

Welcome

to the first Update Report on the Arctic Coast Way.

The purpose of this short document is to keep you informed on the development of the Arctic Coast Way project, to tell you how you can input the project and to outline the next steps in the process of planning and development.

We gave 9 presentations in the project area from end of January until end of February 2017 in Hvammstangi, Skagatrönd, Sauðárkrúkur, Siglufjörður, Dalvík, Akureyri, Húsavík, Kópasker and Vopnafjörður, and introduced our project to approximately 160 interested guests. This report aims to give information to all who could not attend the meetings, but who would like to know more about the Arctic Coast Way. We would also like to provide those who were present a second look at the presentation as well as passing on any new information which has emerged since the meetings. Attached to this report you will find the slides of the presentation we gave in the project area.

We were very happy about the positive feedbacks and the huge interest shown in the Arctic Coast Way project and therefore we feel highly motivated to take the next steps on our exciting journey of implementing the Arctic Coast Way. At this point, we wish to thank all those who participated in the meetings and provided their feedback, comments and ideas. These positive contributions will help us rethink or improve steps already taken and those in preparation. Our special thanks go out to all the helping and organising hands at the meeting venues who gave us such welcoming and professional platforms for the presentations. The regular reports are also a tool to stay in a continuous contact with you - the more people who work together to bring the Arctic Coast Way alive, the stronger it will be.



What's it all about?

The Arctic Coast Way is an exciting project which develops a new attraction for the North of Iceland. Tourist routes are an established tool in global tourism to guide visitors along defined roads to specific areas. The overall objective of the Arctic Coast Way is to provide better opportunities for providers to sell their products under an umbrella trademark and thus reach better visibility in the national and international markets. The route is also a tool to distribute visitors to more peripheral areas and, by developing experiences along the route, we hope to achieve longer dwelling times in the North and to expand the season to create an all year-round travel option from a long-term perspective.

The route itself is the magnet to attract visitors to areas along the Northern shores of Iceland in order to explore everything the coastline has to offer. As visitors follow the route they will find an “à la carte” menu of “Arctic Coast experiences” by means of which they immerse themselves in the landscape and culture, and connect with the people who live close to the ocean. Therefore, the visitors will spend more time out of than in the car. The Arctic Coast Way will not be just another driving option but aims to become an Experience Brand and therefore we are focusing on building up a holistic approach to a driving route plus introducing experience developments along the route.

The whole project has a strong and strict focus on the coastline of the North. This focus is the core element of the promise we plan to send

out to the visitors (see slide 1 of the presentation). To guarantee this promise and ensure a clear and credible brand of high quality we have started to prepare membership criteria which define which providers can participate and how the trade is to be organised under the trademark of the Arctic Coast Way (see slides 12/13).

Who is behind the project?

The project is hosted by Markaðsstofa Norðurlands and the steering committee and the project manager run the project. Christiane Stadler took over the position of project manager in November 2016 and her workplace is in Markaðsstofa Norðurlands. The steering committee currently comprises 6 members, covering the initial project area between Sauðárkrúkur and Vopnafjörður, for the first stage of the project (Bryndís Lilja Hallsdóttir, Sveitarfélagið Skagafjörður, Linda Lean Bogadóttir, Fjallabyggð, Margrét Víkingisdóttir, Dalvíkurbyggð, María Helena Tryggvadóttir, Akureyrarstofa, Gunnar Jóhannesson Travel North, Halldóra Gunnarsdóttir, Norðurhjarí Ferðaþjónustusamtök). One extra seat in the steering committee is reserved for a member from Markaðsstofa Norðurlands, whose current representative is Arnheiður Jóhannsdóttir.





The final name: Arctic Coast Way

After a process of 5 months we decided on the final name for the route: Arctic Coast Way. The old one is almost the new one!

For the final decision, we involved several experts working in tourism and marketing, had open discussions on this after the presentations, and involved the tourism students of the University in Hólar and the marketing students at the University of Akureyri. At this point: we say thanks for the great work of the students!

After collecting all suggestions (all in all 54), we looked for our top favourites, which were:

- › Arctic Coastline Route
- › Arctic Coast(al) Way
- › Norðurleiðin
- › Silver Arctic Coast
- › Route #85#82#76
- › Route 66° North Iceland
- › Strandvegur á Norðurlandi

Why did we finally decide on "Arctic Coast Way"?

