



## Background

You are invited on a journey around the North Sea, a 3000 km adventure that will take you through six countries. Bring your boots – the route in question here is the North Sea Trail, an integrated network of walking trails, designed not for cars, boats, trucks, or trains, but for the simplest and most sustainable form of transport: walking on your own two feet!

## Aim

The NAVE Nortrail project promotes the development of a common coastal path through six countries in the North Sea Region, designed for cultural and outdoor activities. It concentrates not only on harmonising the physical infrastructure of the trail through measures such as standardised signposting, but also on promoting businesses geared towards environmental tourism in the local areas around the path and on strengthening the region's cultural identity.



Walkers on the coast in Vestfold, Norway.

## Activities and Outcomes

Nortrail's principal accomplishment so far has been to establish a common logo and signposting, creating a unique transnational brand: the North Sea Trail. In whatever country or region walkers happen to be along the path, they can rely on clear and familiar markers to guide them to their next destination. A website, with comprehensive information on local sites of historical or cultural interest and accommodation allows visitors to plan their trip on the path in advance. In addition to encouraging a healthy lifestyle through walking, Nortrail promotes a kind of tourism that is virtually pollution-free.

In many cases the history of the North Sea coastal area has little to do with today's national or regional boundaries. The history of the common heritage of North Sea trading and maritime commerce, for example, displayed along the Nortrail trail in Ribe County, Denmark, would have been impossible to compile without input from the English, Dutch, and German historians allied with the project. Indeed, historical research plays a vital role in the Nortrail project: in addition to walking the path for recreation, visitors are

*“Walking across islands and hills with a panorama of the great ocean, along the calm fjords, sounds and open beaches so close to the sea that you can smell the salt in the air all the way – this is briefly the essence of the North Sea Trail”* www.interreg.no 12 August 2004.

**Did you know...** Where will you be on 4 September 2005, Nortrail Day? Wherever you are in the North Sea Region, look out for the nearest of a series of walks organised by Nortrail's partners along their respective stretches of the North Sea Trail. Some sections of the path will be opened for the first time.

regaled with tales – through displays, brochures, and the website – of the different people who have been walking along exactly the same trails over the past several thousand years.

Nortrail's research in one area of Denmark led to the introduction of a new system of trail classification throughout the entire country. Designed as a resource for walkers of differing abilities, this classification shows which trails might be appropriate for a diverse range of groups, from experienced trekkers – isolated, rough terrain with few indicators, for example – to wheelchair users – paved or flat routes. This system of classification now appears on the internet so that potential visitors to the coastal path can plan out the route and type of path that suit their abilities in advance – and avoid getting an unpleasant surprise when they arrive at the route.

## The Future

The NAVE Nortrail project will continue to anticipate and meet the needs of the rapidly growing market for walking tourism. With 26 partners, and 120 sub-partners, the project is expected to become self-sustaining. As more and more people visit and return to the coastal paths developed by the project, an entire tourist economy is expected to develop around the trail. Local business sectors such as accommodation and catering will profit, and the cultural heritage of the areas in question – in many cases ignored by mainstream tourism until now – will begin to receive the attention they deserve.



The Nave Nortrail pathway on the Fife coast, UK.

### Lead Partner contact details

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### List of project partners

- DK** 7 partners
- G** 1 partner
- N** 7 partners
- NL** 1 partner
- S** 3 partners
- UK** 7 partners

Due to the large partnership, in addition to the Lead Partner, the map shows one partner per country only!

### Financial facts

Start date: 1 October 2002  
End date: 30 April 2007  
ERDF: € 3,649,657  
Total eligible sum: € 7,299,317

## The North Sea Coastal Path