

Final report - SSP

Project name	St Olav Ways
Nyps-ID	20359736
Reporting period (YYMM-YYMM)	2308-2401
Web and social media	www.stolavostrobothnia.fi/ https://selangerpilgrimscenter.se/
<p>By submitting this report, we hereby confirm that:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The mandatory A3-poster is displayed and clearly visible to the public (in the premises of each partner)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Interreg Aurora logotype is used in all communication material</p>	

A. Project management

How has the project been organized and coordinated?

Describe the cooperation between partners and the daily work practices, including the roles of the project group and the steering group.

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

The **Interreg Aurora preliminary study St. Olav Ways** has been conducted as a cross-border collaborative project between the lead partner, **Kvarnen samkommun** and **Selånger församling**. Collaborative partners have been **Kristinestads Näringslivscentral Ab**, **Svenska Österbottens förbund för utbildning och kultur/KulturÖsterbotten** and **Selånger pilgrimscenter**. Other stakeholders have also participated in our joint meetings. The steering group has been formed by Kvarnen samkommun and Selånger församling as follows: Carola Wiik and Martin Näse from Kvarnen and Helene Westerlind, Bror Holm and Lena Brunzell from Selånger församling. Also Helene Ersson, Norrlands utredningstjänst and Beatrice Ikonen, RSMH Utbildning Sverige AB, has been present at the steering group meetings, which have been held as physical meetings in Selånger, Vasa and Umeå. Also representatives Angelique Irijala, Kristinestads Näringslivscentral Ab and Åsa Blomstedt KulturÖsterbotten have been members of the steering group. The task of the steering group has been to plan and manage the project process and to supervise the implementation of tasks. The project group consists of Kvarnen members Carola Wiik and Martin Näse, as well as Helene Westerlind and Bror Holm from Selånger församling, Helene Ersson and Beatrice Ikonen. The task of the project group has been the daily work within the project i.e. implementing the project plan according to guidelines from the steering group. The steering group has met 3 times during the project, while the project group conducted monthly meetings using Teams. This besides attending in 3 physical meetings. Lead partner Kvarnen has been in charge of leading the project implementation process together with Selånger. Selånger planned and implemented the meeting in Selånger, while Kvarnen was in charge of the meetings on Aurora Botnia and in Vasa as well as in Umeå. Helene Ersson and Beatrice Ikonen has consulted during the project process.

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How have you ensured involvement from the target group?

Describe how you have considered target group needs. Depending on the aim of your specific small-scale project it may be an important part to systematically ensure an on-going dialogue with the target group.

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

Our preliminary study target group is defined as small and medium sized companies as well as non-profit organisations such as local historical societies. We see a great potential for the St Olav Pathway to become a growth engine for the regions tourism- and creative industries.

The historical society Oravais Historiska Förening has taken part in our meeting at Aurora Botnia/Vasa as well as in Umeå. The historical association Stiftelsen Lebellska köpmansgården also took part in our meeting at Selånger. This association is working with developing the cultural heritage in Kristinestad, which is the south starting point for St Olav Ostrobothnia. Kristinestads näringslivscentral is working daily with small and medium sized businesses in Ostrobothnia in sustainability certifications according to Visit Finland Sustainable Travel program. The joint aim on Nordic level is to get as many small and medium sized businesses along St Olavsleden in Finland and Sweden to work towards economic, ecologic and social sustainability. The chairman of S:t Olavsledens ekonomiska förening as well as the representative from the business development department of Sundsvall kommun attended the meeting in Selånger. The representatives expressed their interest in collaboration as well as willingness to inform both the municipalities and businesses along St Olavsleden regarding content and results of this preliminary study. Collaboration will these partners continue in a large scale project.

What connections are there with other projects and/or initiatives?

Shortly describe connections during the reporting period.

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

S:t Olavsledens ekonomiska förening, with Östersunds kommun as a lead partner in the project *S:t Olavsleden – besöksnäring genom ett gemensamt kulturarv*, aim to develop the service along St Olavsleden in Sweden and Norway. Possible areas of co-operation: developing and extending St Olavsleden between Umeå and Sundsvall as well as profiling, guide education and communication/marketing.