The feedback on the name "Arctic Coastline Route" in the 9 meetings in the areas was very positive so we felt a high level of acceptance inside the project area and therefore we decided to have at least a name version, which keeps the three-word structure. Further Arctic was set and a word regarding the shore like coast, coastal, coastline. But we were unsure about the best wording. Therefore, we involved a translator and the consultancy company Earth Check. Finally, we gave the name to Íslandsstofa to obtain their feedback and also asked them to test different name variations in the PR agencies in the main target markets. All feedbacks together gave a clear opinion: The Arctic Coast Way!

Many of the other name suggestions will be kept in mind as they give us promising ideas for the further marketing of the project. "Strandvegur á Norðurlandi" will be the name for communication in Icelandic.



The final Route

At the outset, our idea for the project was to offer three circles, around Tröllaskagi, the Diamond Circle and the Edge of the Arctic. For this approach, we received funding from Uppbyggingarsjóður Norðurlands eystra. In addition, Sveitarfélagið Skagafjörður contributed to the project from their own funds. When developing the exact location of the route, we finally arrived at the coastline approach which covered the initially financed area between Sauðárkrúkur and Vopnafjörður. The coastline further west was supposed to be developed at a future stage of the project, depending on further funding.

By always stepping back and seeing things from the visitor's perspective, we believe the most logical route along the Northern coast of Iceland is from Hvammstangi to Vopnafjörður. We see both villages as optimal starting/ ending points. Both villages are welcoming and charming with a suitable infrastructure from which to start and end a tour along the Arctic Coast Way. Both villages also offer good access to the Ring road which guarantees a journey as a "one line detour". The districts of Húnavatnssýslur and Vopnafjörður have already demonstrated their interest in taking part in the project; we had a positive feedback at the meetings and currently we are working with people in those districts on the necessary steps to complete the route.





In the first phase our target was to determine the basic concept of the project, which is the development of a tourist route as an Experience Brand and to identify the first key elements for the Arctic Coast Way; that is, the route itself, the name and the brand proposition (see slides 9-11). We started off by defining the route zones and the basic communication strategy and both tasks are still in process. An important step was the introduction of the project to the areas in order to collect feedback and get a feeling for the level of interest. We got positive feedback and interest from all areas and also the main target markets show interest and enthusiasm on the Arctic Coast Way, which rise our optimism to work on a future-leading project.

As the whole project is a vibrant development process we might have to adapt or update elements from time to time, depending on ongoing work. After we had decided on the final name of the route, we started the process to register “Arctic Coast Way” as national and international trademark, the owner of which will be Markaðsstofa Norðurlands. The first phase is financed by Uppbyggingarsjóður Norðurlands eystra and the Sveitarfélagið Skagafjörður. In February, we applied for further funding from Uppbyggingarsjóður Norðurlands eystra and Vegagerðin. Unfortunately, Vegagerðin rejected already our application, but we keep our fingers crossed that we get the “green light” from other applications we did and plan to do!



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The next steps

Now that the presentations are completed there might not be much news from us for a while. This is because we have returned to our desks for concentrated work on planning and preparing for further steps:

- strategy for further funding
- strategy for experience development and implementation
- preparation for infrastructure planning

We will update you with detailed information on these steps in the next report.

Besides this, we have started to work on the Logo and guidelines for the Corporate Identity of the Arctic Coast Way as well as the first draft of the project homepage.

Thanks to:



First be a partner, then a member!

Getting the project right will take time and this is not something that the project management (project manager and steering committee) and Markaðsstofa Norðurlands can achieve on their own. The Arctic Coast Way is approximately 785 km long and connects probably 6 unique route zones, 17 municipalities, 22 villages and approximately 400 businesses! So far, we have identified the final route and named it, but there are many steps ahead and this will only be a success if all businesses and communities along the route give us their backing, support the project with their input and devote themselves to continuous improvement into the future. We look forward to your input over the entire course of the project and please get in touch with us at any stage. We need you as a partner who supports us on our road to getting the project right, but only when the project is ready to start can we invite applications for membership.

Please note:

The project of the Arctic Coast Way is still in progress and Markaðsstofa Norðurlands holds full rights on the entire content developed under this registered trademark. The name, the route, the visitor promise or any other marketing elements of the trademark are not released yet to be used in any marketing and trade issues.



