

The Norwegian Ecotourism Association

Kagakaia Guesthouse was established in 2009, in the rural village of Bø in Vesterålen, North Norway. The owner of Skagakaia has a significant background in sustainable tourism development in Norway, she is the initiator of Ecotourism Norway (launched in 2008) and the developer of the Norwegian ecotourism certification scheme. After 12 years as a sustainable tourism adviser/developer in Oslo, "theory was put into practice" by developing her old family property into a dedicated ecotourism destination, aiming at certification in 2012. They are now in the process of developing their ecotourism activities, and educational visits to share knowledge about ecotourism with students and other businesses. This will be part of their new broader concept. The municipality has low economic development and they want to prove that tourism is a sustainable alternative to exploiting industries, that can create the kind of work that local people need. Also they are offering work to local people less advantaged to give them work experience, training and inspiration – something that is a win win for both staff and business. Skagakaia is a small business with a clear vision. They opened for guests in 2009 but they are still in a development phase.

In this project the organisation will share their experience and work with their project partners to explore possibilities for ecotourism businesses and destinations. They also see this project as a possibility to build capacity and motivation among local partners/suppliers and within their own company.

The organisation gives input in the creation of education tools on certification, ecotourism as tool for business or destination development, and on marketing. They will recruit local participants to the project and disseminate project results at a local and a national level. EcoTourism Norway will organise international workshops in Norway.



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