

LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE - 2011 Edition

1. Application form

A. Details of applicant (institution/organisation)

1. Name of Member State: Norway

2. Represented by

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3. Name of Applicant:

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B. Presentation of the project

1. Project site: Herand Landscape Park

2. Start of the project: march 2006

3. Names of all the project partners:

The local community of Herand

The municipality of Jondal

The County Governor of Hordaland

Hordaland County Council

Innovation Norway

Arkicon

Network for regional and local parks in Norway

4. Financing bodies:

The Municipality of Jondal

The County Governor of Hordaland

Hordaland County Council

Innovation Norway

5. Outline of the project:

a. Central aims

Herand is a unique village and a worthy candidate for the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe 2011.

The village of Herand is a leader in embracing innovative models for the management of cultural landscapes. The entire community stands united behind a systematic long-term project, confident that the inherent value of the landscape, its local distinctiveness, and the traditions and identity of Hardanger landscape can be used creatively to provide new income in a time when agriculture is facing difficult challenges.

Herand is a small village within a unique landscape by the Hardangerfjord. Herand is a community of 230 residents with a rich and diverse cultural landscape and 9000 years of cultural history. Herand has chosen a rural development strategy to focus on the unique landscape and be a part of the Landscape Parks of Hordaland *

In recent decades, many villages and rural areas in Norway have been characterised by the closure of farms and depopulation. The village of Herand has been able to reverse the trend, re-enlivening this community of 230 inhabitants in a rich and vibrant cultural landscape. The farmers and villagers have cooperated in their use of the landscape as a resource, taking numerous measures at wealth creation based on the natural, cultural and historical value of the landscape. Today the community is characterised by enthusiasm and optimism.

Local identity will be an important, unique and valuable resource towards this effort. The travel and tourism business in particular, needs farmers to maintain the cultural landscape as a valuable experience for domestic and international tourists. But a variety of experiences, other than that of landscapes alone can be developed. New produce such as traditional food and crafts are also needed, this should be sympathetic to and characterised by the local uniqueness.

The concept of 'Geotourism' – where cultural landscape, heritage, local food and intimate small-scale travel, creates sustainable tourism – this should be the basis for the development of new experiences and produce from the landscape communities. If such a focus is to be successful, both the villages and the regional Councils need to have an active interest, knowledge and ability to work with developing products. Cooperation and networking is important to achieving these goals.

*Landscape parks represent a unique blend of natural and cultivated landscapes, surrounding thriving local communities. Using and preserving local traditions, culture, and the natural history behind the landscapes as well as local products, we aim to give positive experiences for our visitors. Creativity and new experiences bloom and grow like the landscape itself. We wish to provide genuine experiences and authentic expressions of the personality and identity of the Park itself and the people who live here. Together, the inhabitants strive to develop these areas into solid and inclusive places to live and visit.

Cultural landscape + maximised cultural development = Landscape Parks
– a program for sustainable business and landscape development in Hordaland
(www.landskapspark.no) (www.parknytt.wordpress.com)

b. Main activities

Herand is a small community of 200 inhabitants. People live from fishing, agriculture and tourism. Herand has great history that goes 9000 years back in time. The unique landscape is taken care of by the inhabitants; partly through voluntary work. The enthusiasm is great among the inhabitants and they have a strong identity to their landscape and their history. The landscape is taken care of through sustainable activity and care. Herand landscape park has a priced cultural landscape close to the National Park Folgefonna. You can do activities like lodging, skiing, fishing, cycling, hiking, mountain-climbing and harbor-activities (www.folgefonna.info)

One of the National Tourist Roads passes through Herand. These scenic roads that are especially designed to enhance the travel's experience of the beauty of the surrounding landscape. They truly are highlights. They have participated actively and used the project to strengthen tourism and developing the cultural landscape. (www.turistveg.no)

The Herand landscape Park is using their long history and their unique landscape to tell about the natural and cultural qualities of their community. They are also actively participating in the project "move to Hardanger", and both Germans and Dutch people have moved to Herand the last years (www.flytttilhardanger.no)

See the enclosed appendix about Herand to get more information about the activities.

c. Outcome

The Landscape Park of Herand has won several prizes for their cultural and agricultural landscape. In 2008 they won the Regional Cultural Landscape Price and in 2009 they won the National Cultural Landscape Price. The last years of activity has resulted in increased immigration and optimism.

New businesses have been established. They sell local products to tourists. A restaurant has been established in the old Dairy. They serve local products and local food.

The old school is turned into a local cultural center. It's also a meeting-point for the inhabitants and the office of the Landscape Park is also located in the old school.

The landscape Park is arranging hiking trips in the landscape and they have made different types of signs to give information about the landscape and the tracks.

The numbers of inhabitants are rising.