Sundsvall kommun has informed us about their positive interest in a future implementation project, however not as a lead partner.

A prospective lead partner in Sweden is Region Västernorrland, who has the development responsibility for the Höga kusten leden. Höga kusten leden is highly interesting when planning the development and extension of St Olavsleden between Umeå and Sundsvall. Possible areas of co-operation: target group analysis, cultural heritage and cultural routes impact on cultural tourism in the area. The discussions with Region Västernorrland continue in order to negotiate lead partnership and objectives for a large scale Interreg Aurora project.

During the process we have also learned that neither Selånger församling nor Selånger pilgrimscenter are able to function as lead partners due to intern organizational and economic reasons.

Kvarnen samkommun is the administrative organisation of St Olav Ostrobothnia. Kvarnen is ready to function as lead partner in Finland. Both KulturÖsterbotten and Kristinestads näringslivscentral have informed their interest in collaboration in a large scale project. KulturÖsterbotten has a given role as a cultural heritage developer in Ostrobothnia and Kristinestads näringslivscentral is specialized in business and service development. The organisation is a forerunner in business sustainability certifying according to Visit Finland Sustainable travel program. Kristinestads näringslivscentral collaborates already within the Interreg Aurora Regenerative Tourism project.



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How has the project handled any delays or other deviations?

Reflect on any delays or deviations from the project plan. Describe measures taken to make sure the impact of such deviations does not affect the sought results.

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

The lead partner in Sweden Selångers församling is going to through a major organizational change, which also impacts on the lead partnership in Sweden in a large scale project. The steering group as well as the project group have discussed lead partnership during all three meetings in Selånger, Aurora Botnia/Vasa and Umeå. An analysis on potential lead partners and collaborative partners has been made and we are continuing our discussions with Region Västernorrland during spring 2024 in order to establish the Swedish lead partnership. Also the preparation and planning for a joint project is continuing with all partners and possible new partners, despite the ending of this preliminary study.

B. Project activities

WP 1: Functional crossborder-network
Which activities have been carried out? Describe completed activities (including meetings)
(Maximum 4 000 characters)
<p>Lead partners and collaborating partners have conducted steering group and project meetings as well as study visits as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Steering group and project meeting in Selånger, August 30 - September 1, 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lead partners: Kvarnen samkommun and Selånger församling ○ Collaborating partners: Sundsvalls kommun, Region Västernorrland, S:t Olav Ekonomiska förening, Norrlands Utredningstjänst, Kristinestad Business Center Ab, KulturÖsterbotten and Vasa församling. ○ Visitor and lecturer Carola Nordbäck, researcher at Svenska kyrkans enhet för forskning och analys. Headline: <i>Att vandra som pilgrim</i>. ○ Workshop with Beatrice Ikonen, Projektstöd i Sverige Ab: Large scale project planning as well as discussion about European cultural routes principles. ○ Study visit at Selånger Pilgrimscenter ○ Project presentation St Olav Ways ○ Presentation of organisations and collaborative discussions 2) Steering group and project meeting Aurora Botnia, Vasa and Kristinestad, October 13-14, 2023. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lead partners: Kvarnen samkommun and Selånger församling. ○ Collaborative partners: Norrlands utredningstjänst, Kristinestads näringslivscentral, KulturÖsterbotten and Oravais historiska förening. Visitor and lecturer Pia Smeds, LUKE (Naturresursinstitutet). Headline: Regenerative Tourism project (Interreg Aurora) and transformative learning. ○ Presentation of St Olav Ostrobothnia ○ Meeting with collaborative partners in Österbotten: KulturÖsterbotten and Kristinestads näringslivscentral ○ Further large scale project planning 3) Steering group and project meeting in Umeå, January 25-26, 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lead partners: Kvarnen samkommun and Selånger församling. ○ Collaborative partners: Norrlands utredningstjänst, Workshop with Beatrice Ikonen, Projektstöd i Sverige Ab, Kristinestads näringslivscentral, KulturÖsterbotten and Oravais historiska förening. ○ Further large scale project planning; especially discussions about lead partnership in both Sweden and Finland. 4) Monthly project meetings using Teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lead partners: Kvarnen samkommun and Selånger församling, and Helene Ersson, Norrlands utredningstjänst and Beatrice Ikonen, Projektstöd i Sverige. 5) Situation analysis for both Sweden and Finland 6) Literature study
Which communication activities have been carried out?
Describe how you have communicated the activities and results of the work package. <i>Specify the target group of each activity. Indicate references and/or links. Describe how you raised awareness</i>

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and visibility of your project activities and dissemination of your results. Activities such as events, publications, reports, articles, newsletters, films, campaigns on social media, exhibitions etc.

