

## THING Project, Steering Committee Meeting Balestrand, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2012

### Activity Report no 5 01.Oct 2011- 15th. May. 2012



Frithjof memorial stone on Leikanger, Balestrand,  
Hans Leganger Reusch

### The THING Project – Thing Sites International Networking Group Balestrand, Norway Steering Committee/ Project Partner meeting 12-14. June 2012

# Thing Project - ACTIVITY REPORT 01.10.11 – 15.05.12

## Introduction

### Objective:

The overall objective for the THING project is:

*to exchange knowledge, specify, develop and test new and improved services for sustainable management and business development at the Northern European Thing sites. The project results should also contribute to a future nomination process of a serial inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List of the North Atlantic Thing sites.*

### Members of the Steering Committee during the period :

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Sogn og Fjordane County Council, Norway Lead partner   | Ingebjørg Erikstad, Leader |
| Gulen Municipality , Norway Partner 2                  | Anne Karin Misje           |
| Thingvellir National park, Iceland Partner 3           | Einar A.E. Sæmundsen       |
| Shetland Amenity Trust, Scotland Partner 4             | Jimmy Moncrieff            |
| Orkney College, Scotland Partner 5                     | Bill Ross                  |
| The Highland Council, Scotland Partner 6               | Liz Cowie                  |
| Kunningarstovan, Faroe Islands Partner 7               | Ingigerd á Trødni          |
| Manx National Heritage, Isle of Man Associated partner | Andrew D Foxon             |
| Project Coordinator                                    | Siri Ingvaldsen            |
| Project Coordinator                                    | Arild Bergström            |

Annexes to this document may be downloaded from internet (<http://thingproject.eu/node/48>):

- **Time Schedule/ Work Plan 6 month period**  
[http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/2011-12\\_time\\_schedule\\_9\\_months\\_oct\\_2011.pdf](http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/2011-12_time_schedule_9_months_oct_2011.pdf)
- **Time Schedule/ Work Plan 36 month period**  
[http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/timeschedule\\_tasks\\_36\\_mnth-\\_all-adjusted-\\_oct\\_2011.pdf](http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/timeschedule_tasks_36_mnth-_all-adjusted-_oct_2011.pdf)
- **Main Activity report no 4 (preliminary) :**  
[http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/main\\_project\\_activity\\_report\\_no\\_4\\_thing\\_project\\_2011\\_ab.pdf](http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/main_project_activity_report_no_4_thing_project_2011_ab.pdf)

## 1.0) Organisation

### 1.1 Steering Committee (SC)

**During the period there have been no changes of representation in the Steering Committee.**

*“The Steering Committee consists of representatives of each Partner. Each representative shall be fully authorised to act on behalf of his/hers organisation in all matters relating to the operational issues. Each Partner-representative of the Steering Committee should have one vote.*

*Also the Project Co-ordinator, shall be included in the Steering Committee in a non-voting capacity.*

*The Partners have the right to have a replacement attending the meeting. The International Chairman of the Steering Committee shall be a representative of the Lead Partner organisation, and shall be appointed on the first Steering Committee meeting. The national representatives of the country where the meeting is held shall organise the meetings of the Steering Committee.*

*All decisions of the Steering Committee shall be unanimous.*

*The Steering Committee will direct the work, and:*

- *Define the general strategy of the Partners/Partnership*
- *Decide about foreseen costs*
- *Approve in general all matters related to operational issues in the six-monthly/annual work plans*
- *Monitor the progress of the project and analyse the results achieved by the project*

- *Adopting a new work plan and timetable to be submitted to the Northern Periphery Programme Secretariat in case of a change in direction or major changes in the project*
- *Define and ensure implementation of a policy of dissemination of result of the work undertaken*

*Minutes of all meetings in the Steering Committee shall be submitted to its members.”*

## **2.0 Meetings**

### **2.1 Steering Committee Meeting**

In accordance with the approved time schedule and as decided in Dingwall partner meeting, September 2011, a Steering Committee Meeting was organised March 30<sup>th</sup>. 2012.

The purpose of the extra meeting was to give better information to the Steering Committee on progress and development in the project and for SC to give advice on “project after life”. Communication with NPP re. the concept of service model and project progress was also on the agenda.

A report from the meeting may be found here:

[http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/minutes\\_minutes\\_steering\\_committee\\_meeting\\_30th\\_march\\_\\_2012.pdf](http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/minutes_minutes_steering_committee_meeting_30th_march__2012.pdf)

### **2.2 Management team meetings**

The purpose of the MT meetings is to monitor and guide the project on operational level.

