

Foretaksnavn Svalbard Guide Association

Utfyller

Navn: Franka Leiterer

Mottaker: Svalbards miljøvernfond - Sysselmasteren på Svalbard

SØKNAD

REFERANSEN.R.: 20/46

Svalbard Guide Association

Beskrivelse av tiltaket/prosjektet:

The Svalbard Guide Association (SGA) is the first representative of Svalbard's guide community. We promote/foster sustainable development and preservation of high quality guiding in the Arctic. Not only to assure and improve safety for guests and guides alike, also to foster social acceptance and recognition of the guide profession.

The SGA is a non profit organisation formed by local guides on a voluntary basis. To achieve our objectives we will transfer information between officials, companies and guides. We will act as an information intermediary.

Thus, we are applying for funding to form a solid structure in the form of an online presentation (website and logo) and physical presence (office, flyers, conferences, ...) to communicate our objectives and intermediate information.

Our key focus points:

- HSE (Health, Safety, Environment) compliant and lawful working conditions for guides on Svalbard
- mediating further education and courses to increase guide competences
- raise environmental awareness and promote environmental protection
- symbiosis between local community and guide community (yearly Guide Conference)

Utfyllende om tiltaket/prosjektet

Søknadskategori: Informasjons- og opplæringstiltak

Utfyllende beskrivelse av tiltaket/prosjektet, formålet med tiltaket/prosjektet gjennomføring og metode:

Svalbard Guide Association (SGA) was formed in the winter of 2018, as a non-profit organization. Since we started the SGA has defined its focus points and concentrates on transferring information between officials, companies and guides. Our intentions are to promote and foster sustainable development and preservation of high quality guiding in the Arctic. Not only to assure and improve safety for guests and guides alike, also to foster social acceptance and recognition of the guide profession.

To reach our objectives we are cooperating with many different partners while representing the Svalbard guide community :

Arbeidstilsynet and Handel og Kontor (Union) who helps to form collective agreements on Svalbard to incorporate legal working contracts and permanent full time employment.

H&K is also the main sponsor for our yearly 'Guide Conference'

Visit Svalbard to create a better information flow between the guides and the companies, also to raise the standards in guiding.

Sysselmannen to increase safety for guides and guests, as well as to create a better information flow between the guides and officials (especially freelance guide). We arguing for a certification standard for all guides and companies offering tours on Svalbard.

NNGF (Norsk Naturguideforbund) who has the same goals.

PTGA (Polar Tourism Guide Association) - to help with training and certification of cruise guides .

UNIS (The University Centre in Svalbard) who provides current research outcomes and speakers for conferences. Educated guides can ensure environmental protection through awareness.

Lokalstyre to work on better living situation for guides.

We are a volunteer run organisation, representing more than 300 Svalbard guides and are without any funding so far. Nonetheless some major milestones have already been reached, from the forming of a Guide Association in general up to the collective agreement Svalbard Wildlife Expedition and Basecamp are working on.

As the situation is for now, most guides on Svalbard are only temporary employed with contracts that are not following the norwegian working law. For example, lack of overtime payment, unregulated working hours exceeding the norm, no pension savings or holiday payment. In addition most guides struggle with permanent housing and a safe working environment.

Our short term goal is to improve the employment conditions for all guides on Svalbard to reduce burn out rates and make year-round employment viable, regardless of their nationality, employment or education.

Our long term goal is to make Svalbard internationally recognised for its fully equipped Guides (education, knowledge and experience) and the high standard of professionalism. This can only be beneficial for the local community of Longyearbyen in the long run. Guides with a lot of experience will go into permanent employment and know-how will stay on the island and available for local companies. Especially when it comes to Svalbard's fragile environment, experience of the guide is a key factor for understanding and protection.

The SGA wants to create multiple possibilities to share and spread information and knowledge for guides, as well as mediating further education and courses to increase guide competences.