Presentation to introduce the project in the areas January – February 2017



Visit North Iceland
THE ARCTIC NORTH

The Arctic Coastline Route

Ferðamannavegur um Norðurland

VISIT NORTH ICELAND · HAFNARSTRÆTI 91 · 600 AKUREYRI · ICELAND

THE ARCTIC COASTLINE ROUTE

Ferðamannavegur um Norðurland

Project funding: Uppbyggingarsjóður
Sveitarfélagið Skagafjörður

Steering group: María Helena Tryggvadóttir, Akureyrarstofa,
Bryndís Lilja Hallsdóttir, Sveitarfélagið Skagafjörður
Linda Lean Bogadóttir, Fjallabyggð
Margrét Víkingsdóttir, Dalvíkurbyggð
Halldóra Gunnarsdóttir, Norðurhjári Ferðaþjónustusamtök
Gunnar Jóhannesson Travel North

Project Manager: Christiane Stadler

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What is the Arctic Coastline Route? Our promise to the visitors



Arctic Coastline Route – facing the Polar Circle

“The Arctic Coastline Route on Iceland’s Northern Coast, connects you to its rough and unspoiled nature and takes you to diversified landscapes between seaside and mountains. It captivates you with its peaceful coastal villages and authentic people, whose stories and culture are formed by the live at the ocean close to the Arctic Circle. It inspires you with changeful atmospheres of remote tranquillity, vibrant energy and magical lights all year round. You are freed up to slow down and leave feeling uplifted and fulfilled with unique memories.

The Arctic Coastline Route

A tourist route in the North of Iceland

- Tourist Routes are a popular tool in Tourism to promote a specific travel route through an area often connected to a specific theme
- Famous examples world wide are:
 - Trollstigen and Atlantarhavsvegen in Norway
 - The Marguerite Route in Denmark
 - The Garden Route in South Africa
 - The Great Ocean Drive in Australia
 - The Wine Street in Germany
- Iceland: research about “ferðamannavegur”, e.g. Vegagerðin
- **The Wild Atlantic Way in Ireland as “best-practise-example” for the development of the Arctic Coastline Route**



Project targets

1. A new attraction for the North of Iceland
2. Distribution of tourists to peripheral areas and all year round
3. Longer dwell time of the tourists in the North
4. A strong marketing product to promote the North on the national and international market

The Name “Arctic Coastline Route”

1. North Iceland is at the border to the Arctic -> unique character inside of Iceland
2. Coast -> has a special fascination for travellers
3. Route -> to point out the character of travel option

⇒ the name is still in progress

⇒ your feedback and creativity is welcome!

The Project Area of the Arctic Coastline Route

- The Arctic Coastline Route is a linking route along the 3 existing circles of Arctic Bow, Diamond Circle and Edge of the Arctic
- The route is drivable as a one-way route coming from East/West or as a 8-circle around Akureyri





The “NON-Magnet-Approach” for the Arctic Coastline Route

“The journey is the reward” (Confucius)

NOT the single well-known highlights are pointed out as highlights,
BUT generic highlights, which do not classify single places

=> **the whole route is same attractive**

- ca. 500 km of coastline along the North Atlantic Ocean
- x places to spot best the midnight sun
- Boat transfer to 4 islands
- 54 marked bird places of the Birding Trail
- the closest places to and the only place on the Arctic Circle in Iceland
- 5 spots for whale watching
- xx branded Arctic Coastline hiking trails
- 19 towns and fishing villages
- Gateway to the largest National Park of Europe
- 5 ski areas
- A European Destination of Excellence
- xx award winning cultural places

Sections of the Arctic Coastline Route



Visitors for the Arctic Coastline Route

International Tourism Trend

- Visitors are not longer fulfilled by simply visiting a place
- Visitors want to connect, engage and immerse themselves in something unique
- Visitors seek for memorable and meaningful experiences with all senses

Target groups

(built up on survey of Lilju Rögnvaldsdóttir and “Hinn upplýsti Ferðamaður”)