MT meetings also are forums for information-exchange between Work Package leaders and Coordinators.

To secure good communication among partners, all partners have been invited to the meetings. MT-meetings in the period have consequently been organised as “all-partner”-meetings.

During the period all MT-meetings have been organised as monthly telephone/Skype conferences. A total of 40 items have been on the agenda (2011- 3 meetings, 2012- 5 meetings)

### **2.3 NPP Conference**

Lead partner and Shetland Amenity Trust participated in a seminar organised by NPP in Copenhagen, February 22nd. 2012.

In a one day meeting 21<sup>st</sup> of February partners and desk officers also discussed :

“1. *Status on project implementation, especially WP3 and WP4*

- a. *Impact of the delays on development/testing of outcomes*
- b. *envisaged next steps*
- 2. *Project outcomes*
  - a. *envisaged format and content of the service model; how will the different elements be pulled together and packaged?*
  - b. *what is the viability of the outcomes?*
  - c. *indicators*
- 3. *Involvement of local businesses and communities*
  - a. *How are they involved? What needs have they expressed? How will the envisaged outcomes benefit them?*
- 4. *Communication strategy (comm plan, dissemination strategy, marketing and tourism strategy)*
  - a. *integration of the plans*
  - b. *envisaged next steps*
  - c. *indicators”*

(Also see 2.3.1)

#### **2.3.1 Service Model**

**The concept of and common understanding of the service model has been discussed among partners and commented on by the NPP Desk officer. In order to clarify the common understanding of the concept of a service model and other issues related to the project, a meeting with the desk officer was organised in Copenhagen February 21st. in connection with a NPP seminar February 22nd. (see 2.3.)**

- The meeting in Copenhagen between desk officer and partner representatives (Lead Partner/SAT/Project coordinators) did not succeed in reaching a common understanding and definition of the concept service model.
- It became evident that the desk officers and partners did not share a common understanding.
- Partners send a letter (21<sup>st</sup> of March) to desk officer in Copenhagen asking for further clarification. Reply from the secretariat the 27. of March did not contribute to further clarification of the concept.
- Communication between partners and desk officers were presented to the SC in the meeting 30<sup>th</sup> of March partners.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, Lead partner, Project Coordinators and NPP Desk Officers organised a Skype meeting to discuss the situation.
- A reply letter was received 08<sup>th</sup> of May from the NPP desk, demanding a description of a service model as well as statements of decommitment from Lead Partner latest May 15<sup>th</sup>.  
Both demands were met as required: <http://thingproject.eu/content/service-model>
- Communication between the partners has contributed to a clarification of the issue but also has resulted in a delay in project activities.
- During the clarification process the project partners ask Lead Partner to call for a Steering Committee Meeting with the aim of prolonging the project activity report with 4 months – in line with date of Grant Letter.
- The Service Model may be packaged and presented as a web service before the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2012. However, a full test and evaluation can not be expected even if some elements in the model may have these qualities.  
A prolonged activity period may produce the wanted result to full extent.

### 3.0 Communication

In addition to regular post and telephone, e-mail, Skype ip-telephone and Basecamp communication tool has been used for communication.

The communication plan was evaluated but no updates or changes have been made during the period. Partners decided that the strategy document regarding Tourism and management should be produced before making any changes to the communication plan. Other communication tools are commented on later in the document.

## 4.0 Additional project indicators

### 4.1 International THING website (inclusive WIKI or intranet) and improved regional Web 2.0 based sites

#### 4.1.1 Websites and forums

- The project-web site ([www.thingproject.eu](http://www.thingproject.eu)) is designed to offer internal information in the project and external information regarding the project and Thing sites. The *project* web page is in English (as stated in the application) and is designed to conform to EU standards for access by physically disabled.
- During the period the project, based on material from partners, the web site has been regularly updated by lead partner and the web page now contains sections for general information, announcement for meetings and events, relevant project documents, contact information, press releases, news and related links to other organizations, NPP and photo material.

#### 4.1.2 Common web site

During the period a new web page has been designed and published. The web page is multi linguistic and offers visitors a wide range of information. All partners and respective thing sites are now represented on internet. The web page also contains information for tourists, such as travel organisations and travel companies. *The project now met the requirements in the grant letter concerning the number of web-pages (presence) to be created.*

The work on a common web site was started in project period 3 and was followed up in round 4 and 5.

The web site is part of the development of a Tourism and Marketing Strategy and during the period partner 3 has collected material from partners to be used on the web page. Professional web designers have been engaged in the creation of the web site.

#### **4.1.3 Basecamp**

Basecamp project management program and communication tool – has met the requirements for ensuring a good communication in the project.

