

**THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY** must increasingly cooperate with and demand from public authorities that more weight is given to green values when new hydropower or wind power plants, new transmission lines and large road projects are constructed. Wetlands must be protected, and dumping of waste from mining is forbidden in cases where this causes degradation of nature or culture.

**THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY** should strive to develop ways to spread traffic to more destinations and extend tourism seasons. It must identify ways to attract target groups who contribute to value creation via more eco-friendly travel experiences with a low environmental footprint. Focus on longer stays with less energy-consuming transport should be encouraged.

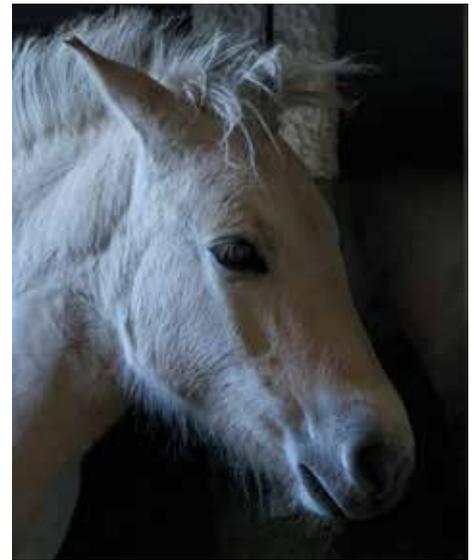
**IT SHOULD MAKE** more effective use of digital media in order to spread tourism traffic to all parts of the country and across all seasons.

**THE TRAVEL OPERATORS** should favor:

- Transport vehicles with low greenhouse gas emissions
- Travel and tourism products and services that come with an eco-label and are environmentally certified
- Hotels and restaurants of high quality in terms of construction, low energy consumption and using renewable energy sources.

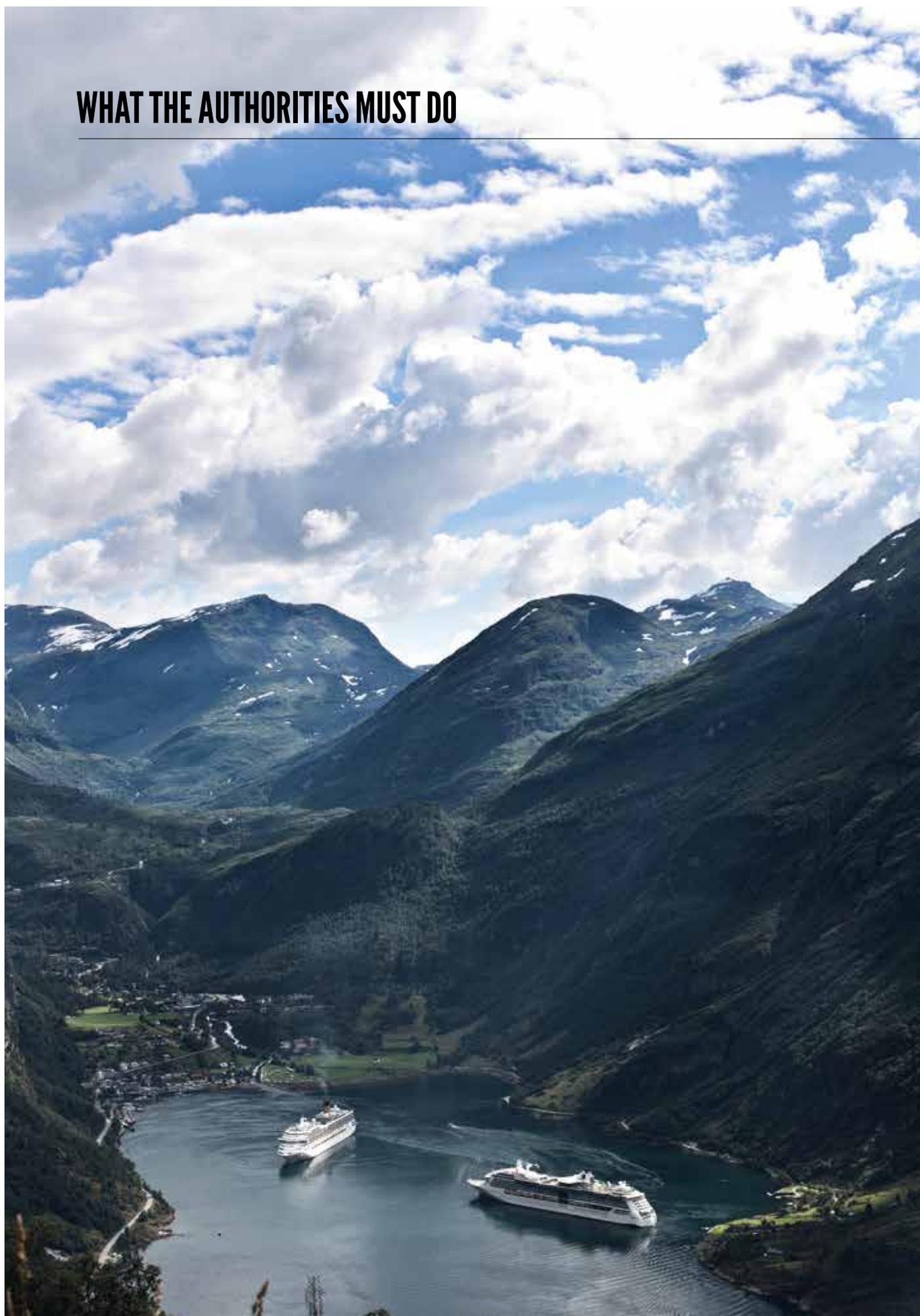
**SANITATION SYSTEMS** management should be based on waste prevention, reuse and material recycling. Food waste should be minimized. The opportunity for selling excess food and other residues to others must be explored.