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

Steering group and project group – invitation to the meeting in Selånger with program

S:t Olavsledens ekonomiska förening – invitation to the meeting with program by mail (Helene Ersson)

Sundsvall kommun - invitation to the meeting with program by mail (Helene Ersson)

Region Västernorrland - invitation to the meeting with program by mail (Helene Ersson)

Härnösands stift - invitation to the meeting with program by mail (Helene Ersson). This organisation was not able to attend due to illness.

Kristinestads näringslivscentral – invitation to the meeting with program by mail (Carola Wiik)

KulturÖsterbotten - invitation to the meeting with program by mail (Carola Wiik)

Vasa församling - invitation to the meeting with program by mail (Carola Wiik and Martin Näse)

Lebellska föreningen - invitation to the meeting with program by mail (Carola Wiik).

The program and workshop material can be found on www.stolavostrobothnia and <https://selangerpilgrimscenter.se/>. The participants of the meeting in Selånger have shared information about the project in their own network. The meeting was the kick-off for this study project and it opened up the possibility for joint discussions on future project content and lead partnership. The event provided knowledge and information on the current Nordic pilgrimage research. Facebook posts from this event were made available on partners organizational Facebook accounts for example “Hiking St Olav Ostrobothnia” and “Pilgrimscenter Selånger” “Business Kristinestad” as well as private Facebook accounts.

WP 2: Cooperation structures and joint development strategy

Which activities have been carried out? *Describe completed activities (including meetings)*

(Maximum 4 000 characters)

During our first meeting in Selånger, various possibilities for collaboration and lead partnerships were discussed for a new **Interreg Aurora project**. These discussions continued throughout the project, including at the project meetings at Aurora Botnia/Vasa on October 13-14, 2023, and in Umeå on January 25-26, 2024. The project conducted an analysis of potential project partners and their potential roles in a new project, both in Sweden and Finland.

According to the analysis made we understand that neither Selånger församling nor Selånger pilgrimscenter are able to function as lead partners. This due to a major intern organizational change which will be made in the beginning of 2025, where Selånger Församling becomes part of a larger parish. This change demands focusing and therefore Selånger församling announced that it is interested in partnership but cannot function as lead partner. Selånger pilgrimscenter, which is owned by a foundation, also expresses interest in partnership within a large scale project, but cannot for economic reasons become the lead partner for the project.

According to the analysis made in Sweden S:t Olavsledens ekonomiska förening, with Östersunds kommun as a lead partner in the project *S:t Olavsleden – besöksnäring genom ett gemensamt kulturarv*, aim to develop the service along St Olavsleden in Sweden and Norway. This project is financed through Interreg Sverige-Norge. We recognise possible areas of co-operation: developing and extending St Olavsleden between Umeå and Sundsvall as well as within the area of profiling, guide education and communication/marketing.

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Sundsvall kommun has informed us about their positive interest in a future implementation project, however not as a lead partner. Sundsvalls kommun will play an important role when developing and extending St Olavsleden from Umeå to Selånger.

A prospective lead partner in Sweden is Region Västernorrland, who has the development responsibility for the Höga kusten leden. Höga kusten leden is highly interesting when planning the development and lengthening of St Olavsleden between Umeå and Sundsvall. Possible areas of cooperation: target group analysis, cultural heritage and cultural routes impact on cultural tourism in the area. The discussions with Region Västernorrland continue in order to negotiate lead partnership and objectives for a large scale Interreg Aurora project. Region Västernorrland was also present at the meeting in Selånger 30.8-1.9.2023. The discussions with Region Västernorrland continues during spring 2024.