All work group members and others engaged in the project (ca 40) now can access to program.

#### **4.1.4 Web.2.0 Services**

The Main Partner Meeting in Scotland, September 2011, it was decided that Lead Partner should take more responsibility regarding WP4, and in cooperation with partner 3 (Thingvellir National park), assist in the development of services and products described in work package 4.

Due to budget changes, the activity in the work package 4 was lowered compared to the aims in the grant letter/application and this has been reflected on the budget situation and low spending re partner 3.

- Lead Partner has access to experts in their organisation and has consequently contributed to development of quick-response codes and linked them to applications on the thingsite.com web page. The system has been tested on location in Norway and may be applied where useful among project partners.
- The web page is now also designed to communicate with cell phones (QR-codes)
- Further partners have decided to subscribe to the geo caching concept and apply it to own use.
- Facebook and Flickr are regularly updated

#### **4.2 International seminars and conference (Project meetings and a UNESCO strategy conference)**

- All management team meetings, Steering Committee meetings and Main Partner meetings have been arranged as described in the approved time plan and in the application document/grant letter.
- The UNESCO seminar was organized in last report period. (see 4.3.5.) and the report is expected to be presented as draft May 2012.

During the report period partner Orkney College and partner Shetland Amenity Trust have organised a number of lectures and events and more are expected to follow. This report mentions:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| February 16 <sup>th</sup> .                           | Lecture: Dr Alexandra Sanmark, 'Viking and Norse Ting Sites in Shetland.'             |
| March 22 <sup>nd</sup> . and 23 <sup>rd</sup> .       | Lecture: Professor Stefan Brink, 'Law in Early Scandinavia'                           |
| April 19 <sup>th</sup> . And 20 <sup>th</sup> . April | Lecture: Professor Judith Jesch, 'Sagas and Things: The Cultural Life of Assemblies.' |
| May 24 <sup>th</sup> . and 25 <sup>th</sup>           | Lecture: Dr Peter Anderson , "Orkney Earls"   |

- Also see 2.3

#### **4.3 Reports Surveys and documentation of THING sites history and research questions, site management status of tourism impacts.**

##### **4.3.1 Reports on :      Thing Sites interregional influence and history                                     Agenda for research                                     Sustainable site management principles**

In the last report (31<sup>st</sup> of August 2011) to the Steering Committee was stated:

***“Partners are expected to produce and submit material to WP3. The outcome is to a large extent depending on partners following up and submitting their material according to the time plan. As this report is written, there are approximately 7 months left of the project period and consequently the quality of reports are depending on the partners following up as expected. During report period no. 4 it has become evident that partners are to some extent meeting challenges in producing the needed material on time.”***

Even if a new time schedule was decided in September 2011 by the Steering Committee, partners still have been struggling to meet the deadlines for submitting material, as required.

However, it is expected that both : “Thing Story”, (Thing Sites interregional influence and history), “Agenda for research” and “Sustainable site management principles” will be delivered as required but with delay.

Partner 4, Shetland Amenity trust, is responsible for WP3. This work package is the most extensive of the four work packages. The project is expected to produce the reports mentioned above as elements in the service model.

Production of a booklet (Thing Story), educational material/links to schools, development of “Agenda for Research” and “Guidelines for interpretation and dissemination of the common history” are also included work package/service model.

#### **4.3.2 Thing Sites interregional influence and history (Thing Story)**

Partner 3(all partners):

- **Thing Story** booklet is reported to be completed as planned.  
The booklet is part of the process of creating a common knowledge platform and of importance when it comes to documenting the Thing Sites inter-regional influence and history. Collected material and written contributions from all partners are the fundament in “Thing Story”, an illustrated booklet that is expected published in late spring 2012.  
This is several months behind the schedule that was agreed I September 2011.
- **General Interpretation guidelines** has been produced and was uploaded to the project web page.  
If project indicators are to be met, partners must confirm that their interpretation model has been communicated to the other partners and to business partners in rural and urban areas.  
The importance of partners following up on this point was also on the agenda in the SC-meeting of March 30.
- **Standards for archaeological assessment of thing sites** in Highlands and Islands of Scotland will be uploaded to the project page in May 2012.