Our Facebook page is already a good way to share information, but to achieve professional outreach a branding and logo has been developed and we are in the final process of releasing a website (www.svalbard.guide). Here guides can inform themselves from the svalbard environmental protection act, over where and how to receive training all the way to research publications and new regulations from Sysselmannen.

We have successfully established a yearly 'Guide Conference' with the support of H&K and this year it will be held on the 02.03.2020 at Funken. This will not only give a platform to H&K and the SGA to reach the guides, but also to any other institution that would like to get in contact with the guides. This year Sysselmannen, NNGF, PTGA and some lectures from UNIS are invited to talk about various topics - from safety in field over possibly education courses to research topics about sea ice or climate change. The cooperation with different institutions can contribute to a better symbiosis between the local community and the guides. We will use local resources and businesses where possible. There is a lot of potential and benefits in cooperation between different industries, local institutions and people. We want to help to bring all those together to work as one, respect each other and help each other out.

Miljøeffekt av tiltaket/prosjektet:

"The nature guide has its work as a professional leader and host of commercial groups of tourists in nature.

The nature guide shall facilitate safe, educational and nature friendly experiences. One of the main objectives is to inspire tourists to stronger nature awareness.” (Andersen and Rolland, 2016, 175) One of the main goals for the Svalbard Guide Association is to establish the everyday work of guides as an internationally recognized profession. We, as the guides, already know that guiding is a very challenging and demanding profession to choose, but it is not yet fully recognized and understood within the tourism industry. This is absolutely essential to develop a better understanding of how tourism is affecting nature and the environment. Guides are, in most cases, the first and only contact and source a tourist has to Svalbards environment, therefore it is vital that guides are properly educated to present the most accurate and helpful information to the nearly 100.000 tourists that will come to the archipelago every year (© Statistisk sentralbyrå, December 2016, page 16). This goes hand in hand with protection of the Svalbard environment.

David Attenborough observed pertinent «No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced”

Andersen & Rolland (2016:7) argue in their study, “that the role of a nature guide differs from a tour guide in a way that implies work with groups of tourists IN nature. Nature is a diverse, challenging and fragile additional element to being a guide.” It is well understood that most tourism on Svalbard is nature-based and inevitably has an impact on the environment. Being in nature with any number of people potentially causes damage to the environment – nature or culture wise. On a place like Svalbard regulations are already made and Syssemlannen has the responsibility to enforce them. The Svalbard Environmental Protection Act is the foundation for all activity regulations in Svalbard's natural environment. (Overrein 2015:8) It is the tourist companies responsibility to not violate any of the laws and regulations. In practice though, it is the guides who have to ensure that the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act is followed at all times under all circumstances.

As it currently stands, burned out guides due to extreme overtime each month and job insecurity (easily more than 280 hours per month, yet only offered contracts <6 months), uneducated guides, guides under time pressure and so on - probably can't efficiently prioritize or risk the compliance of the laws.

We believe having official regulations set by an administration already raises awareness and makes a place 'special'. Visitors are automatically more sensitive to avoid trespassing those rules. It also makes the tourists wonder why this place is protected and invokes constructive thinking - they might start asking questions and look for the 'greater truth' (Ham 2009:51). The Svalbard Guide Association is a strong supporter of regulations and encourages more strict measurements.

There are few studies about animal disturbance in arctic regions, but for animals living in alpine regions previous studies found that human disturbances are a significant issue for them. Similar to the arctic, the living situation is extreme and short vegetation periods minimize the time animals can build up energy reserves. The studies show that animals are disturbed much more easily, leading to the loss of important time and energy for feeding, with risk of physical injuries (Greulich 2015:2 & Overrein 2015:9). They might also show behavior changes – such as birds leaving their nests. The likelihood and degree of disturbance depends on the time of the year, the animals age, health and sex. Females with offspring react much more sensitively. (Overrein 2015:9) Again, the guide has the responsibility to provide a good example by keeping their distance to wildlife, keeping Svalbard clean (to prevent animals eating trash or getting tangled up in it) and most importantly explaining their behavior to the guests so they can understand, reflect and adopt nature awareness (Weiler & Davis 1993:98).