*Opposite page:  
The Juvet hotel.  
Photo: Tina Stafren/Visitnorway.com  
Foaal. Photo: CH/Visitnorway.com  
Bakklundet, Trondheim.  
Photo: CH/Visitnorway.com*



## WHAT THE AUTHORITIES MUST DO

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**INCENTIVES MUST BE DEVELOPED** that strengthen green competitiveness through a more sustainable tourism approach, by applying the principles proposed by the Expert Committee on Green Competitiveness.

**THE GOVERNMENT** should follow up the majority remarks of the Starting to the 2017 travel industry white paper no. 19 proposition. A strategy must be put into effect that safeguards nature and cultural values in regard to construction of roads, energy generation plants and other major interventions that may jeopardize Norway's culture and nature capital.

**ALL INTERVENTIONS** and constructions that degrade Norway's nature and cultural values should in principle be avoided. Large unspoiled areas that are connected should be protected. The recent extensive liberalization permitting use of motor vehicles in open nature is a threat to the environment, and should be reversed.

**THE NATIONAL** tourism and travel industry on the national level must be seen as a key stakeholder in all discussions regarding construction or expansion of new hydropower or wind power projects, new transmission lines, large road construction projects, or interventions that might damage wetlands or lead to dumping of waste from extraction activity.

**INCENTIVES MUST BE** developed that reward use of transport with the lowest possible energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Premium must be given to use of electric powered or hybrid vehicles and boats.

**A GREENER** and more coordinated public transport service network has to be put into operation, including better and more effective train service between domestic regions and to/ from Norway's neighboring countries in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**INNOVATION NORWAY**, Siva, Enova, Norway's research council and similar institutions should be given a more explicit mandate to fund green shift/transformative projects.

**POLICY MEASURES** should pave the way to encourage spreading tourism traffic spatially and seasonally. Marketing and other initiatives should promote industry development on a level playing field between domestic and international tourism. This could, with a green approach, strengthen the travel industry, open access to more destinations over an extended season.

**NORWAY MUST**, through international and national legislation, further implement measures to reduce emissions of NOx and environmentally dangerous particles from ships, and prohibit emission of untreated sewage. All shipping in the World Heritage fjords must be monitored and regulated.

**STUDIES THAT MAY LEAD** to greener consumption and energy supply for ships visiting Norwegian waters and harbours must be expedited.

**THE AUTHORITIES** should implement the adopted policy measures in Europe and the UN International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes operational improvements and deployment of sustainable alternative fuels in Norway.

**MANAGEMENT** models based on waste prevention, reuse and material recycling should be facilitated. Food waste should be reduced to a minimum.

**NORWAY MUST** sustain and further strengthen its position in the face of growing threats to the marine environment in the form of litter, use of plastic and other types of fast-growing pollution and emissions.

**INCENTIVES SUPPORTING** the National Tourist Paths should be strengthened to improve safety, access and construction of new attractions and facilities that would contribute to spreading tourism traffic geographically over longer seasons.

**ENVIRONMENTAL LABELLING** of Norway's sustainable destination should be expanded further.

**NORWAY'S** current instruction manual for destination development must be upgraded as a tool for a more sustainable approach to tourism and travel.

*Opposite page: View of the Geiranger fjord. Photo: Tina Stafren/Visitnorway.com*

# TRADE-OFFS TO IMPLEMENT THE SUSTAINABLE VISION TOWARDS 2050

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- How to incorporate the needs of sustainable tourism in decision processes involving expansion/construction of hydroenergy and transport networks?
- How to prevent decay and damage to nature's treasures without compromising the principles underlying *Allemannsretten* (every man's access to public land)?
- How to access funds for responsible destination development and conservation protecting *Allemannsretten*?
- What does it take to make tourism in Norway carbon neutral or eliminate climate gas emissions?
- Is it possible to design short tourism circuits and itineraries and at the same time offer «off the beaten track» experiences for the visitor?
- How to put a price on the wear and tear of Norway's tourism attractions so that such valuations can facilitate funding and prevent expansion of infrastructure that reduces the country's nature and culture capital?
- How can Norway enact policies and legislation that make it possible to earmark funding that helps finance maintenance and protection of the country's natural and cultural treasures?

## Examples of trade-off challenges

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1

The competition for access to marine resources between the oil and gas industry, the fisheries and the tourism industry

2

The future of wild salmon vs fish-farming interests: The former is threatened, while the profitable fish-farming industry is still coping with environmental issues

3

While many farmers want more culling of wildlife such as wolves and eagles, conservation organizations are opposed. Resolution of this issue will affect Norway's international reputation

4

Some of Norway's iconic World Heritage tourism attractions are suffering from crowding in peak season, in part due to the dramatic increase in international cruise traffic: a classic revenue vs. protection issue that is looking for an urgent solution

Front cover: The Aurlandsdalen valley, 2017. Photo: Marius Dalseg Sætre (from DNT's photo archives)

Back cover:

Snowshoeing at Hoven, Loen Skylift. Photo: Bård Basberg/Loen Skylift

Winter fishing in the Kokelv river, Finnmark. Photo: media-army.de/www.visitnorway.com

Sami culture, Northern Norway. Photo: C.H/visitnorway.com

The Pulpit rock, Lysefjorden. Photo: Per Eide/visitnorway.com



DE HISTORISKE  
hotel & spisesteder



Oslo, July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017

De Historiske  
Den Norske Turistforening  
Fellesforbundet  
HANEN  
Innovasjon Norge  
NCE Tourism  
NHO Reiseliv  
Norges Naturvernforbund  
Norsk Reiseliv  
Virke Reise Norge og Kultur