Primary markets: Self driver from Germany, Great Britain, Scandinavia, France

Older relaxers over 50

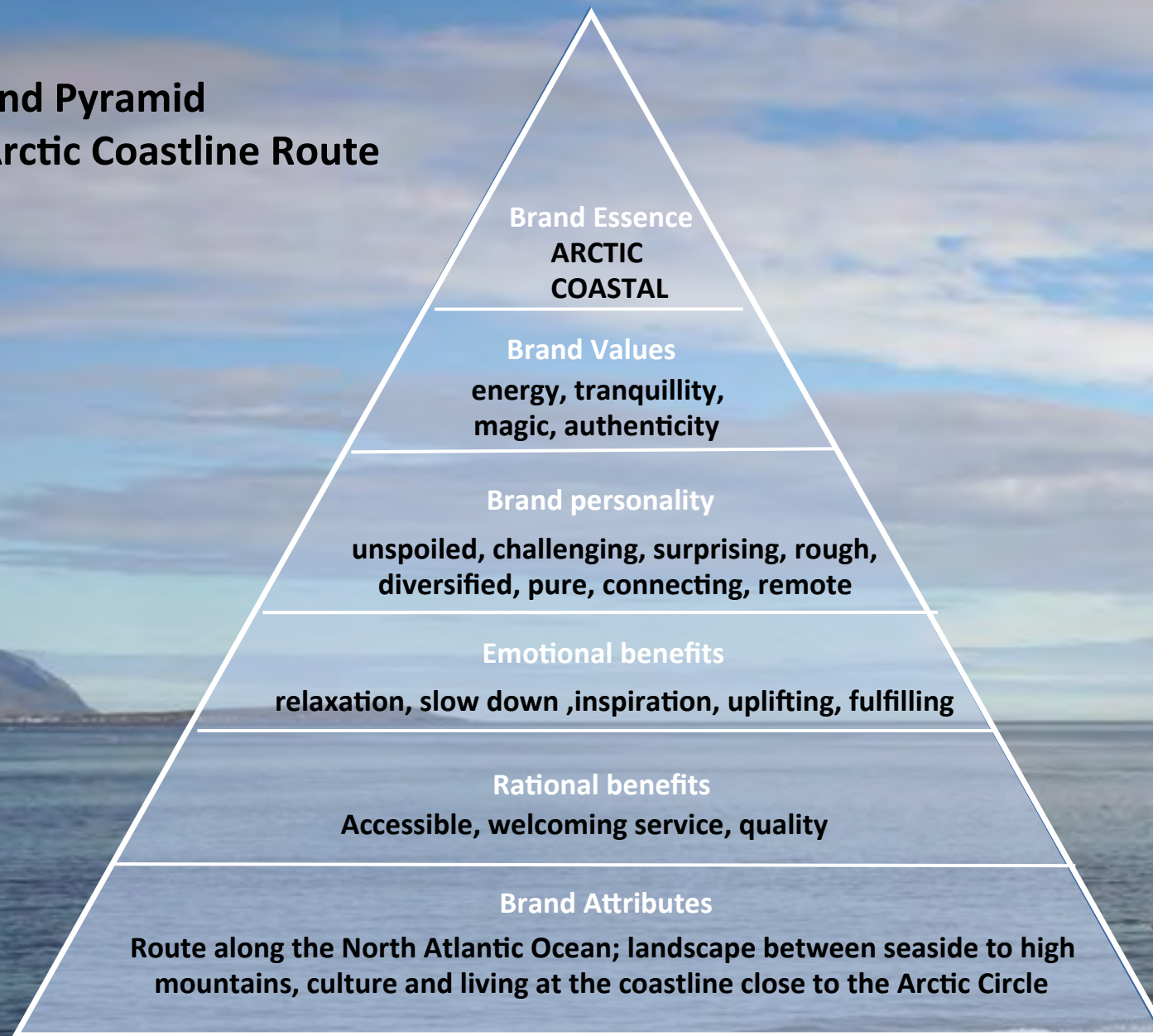
- higher income and more time
- expand their knowledge by exploring landscapes, history and culture
- authentic experiences and relaxing activities

Affluent Adventurers around 30

- Undertake adventure activities, both “hard” and “soft” variety
- appreciating peace and quite between physical activities in nature
- off the beaten track, but easy to realize



The Brand Pyramid of the Arctic Coastline Route



Ímynd Norðurlands Image of North Iceland:

miðnætursól, norðurljósín

eyjar, hafið, mannlíf við heimskautsbaug

vetrarævintýraland, vetrarsport, skíði

myrkur, birta, stjörnur ,gróður

íslenski hesturinn , fjölbreytt dýralíf

þögnin, kyrrðin

sjávarsíðan, strandmenningarsvæði

gönguleiðir, hvalir, veiði í ám og vötnum, sjóstöng

matarmenningin, strandmenning, sjávarbyggðirnar

mannlíf við heimskautsbaug

snjór, heimskautsbaugur

fjölbreytileiki

ekta

hrein, óspillt og ósnert náttúra

fámennir staðir, rólegur lífsmáti

orkustöð til að endurhlaða batteríin

heimafólk aðgengilegt ferðamönnum

allt á milli fjalls og fjöru

þekking þjónustuaðila á sínu nánasta umhverfi



Visit North Iceland
THE ARCTIC NORTH

The Arctic Coastline Route as Experience Brand

The Arctic Coastline Route is not just a new driving option, but an **Experience Brand (= Driving route + experiences)**