In Finland, Kvarnen samkommun is the administrative organisation of St Olav Ostrobothnia and Kvarnen has also functioned as the lead partner in this preliminary study. Kvarnen is ready to function as lead partner in Finland for at large scale Interreg Aurora project. Both KulturÖsterbotten and Kristinestads näringslivscentral have informed their interest in being partners in a new large scale project. KulturÖsterbotten, which has a given role as a cultural heritage developer in Ostrobothnia and therefore this organisation is also interested in developing the cultural heritage in St Olav. Kristinestads näringslivscentral is on the other hand specialized in business and service development and the organisation is a forerunner in certifying businesses in sustainability according to Sustainable Travel Visit Finland program. Kristinestads näringslivscentral collaborates within the Interreg Aurora Regenerative Tourism project.

Norway, as the owner of the certification of cultural route of St Olav Ways in all Nordic countries, is an important connection when developing the St Olav routes in all countries. The conclusion made during the discussions and meetings held with Stiklestad Nasjonale Kultursenter, is that they will function as our Norwegian advisor and mentor in a large scale project. This with their own budget.

Which communication activities have been carried out?

Describe how you have communicated the activities and results of the work package. *Specify the target group of each activity. Indicate references and/or links. Describe how you raised awareness and visibility of your project activities and dissemination of your results. Activities such as events, publications, reports, articles, newsletters, films, campaigns on social media, exhibitions etc.*

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

Steering group and project group – invitation to the meeting in Selånger, Aurora Botnia/Vasa and Umeå with program

LUKE (Naturresursinstitutet) – invitation to the meeting with program by mail (Carola Wiik)

Lebellska föreningen - invitation to the meeting with program by mail (Carola Wiik)

The program and analysis for both Sweden and Finland can be found on www.stolavostrobothnia and <https://selangerpilgrimscenter.se/>. The participants have shared information about the project in their own networks. The event provided knowledge and information about the Interreg Aurora Regenerative tourism project and the transformative learning concept. The attendants also had the chance to visit St Olav Ostrobothnia on site in Vasa and Kristinestad. The group visited Kristinestads näringslivscentral, Stiftelsen Lebellska köpmansgården and KulturÖsterbotten. Facebook posts from this event were made available on partners organizational Facebook accounts for example “Hiking St Olav Ostrobothnia”, “Business Kristinestad” and “Pilgrimscenter Selånger” as well as private Facebook accounts.

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WP 3: Historical heritage of St Olav

Which activities have been carried out? *Describe completed activities (including meetings)*

(Maximum 4 000 characters)

Cultural heritage and historical evidence play an important role in all European cultural routes. This also stands for the Nordic pilgrimage hiking routes of St Olav Ways. The project conducted a literature study on existing research in the Nordic region related to pilgrimage from a holistic sustainability perspective. According to researchers Carola Nordbäck and Mats Nilsson existential issues are partly the reason for modern pilgrimage. As humans we need to understand ourselves and others and the reference we often use is the historical and cultural context. This we can also find in the pilgrimage hiking routes. Writer David Thurefjell explains in his book "Granskogsfolk" that nature is the spirituality and religion of the modern humans. Seeking the meaning of life is connected with cultural heritage, nature and hiking also according to writers Susanne Österlund- Pötzsch and Sverker Sörlin. The conclusion is that in order to develop and strengthen the brand of St Olavsleden in both Sweden and Finland as a historic cultural route we need to gain information and knowledge about and from the modern pilgrims and hikers hiking along St Olavsleden. We need to understand the expectations and needs of these pilgrims and hikers in order to be able to develop services and experiences along the route. This in order to be able to build a strong St Olav brand connected to the historical and cultural heritage. Together we need to form a common communications strategy based on actual data and information provided by the pilgrimage hikers. The literature study was made by Beatrice Ikonen, Projektstöd i Sverige. Furthermore Carola Nordbäck, researcher at Svenska kyrkans enhet för forskning och analys, visited our first meeting in Selånger 30th August where she gave us a lecture on the topic "Att vandra som pilgrim" with reflections on historical and modern pilgrimage. The literature study can serve as support for a joint project application.

Which communication activities have been carried out?

