

National Cycle Network (NCN) and cycle tourism projects in Norway

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Norway is a typical area for winter-sports activities. By preparing recreational cycle-routes, alongside by other activities, we take part in creating new activities in low seasons in summer.

A survey from 2005 tells that the interest for bicycle has increased a lot.

NCN

Norway has a long coastline, we have valleys, rivers, woods and mountain areas of great interest, and the NCN should cover all these elements.

Cyclists mainly have to share the road with car traffic, but we have many car free stretches along the NCN. The complete NCN, 9 routes, will be about 10000 km, and the longest is route no 1, the coastal-route, which will be 4600 km.

EuroVelo

We have parts of 5 EuroVelo-routes, Atlantic coast route, Pilgrims route, Middle European route, Eastern European route and North Sea Cycle Route. As many as 3 of the EuroVelo routes start at North Cape.

The EuroVelo network is close to 5900 km in Norway, or about 60% of our NCN.

Project "Cycling-friendly destinations"

The Institution for Cycle Tourism has a project on developing cycling-friendly destinations. The tourists want to see, discover, get new knowledge about old craftsmanship, old farming, local geology, traditional food, folk music etc

The concept, with processes of quality control and other necessities to establish a cycling-friendly destination, will provide even better facilities for cyclists in Norway.

The project's main aim is to prepare and test a concept for the development, organisation and promotion of the cycling facilities within a limited geographical area or destination.

The concept shall give the cycle tourist the opportunity to use a destination as a base, and either make arranged cycling day trips in the area or generally use the bicycle as a means of transport.

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About The Norwegian Public Roads Administration

The Norwegian Public Roads Administration is responsible for the planning, construction and operation of the national and county road networks, vehicle inspection and requirements, driver training and licensing. It is also authorized to grant subsidies for ferry operations.

On matter pertaining to national roads, the Public Road Administration is under the direction of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. On those related to county roads, the Regional Director is subordinated the county legislature.

The Public Roads Administration is under the leadership of the Directorate of Roads, which is an autonomous agency subordinated the Ministry of Transport and Communication. The Public Roads Administration encompasses five regional offices.

Vision:

- *“On the road to a better society”*

The objective of the Norwegian Public Roads Administration:

- *To develop and maintain a safe, eco-friendly and efficient transport system. This is being done on a sound, professional basis by interacting with politicians, users and other interested parties.*

Organisational cooperation

The NPRA is represented in over 200 working groups and committees in a wide range of international organisations. The content, extent and duration of these engagements vary from short term research projects to ongoing work of political nature.

The main NPRA cooperation partners in Africa are Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia. In these countries we are working with many different projects.

Cycle tourism and National Cycle Network (NCN)

Norway is well known as a typical area for winter-sports activities. Therefore many tourist destinations have low-season for half the year, in summer. By preparing recreational cycle-routes, alongside by establishing offers like paddling, mountain-walking, sports-fishing etc, we take part in securing all year engagement for people, hotels, hut-rentals etc in our inland and mountain areas.

National Cycling Strategy - Making Cycling Safe and Attractive

Leisure and holiday cycling encourages everyday cycling

Leisure cycling comprises 2/3 of all bicycle journeys in Norway. Facilitating leisure time bicycle use is primarily a local responsibility, since this involves measures in residential or other neighbourhood areas. It involves cycling for fun and to run errands, bicycle trips in the countryside and cycling for sport.

A survey conducted in 2001,(repeated in 2005,) showed that more and more Norwegians wish to go on cycling holidays in their own country, and that cycling holidays are one of the leading forms of active holiday in Norway.

The Norwegian Public Roads Administration plays an active role in signposting bicycle routes. In its efforts to find routes, the administration is to ensure that traffic safety and road quality standards are met. At the same time, the emphasis is to be showing off attractive areas, natural beauty, cultural landscapes and other attractions.