The Arctic has a very sensitive ecosystem, where flora and fauna are highly specialized. It is very easy to leave footprints, and not just in a metaphorical sense: plants are very fragile in this harsh climate and just over 50 species are Red Listed (Lier 2009:8). Tire marks remain for decades and the flora recovers very slowly compared to temperate areas. Thus guides explain to their guest to try to walk on stones, and that it is prohibited to pick flowers (Lier 2009:6).

There have been negative examples of tourism conflicting with environmental protection: the chasing of a female polar bear with two cubs, flower picking in Skansebukta and in Longyearbyen, tourists breaking into

cabins and lighthouses, individual tourists hiking or kayaking without proper Svalbard knowledge or polar bear protection. The list could go on and on, but the point is: with education, stronger regulations and professionally supported pro-active guides these incidents might be preventable. Powell and Ham (2008) found proof in their studies that ecotourism can lead to pro-conservative knowledge, attitudes and behavior. In another study Ham (2009:49 and 54) proves that Tilden actually was correct when he quoted: "Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection."

Forvaltningsrelevansen i prosjektet:

Ikke utfyllt

Ris ID:

Forskningsinstitusjon:

Har det tidligere vært utført tilsvarende prosjekt innenfor samme type hovedkategori eller lignende prosjekter? Nei

Trengs det særskilt teknisk og/eller faglig kompetanse? Nei

Inngår det flere faglige og/eller økonomiske samarbeidspartnere i tiltaket/prosjektet? Nei

Gjennomføring av tiltak/prosjekt

Varighet: 01.02.2020 - 31.12.2020

Fremdriftsplan		
Start	Slutt	Milepæl/aktivitet
01.02.2020	31.12.2020	Website up and running
01.02.2020	29.02.2020	professional logo and branding
01.03.2020	05.03.2020	Guide Conference
01.03.2020	01.04.2020	print flyers to inform about SGA
01.05.2020	31.12.2020	maintain website
01.02.2020	31.12.2020	outreach and PR work
01.02.2020	31.12.2020	meetings with sysselmannen, visit svalbard, etc.

Kostnadsoverslag

Kostnadsoverslag			Beløp
Eget arbeid	Sats	Timer	
Dugnad	200,-	800	160 000
Lønnsutgifter		0	0
Lønnsutgifter		0	0

Lønnsutgifter	0	0	0
Kjøp/leie av tjenester (håndverkere, konsulenter m.m)			
set up website, branding, logo, webspace			30 000
marketing (flyers, poster and so on)			5 000
Guide Conferences & meetings			50 000
Andre kostnader			
Materialkostnader			10 000
Fraktkostnader			0
Reiser, transport, opphold			0
rent of office space for two years			65 000
Totale prosjektkostnader			320 000

Finansiering

Finansieringsplan			Beløp
Egeninnsats	Sats	Timer	
Dugnad	200,-	0	0
Lønnsmidler	0	0	0
Lønnsmidler	0	0	0
Lønnsmidler	0	0	0
Egenkapital			
Egne midler utenom lønnsmidler			0
Verdi av egne materialer			0
Lån (långiver)			0
Private tilskudd (stipend, fond, sponsorer, gaver)			
Spesifiser			0
Spesifiser			0
Spesifiser			0
Offentlige tilskudd (søknad sendt til: navn/status)			
Spesifiser			0
Spesifiser			0
Spesifiser			0
Omsøkt tilskudd fra Svalbards miljøvernfond			320 000

Kan tiltaket/deler av tiltaket gjennomføres med mindre tilskudd enn omsøkt? Ja

We would gain a lot from an office, but it would be possible without. We need some financial support to increase our outreach and act 100% as the information intermediary between guides, officials and companies.

Vedlegg

Ingen vedlegg

Merknad:

Ingen merknad

Ettersende vedlegg per post: Nei

Er nødvendige tillatelser vedlagt søknaden? Ja

[sign] **Franka Leiterer** for **Svalbard Guide Association**

Lvert 01.02.2020