Describe how you have communicated the activities and results of the work package. *Specify the target group of each activity. Indicate references and/or links. Describe how you raised awareness and visibility of your project activities and dissemination of your results. Activities such as events, publications, reports, articles, newsletters, films, campaigns on social media, exhibitions etc.*

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

Carola Nordbäck, researcher at Svenska kyrkans enhet för forskning och analys, visited our first meeting in Selånger 30th August where she gave attendants in the Selånger meeting a lecture on the topic "Att vandra som pilgrim" with reflections on the historical and modern pilgrimage. A summary of this lecture can be found on St Olav Ostrobothnia www.stolavostrobothnia.fi where it is accessible to the public.

The project conducted a literature study on existing research in the Nordic region related to pilgrimage from a holistic sustainability perspective. The purpose of this study was to enhance understanding and knowledge of the shared heritage in St. Olav and the central values and principles that form the basis for all of Council of Europe certified cultural routes. The literature study provides a concise summary of current Nordic research on pilgrimage. This material can serve as support for a joint project application as well as interesting background material for associations and businesses along St Olavsleden in both Finland and Sweden, as well as possible collaborative partners in a new large scale project. All partners in this preliminary study have received the study. The literature study was made by Beatrice Ikonen, Projektstöd i Sverige. The study can be found on St Olav Ostrobothnia www.stolavostrobothnia and <https://selangerpilgrimscenter.se/> where it is accessible to the public.

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WP 4: Certification values and principles

Which activities have been carried out? Describe completed activities (including meetings)

(Maximum 4 000 characters)

The Council of Europe emphasizes central values as the foundation for all cultural routes. These values include democracy, human rights, peace, intercultural dialogue, networking, and cross-border cooperation. Consequently, these principles are equally significant for both St. Olavsleden and St. Olav Ostrobothnia. The steering group and the project group have during all three meetings in Selånger, Aurora Botnia/Vasa and Umeå discussed the principles of the Council of Europe. Cross-border cooperation and networking are principles already being used in this project as the lead partners and collaborative partners meet and plan activities within in this preliminary study but also plan for a large scale collaboration on St Olav within Interreg Aurora. Of course, there is a need to further broaden the network with partners in other areas such as companies and associations. According to the conclusions from the meetings and the literature study made, dialogue with pilgrimage hikers and users of the Nordic St Olav routes is crucial in developing the brand and communication of St Olav. Another conclusion is that involving the church and parishes along the St Olav routes in both Sweden and Finland provide us with the foundation for credibility in our communication about topics as democracy, human rights and peace. Selånger församling is already adopting these principles in the activities provided at Selånger pilgrimscenter, but there is a need to communicate the principles and values more effectively and clear. At St Olav Ostrobothnia the collaboration with the church and the parishes has started as a result from this project as representatives from Vasa parish were present at our first meeting in Selånger, and now a pilgrimage center will be developed in Vasa during spring 2024. The collaboration with parishes and the church continues during spring 2024 as the bishop has invited St Olav Ostrobothnia to collaborative discussions with all parishes in Österbotten/Ostrobothnia.

Which communication activities have been carried out?

Describe how you have communicated the activities and results of the work package. *Specify the target group of each activity. Indicate references and/or links. Describe how you raised awareness and visibility of your project activities and dissemination of your results. Activities such as events, publications, reports, articles, newsletters, films, campaigns on social media, exhibitions etc.*

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

The steering group and the project group have during all three meetings in Selånger, Aurora Botnia/Vasa and Umeå discussed the principles of the Council of Europe. The project conducted a literature study on existing research in the Nordic region related to pilgrimage from a holistic sustainability perspective. The purpose of this study was to enhance understanding and knowledge of the shared heritage in St. Olav and the central values and principles that form the basis for all of Council of Europe certified cultural routes. This material can serve as support for a joint project application as well as interesting background material for associations and businesses along St Olavsleden in both Finland and Sweden, as well as possible collaborative partners in a new large scale project. All partners in this preliminary study have received the study. The literature study was made by Beatrice Ikonen, Projektstöd i Sverige. The study can be found on St Olav Ostrobothnia www.stolavostrobothnia and <https://selangerpilgrimscenter.se/> where it is accessible to the public.

C. Results and exit strategy

What was the purpose and goal of the small-scale project?

Describe the aim and the sought objective.