Herand was one of the first communities in Hordaland who used a landscape analysis as a strategy for rural development. They are still working with these principals in the implementation of rural development.

C. Description of the project

1. Sustainable territorial development

- **Is the project part of a sustainable development policy?**
- **Does it contribute to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural or aesthetic values of the landscape? How?**
- **Has it successfully countered or posed remedy to any pre-existing environmental damage or urban blight? How?**

The project has a sustainable policy through the concepts of the Landscape Park.

The landscape parks of Hordaland County share a number of common traits:

- The landscape parks are part of a network that shares a common purpose and similar qualities.
- Landscape parks are locally organized and have their own statutes.
- The parks allow for suitable local commercial activity.
- The respective local authorities are responsible for the development of their landscape parks.
- The cultural landscape, buildings and cultural heritage are preserved and developed in accordance with the local distinctive characteristics, environment, culture and aesthetics.
- Geotourism is a key principle in developing tourism.
- The landscape parks aim to make the cultural landscape readily available to the public.
- There is a focus on local traditional fare and food products – “Food with a history” – preferably using organic ingredients.
- Landscape parks aim to increase public understanding of the environment, and the inherent value of the natural and cultural landscapes.
- Local history and heritage are essential aspects of the park’s identity and brand.

Norwegian landscape parks will soon have a new, joint website:

www.herandlandskapspark.no

Herand has a unique potential to become a regional beacon and a knowledge base with regards to the physical and cultural landscape and the cultural heritage that is associated with the village and settlement patterns of the surrounding area.

Herand has been working with its cultural heritage like old buildings, the cultural landscape and local petroglyphs.

2. Exemplary value

- **Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?**
- **Which are the good practices that it implemented?**

Ten years ago, the villagers established the Community Association of Herand (Bygdelaget i Herand). Since then the association has made an impressive effort to stimulate innovation and concrete measures. Through a combination of personal initiative and old-fashioned cooperation, a variety of volunteer projects has been launched. This has strengthened the sense of community, identity and local pride. One of the major joint projects realized through volunteer efforts has been the Cultural Trail.

The Community Association is quick to inform villagers about new initiatives and developments. An example of a project that has proved profitable is *Streif*, in which suggested

walks through the cultural landscape are combined with a taste of local food and culture. These events have been held in collaboration with the Bergen Mountain Touring Association (www.hordastreif.no)

In conjunction with the Landscape Park, a large permanent exhibition has been established in the old school building. The focus is on Herand's long and colourful history and fascinating cultural landscape. Large images show glimpses of everyday life in Herand – past and present. The exhibition contains many references that point to the surrounding landscape, and describe theme trails, inviting visitors to explore it on their own. The admission fee helps to finance operation of the Landscape Park and its continued development.

3. Public participation

- **Does the project actively encourage the public's participation in the decision-making process? How?**
- **Is the project in line with the wider policies implemented by national, regional or local authorities?**

It's a good example of mobilizing inhabitants to engage in their place and in their landscape. It has created involvement and the involvement has been bottom-up – from the inhabitants themselves. They have a wish and desire of making the local community sustainable and they want to show people and share the wonderful possibilities the landscape creates.

The last Saturday in April of every year is the big day for village volunteer work. All residents, young and old, participate according to their ability, making the village as attractive as possible for the summer. Colourful annuals are planted, the village is tidied, and a coat of fresh paint is applied where needed. Unlike many places, there is no vandalism in Herand – not a single flower has even been harmed. Everyone shares a desire to beautify the village, and to preserve and responsibly develop the resources of the surrounding landscape. After all, it is a key part of the villagers' identity.

The Herand Landscape Park is a part of the regional plan for sustainable development for Hordaland County and the national network for Regional and Local Landscape Parks.

4. Awareness raising

- **Is the project effectively increasing the public's awareness of the importance of landscape in terms of human development, consolidation of European identity, or individual and collective well-being? How?**

The Herand Landscape Park is a part of a sustainable development policy through the Landscape Park policy. The concept of 'Geotourism' – where cultural landscape, heritage, local food and intimate small-scale travel, creates sustainable tourism – this should be the basis for the development of new experiences and produce from the landscape communities.

It contributes to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic values of the landscape through the principals of Geo-tourism.

The different Landscape-prices have put Herand on the national map for outstanding sustainable development. The Landscape and the inhabitants of Herand have been presented through local, regional and national media. The community of Herand has established a visitor-centre which

presents the landscape, the history and the inhabitants. The visitor-center is also a base for exploring the landscape through paths and tracks to explore the landscape and its history; see the enclosed CD.

2. Additional material

- Presentation of Herand Landscape Park by the County Governor of Hordaland and Svein P. Kveim
- Posters by Arkikon
- Film by Arkikon