The survey from 2005 tells first of all that the interest for bicycle use in Norway has increased a lot since the last survey in 2001. In addition it shows that:

- 68% tells they probably will take a one day bike trip near home
- 47% tells they probably will take a one day bike trip during holidays in Norway
- 34% tells they probably will take a bike tour with overnight stay in Norway
- 31% tells they probably will take a bike tour with overnight stay outside Norway
- 21 % tells they probably will go for mountain biking / downhill biking

Of those who have used their bikes on holidays in Norway, the duration of the trip was:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----|
| • 1-2 nights | 37% |
| • 3-4 nights | 19% |
| • 5-7 nights | 6% |
| • 1 – 2 weeks | 4% |
| • More than 2 weeks | 1% |
| • Don't remember | 33% |

The main reason for using bikes is exercise, but the respondents also tell that they use their bikes because it's relaxing and it's a perfect way to spend time with family and friends. And the pleasure by just being outdoor is a very good reason for bicycling.

Our conclusion then is obvious; there is a big potential for increased recreational bicycle use in Norway. The main interest is of course local daytrips, but weekend and longer cycle tours also are very popular. From the visitor's comments at www.bike-norway.com and www.northsea-cycle.com , we also see that foreign visitors have an eye on Norway. And they want to go for longer bike tours, even Norway from north to south, or about 3000 km. North

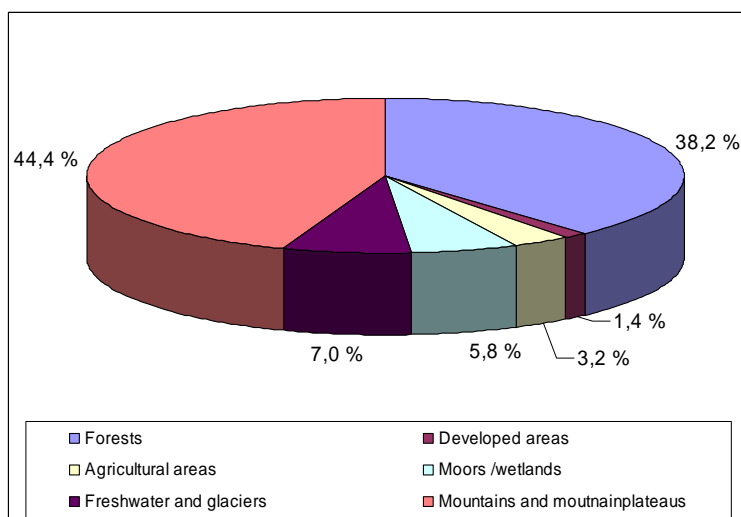
Cape. The plateau on the North Cape cliff – 307 m above the sea – is Europe's northernmost corner, at 71°10'21" latitude and 21°47'40" longitude. The impressive and dramatic cliff has long been a navigational marker for seamen. The somewhat modest peninsula "Knivskjellodden", which reaches one and a half kilometres further north (71°11'8") is surpassed, not just in height, but also when it comes to popularity.

National Cycle Network (NCN)

Many of the European countries have plans for a NCN, and of course we also have realized the need of it in our country as well. The Norwegian topography with a long coastline, valleys, rivers, woods and mountain areas is of great interest for those who love the nature, waterfalls, small white wooden houses, our countryside, the blue sky, high mountains and of course the midnight sun. You also come close to the wildlife, and especially seeing the moose is great. You also can smell, feel the temperatures, the wind, the rain and sun during biking Norway. You can stop and pick wild berries, you can stop and sit under a tree to relax, and you can drink the water from almost all the waters and rivers without any worries. You are free to take a bath in whatever little pond you pass by, and the water is clean and clear.

Just to inform a bit about Norway. After Iceland, Norway is the country with lowest population per sq. km. in Europe, with about 15 persons pr sq km. But also, about 80% of the population live in urban areas, where the density is close to 1600 persons pr sq km.