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

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The main objective of this preliminary project was to bring together lead partners Kvarnen samkommun, administering St Olav Ostrobothnia and Selångers församling as home parish to Selånger pilgrimscenter, with other collaborative partners in order to facilitate a functional crossborder network between the partners. The result in this work package was three meetings with lead partners, collaborative partners and possible other interested partners in Selånger, Aurora Botnia/Vasa and Umeå. The second goal was to initiate cooperation structures and a joint development strategy. This goal was met by facilitating meetings between partners, both physical meetings in Selånger, Aurora Botnia/Vasa and Umeå as well as additional steering group meetings on Teams. Partner analysis has been made in both Sweden and Finland in order to communicate alternatives for cooperation structure and strategy for a large scale Interreg Aurora project application. The third goal was to cooperate on the theme of cultural and historical heritage of St Olav. Carola Nordbäck, researcher at Svenska kyrkans enhet för forskning och analys, gave a lecture on the topic "Att vandra som pilgrim" with reflections on historical and modern pilgrimage. The project conducted a literature study on existing research in the Nordic region related to pilgrimage from a holistic sustainability perspective. The purpose of this study was to enhance understanding and knowledge of the shared heritage in St. Olav. The fourth goal was to explore the values stated by the Council of Europe for all cultural routes. Values such as democracy, human rights, peace, intercultural dialogue, networking, and cross-border cooperation. The steering group and the project group have during all three meetings in Selånger, Aurora Botnia/Vasa and Umeå discussed the principles of the Council of Europe and concluded the importance of shared knowledge and understanding of these values for example through cooperation with churches and parishes along St Olavsleden in Sweden and St Olav Ostrobothnia in Finland. The conclusion made during the discussions and meetings held with Stiklestad Nasjonale Kultursenter, is that they will function as our Norwegian advisor and mentor in a large scale project, in how to develop the St Olav cultural heritage.

What results have been achieved and how will these be implemented further?

Describe how the project objective was completed and the results achieved. Reflect on the exit strategy, include a description of how the results of the pre-study will be implemented/developed. Describe whether the partners intend to apply for funding for a main project and, if so, from which financier and when the application is expected to be submitted.

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

The main objective of this preliminary project was to bring together lead partners Kvarnen samkommun, administering St Olav Ostrobothnia and Selångers församling as home parish to Selånger pilgrimscenter, with other collaborative partners to facilitate a functional crossborder networking between the partners. Lead partners and collaborating partners have conducted steering group and project meetings as well as study visits as follows 1) Steering group and project meeting in Selånger, August 30 - September 1, 2023. Presentations, lecture and workshop. 2) Steering group and project meeting Aurora Botnia, Vasa and Kristinestad, October 13-14, 2023. Project planning and study visits 3) Steering group and project meeting in Umeå, January 25-26, 2024. Project planning. 4) Monthly project meetings using Teams. Partner analysis has been made in both Sweden and Finland in order to communicate alternatives for cooperation structure and lead partnership as well as strategy for a large scale Interreg Aurora project application. The project conducted a literature study on existing research in the Nordic region related to pilgrimage from a cultural and historical holistic sustainability perspective. The purpose of this study was to enhance understanding and knowledge of the shared cultural heritage in St. Olav as well as reflect on the values and principles stated by the Council of Europe. The literature study can serve as support for a joint project application. Discussions and preparations is in place for a large scale Interreg Aurora

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project, according to partner analysis made in the project. The aim is an application for funding during autumn 2024 or spring 2025.

D. Summaries

Project summary

The project summary from the final report will be frequently used on European and national level to spread results from Interreg Aurora projects. The summary should answer the following questions:

- *What results have the project achieved?*
- *Where are the project results published? (open access is mandatory)*
- *What has the cross-border cooperation specifically meant for the project's implementation and results?*
- *How has the project contributed to the SDGs?*
- *How has the project impacted the life of the target groups and citizens?*
- *What is the exit strategy of the project? Describe any final agreements for partnerships, cooperations etc.*

(Maximum 4 000 characters)