- ⇒ the **route itself is the magnet** to bring visitors to the areas
- ⇒ “a-la-carte” offers of **experiences along the Arctic Coastline Route**

Our task:

1. To develop a consistent brand
 - > **Brand Pyramid** for the values, personality of the Route and the benefits for the visitors
 - > **Brand Experiences** to get the values, personality and benefits alive
2. to give a clear and credible promise to visitors



Criteria for a membership

- To guarantee the **quality** of our promise
- To guarantee a **credible** brand



Visitors become powerful advocates

The Criteria of Membership”

“ Ekki vera eitthvað fyrir alla
Vertu allt fyrir einhverja!”

1. General

- “Arctic Coastline Route” is a **registered trademark** and **just a member** of the Arctic Coastline Route **is allowed to trade** under the brand
- Members are licenced businesses and are members of Visit North Iceland
- Members need to guarantee at least a communication availability (email, phone) all year round
- Members improve continuously their offer on the “Arctic Coastline Experiences” and enhance their enterprise in sustainability

2. Geographical criteria to underpin the coastal character

- Participating villages have to be at the coast
- Accommodations are in the **close neighbourhood** of the route
- Experiences have to focus on the coastline

3. Experiences

The **brand is limited** to those offers that can **best represent** the “Arctic Coastline Experiences” by standing to the brand values and brand personality

An Arctic Coastline Experience has to:

- highlight the rough and unspoiled nature of the **coastal landscape**
- Tells the **stories** of how the nature and the **ocean** influenced the **live and culture close to the Arctic Circle**

=> Businesses apply with a short description of the offer, of how it embodies the values and personality of the brand

=> not the company, but the single offers get branded as “Arctic Coastline Experience”

4. Marketing & Information

- members support the marketing of the brand “Arctic Coastline Route” by including the logo/name in their companies marketing, e.g. on tripadvisor or booking.com
- accommodations provide information about experiences and food options of members at least in their area



A view into the future - Next steps to take

- Analysis of the survey about name, sections and aspects of the Arctic Coastline Route
- Development of Logo and Guidelines
- Applications for further grants
- Marketing
- Development of the Arctic Coastline Experiences
- Infrastructure and signature planning



Development of Arctic Coastline Experiences



An Arctic Coastline Experience has to:

- highlight the rough and unspoiled nature of the **coastal landscape**
- Tells the **stories** of how the nature and the **ocean** influenced the **live and culture close to the Arctic Circle**

=> Building up on existing experiences/offers

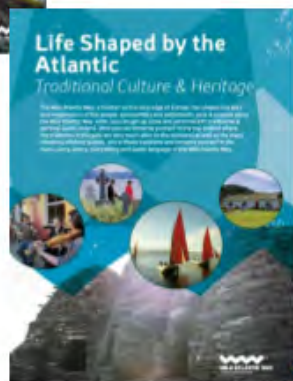
=> Development of further experiences as continuous process to get the Route alive and to define new highlights

=> we need your help!



Our vision:

Wild Atlantic Way:
Development of World Class Visitor Experiences
Consultation with Earth Check



EARTHCHECK

Approach for Categories of Arctic Coastline Experiences:

- **Arctic Nature**
- **Arctic Hike**
- **Arctic Life**
- **Arctic Wildlife**
- **Arctic Light**
- **Arctic Ocean**
- **Arctic Events**
- **Arctic Active**

Infrastructure and signature planning

Discovery points

(close connection to the coming DMP project)

1. existing viewing points and lay-bys along the route which will be branded as “Arctic Coastline Route Discovery points”

2. future viewing points and lay-bys along the route which must be planned and developed e.g.:



- best places to spot the midnight sun (**Arctic Light**), e.g. Hraunhafnartangi, Tjörnes lighthouse, Múlakolla, Grímsey



- new viewing points for scenic stops



- better beach accessibility (**Arctic Nature**)



- park sides for branded hiking trails

Why to take part in the Arctic Coastline Route?

- It is the first official “ferðamannavegur” here in Iceland
- It is a strong tool to reach visibility as overarching-brand in the national and international market, if we get it together alive
- Marketing support: website, flyer, tripadvisor, general marketing of MN (further marketing depends on further funding)

Tell us what you think: acw@northiceland.is
Follow the project on facebook of Markaðsstofa Norðurlands
Get detailed updates with the Arctic Coastline mailing list