#### **4.3.3 Agenda for research**

Partner 3(all partners):

The Steering Committee Meeting March 30<sup>th</sup> stated as follows:

*“SC members agreed future co-operation was desirable. It could fit well within the Council of Europe’s Cultural Viking Routes, which has been recommended for approval in April, with Destination Viking Association as the accredited body to manage the Viking Cultural Route. This may also be an alternative way to reach the common goal in the project re a serial inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.*

*Jimmy Moncrieff SAT also informed about the mapping of Viking sites in Russia as part of a Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC) project. (In the Footsteps of Rurik”)*

*SC member Jimmy Moncrieff, Shetland Amenity Trust, will put this idea into writing to be presented to partners.*

*Final decision is to be taken in the SC-meeting in June 2012.*

**A research agenda may reflect this view.”**

Partner 3 Shetland Amenity Trust has developed a first draft. Input and proposals from partners has not been received when this report is written.

However, it is reported that the product will be delivered as required.

#### 4.3.4 Sustainable site management principles

Partner 3(all partners):

- Site management Guidelines, draft no 4 was distributed to partners on January 13<sup>th</sup>. A call for final comments was sent to partners March 13.
- Partner 3 Shetland Amenity Trust reports this product will be produced as planned according to the time schedule.

#### 4.3.5 Documentation for supporting serial nomination of Thing Sites at the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Partner 3(all partners):

The “UNESCO strategy conference” was organized in Scotland Sep. 2011, during last report period.

UNESCO strategy document : A report and recommendation following up the seminar in Dingwall is expected to be produced before end of May.

This document has been substantially delayed.

#### 4.3.6 Site management Guidelines

The Site Management Work group and the Tourism and Management Work group were expected to conclude their work tasks January 2012.

More time than anticipated has been need in order to collect material from partners. Site management guidelines are expected delivered at project activity end, like scheduled in the approved time plan.

#### 4.3.7 Education Work Group

The work group is expected to finish their work at the end of the project activity period (June 2012). During the period a **Thing Case Studies Template was produced.**

The purpose of Case Studies is to disseminate and share examples of education practice among the partner Thing sites and other educationalists (for example teachers). The final document will be formatted to comply with the Thing project branding and will be available to download on the Thing website.

The milestone set for uploading educational material to the web site for dissemination is 08th of June. When this report is written 2 milestones are overdue regarding this product.

## 5.0 Reports to NPP

### 5.1 Financial report –

- The financial reporting periods are April - September and October - March. Certificates of Expenditure from partners have been handed in after the agreed deadline and consequently the project has not succeeded in submitting reports and project claims as indicated in the time plan and partnership agreement. This has resulted in delay of reimbursement to partners. Project claims for round 1 -4 have been submitted. Project claim 1-3 have been approved.
- The reporting procedure for round4 was:  
Period: 01.04.2011 – 31.09.2011-Submission date from Lead Partner to NPP: 31.01.2012  
The project partners did not succeed in meeting the deadlines as stated in Grant Letter. The project claim no 4 was submitted 7 weeks after the deadline and Report no 4 has not yet been approved.

The financial report indicates that the project as whole is under spending. This was also an issue in the report from the Main Partner Meeting in Dingwall September 2011, where it was stated:

*“The under-spending for some partners may indicate that a higher degree of activity is needed and that more effort will be needed in the remaining time, if the aims in the project shall be met.”*

- The financial report may be found here:

**Main Activity report no 4 (preliminary) :**

[http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/main\\_project\\_activity\\_report\\_no\\_4\\_thing\\_project\\_2011\\_ab.pdf](http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/main_project_activity_report_no_4_thing_project_2011_ab.pdf)

## 5.2 Budget changes

All partners have earlier given their approval concerning the project budget changes announced by Tingvellir National Park. A minor budget change was consequently approved in project round 3.

## 6.0 Main Project Activity Report

During the period, the 4th Main Project Activity report was submitted within deadline. However, the report is not complete due to reasons mentioned in 5.1.

## 7.0 Time schedule/Work plan 9 month period/Work groups

The project planning and implementation follows 6 months work plans. The 6 months periods are identical with NPP reporting periods with exception of the start up and final periods.

Activities in the workgroups are expected to follow the time-schedule decided by the Steering Committee.

Milestones set in the approved time schedule has been transferred to the Basecamp Calendar and milestones set accordingly.

A list of the work groups and functions may be found here: <http://thingproject.eu/node/54>

The 36 month time schedule approved October 2011 may be found here: [http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/timeschedule\\_tasks\\_36\\_mnths\\_-all-adjusted-\\_oct\\_2011.pdf](http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/timeschedule_tasks_36_mnths_-all-adjusted-_oct_2011.pdf)

The 9month approved time schedule approved October 2011 may be found here: [http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/2011-12\\_time\\_schedule\\_9\\_months\\_oct\\_2011.pdf](http://thingproject.eu/sites/default/files/projectdocs/2011-12_time_schedule_9_months_oct_2011.pdf)

Dale 25 May-2012



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