The route of St Olav ways is a Nordic pilgrimage hiking route certified by the Council of Europe. St Olav Way consists of different pilgrimage hiking routes in Finland, Sweden and Norway. The main objective of this prestudy project was to bring together lead partners Kvarnen samkommun (FI) administering St Olav Ostrobothnia and Selångers församling (SWE) as home parish to Selånger pilgrimscenter, with other collaborative partners to facilitate a functional crossborder networking between these partners. Lead partners and collaborative partners have conducted steering group and project meetings as follows: 1) Steering group and project meeting in Selånger, August 30 - September 1, 2023. Kick-off, presentations, lectures, workshop. 2) Steering group and project meeting Aurora Botnia, Vasa and Kristinestad, October 13-14, 2023. Project planning, workshop and study visits 3) Steering group and project meeting in Umeå, January 25-26, 2024. Project planning. 4) Monthly project meetings using Teams. Partner analysis has been made in both Sweden and Finland in order to develop alternatives for cooperation structure and lead partnership as well as strategy for a large scale Interreg Aurora project. The project conducted a literature study on existing research in the Nordic region related to pilgrimage from a cultural and historical sustainability perspective. The purpose of this study was to enhance understanding and knowledge of the shared cultural heritage in St. Olav as well as reflect on the values and principles stated by the Council of Europe. The literature study can serve as support for a joint project application. Discussions and preparations continue for a large scale Interreg Aurora project, according to partner analysis made in the project. Our aim is an application for Interreg Aurora funding during autumn 2024 or spring 2025.

Our target group was defined as small and medium sized companies as well as non-profit organisations such as local historical societies. The historical society Oravais Historiska Förening and Stiftelsen Lebelliska köpmansgården work with the development of cultural heritage in Ostrobothnia on local level. These organisations have taken part in our meetings in Selånger, at Aurora Botnia/Vasa as well as in Umeå. Kristinestads näringslivscentral and St Olavsledens ekonomiska förening are both working with municipalities and small and medium sized companies along St Olavsleden in Sweden and St Olav Ostrobothnia in Finland. Kristinestads näringslivscentral work according to Visit Finland Sustainable Travel program when certifying small and medium sized businesses in Ostrobothnia, also tourism and event businesses along St Olav Ostrobothnia. The joint aim on Nordic level is to get as many small and medium sized businesses along St Olavsleden in Finland and Sweden to work towards economical, ecological and social sustainability in Finland using Visit Finland program and in Sweden for example using the Västerbotten Experience VX-program. Quality certification will boost economic development for both companies, municipalities and local communities. The cultural routes of Europe form an important part in developing democracy, human rights, cultural diversity and peace in Europe. These values are the basics in creating social

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sustainability. The collaboration with the church and parishes along the St Olav routes in both Sweden and Finland is important when developing topics as democracy, human rights and peace. Selånger församling is adopting these principles in their activities at Selånger pilgrimscenter, but there is a need to communicate these values more effectively. At St Olav Ostrobothnia the collaboration with the church and the parishes started as a result from this project as representatives from Vasa parish were present at our first meeting in Selånger. Now a pilgrimage center will be developed in Vasa during spring 2024. Project results can be found on www.stolavostrobothnia and <https://selangerpilgrimscenter.se/>.

Short project summary

The short project summary will be frequently used on European and national level to spread results from all Interreg Aurora projects.

Write a short and clear text for the general public about the project results, and how the cross-border cooperation has impacted the life of the target groups and citizens. Inform on where the project results are published.

(Maximum 1 000 characters)

The St. Olav Ways project facilitated networking and collaboration among partners along St. Olavsleden, SWE and St. Olav Ostrobothnia, FI. Lead partners Kvarnen samkommun and Selånger församling with collaborative partners have conducted meetings in Selånger, at Aurora Botnia/Vasa and Umeå. An analysis was made on potential project partners and their roles in a follow-up project. Collaborative discussions covered various project themes, needs, and structures for cross-border cooperation. The project conducted a literature study on existing research related to pilgrimage from a cultural and historical sustainability perspective. The purpose was to enhance understanding and knowledge of the shared cultural heritage in St. Olav and reflect on the values and principles stated by the Council of Europe for cultural routes. Preparations continue for a large scale Interreg Aurora project. Project results are available on www.stolavostrobothnia and <https://selangerpilgrimscenter.se/>.