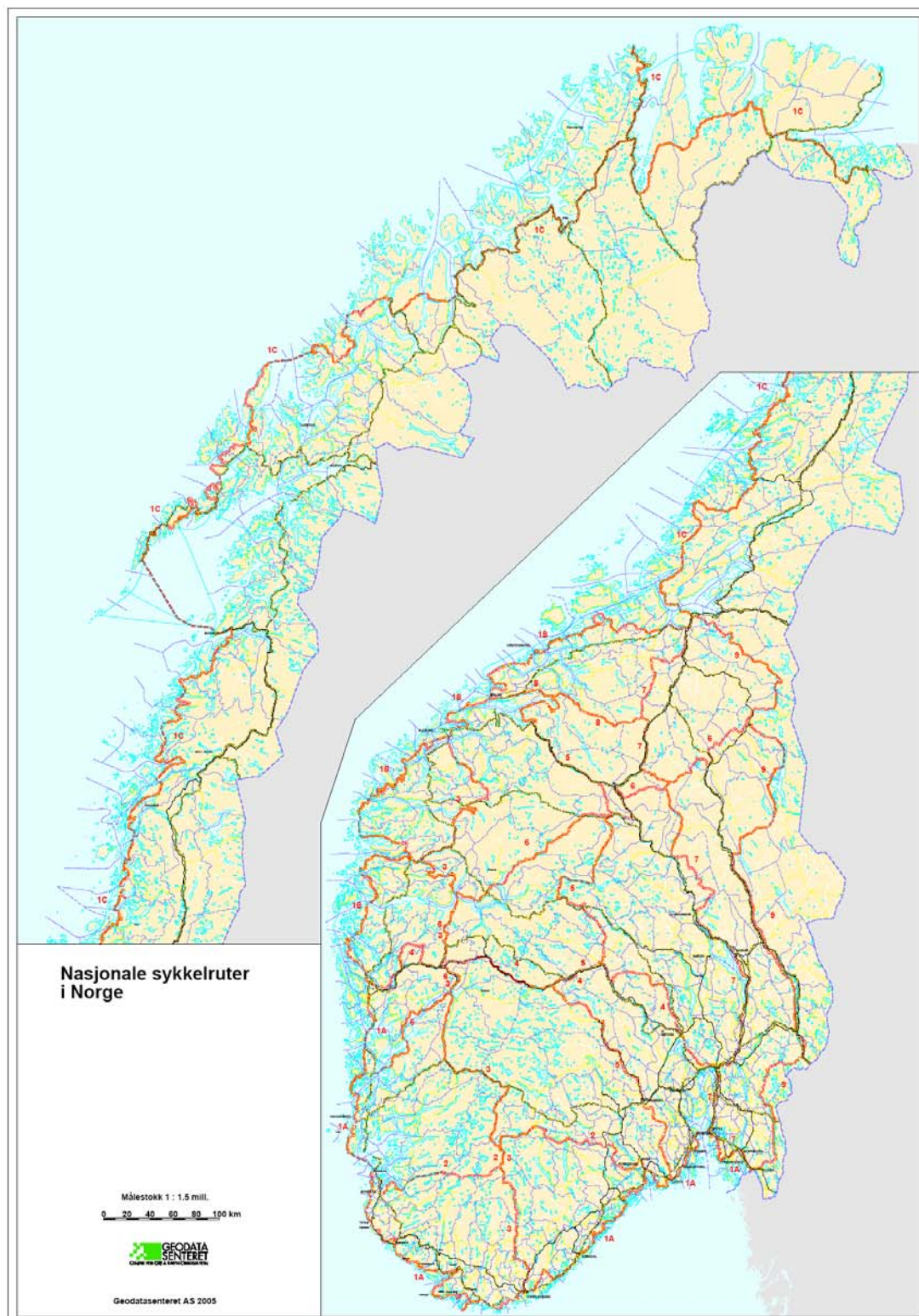
Only 5% of Norway is developed areas or agricultural areas, so there are rather good opportunities to discover some nature in these northern areas, and sometimes you will find yourself complete "alone".



Our road network is appr. 90 000 km, and about 45% of this is municipality roads. We do not have many alternative roads to the main roads in rural areas. That's the reason why we can't offer a car free national cycle network. Cyclists have to share the road with car traffic. But we work hard to find alternative roads, we reuse former car roads, local roads with lower car traffic speed, and we use "forest roads" with gravel surface for the NCN. But of course we have guidelines for what we can signpost as cycle routes, a combination of amount of car traffic, speed level, free sight, width of road shoulder etc. Most of our national cycle routes will have less than 1500 cars per day in the cycling season.

The Norwegian Cycling Strategy gives the NPRA the responsibility to secure that statements on road safety and access are satisfied when the line for the cycle routes are chosen. At the same time, it has to be secured that the cyclists will see attractive areas, beautiful nature, cultural landscapes and other attractions.

Based on the requirements for the cycle routes we now have made an overview map for the NCN, which are shown below:



The complete NCN is about 10 000 km, and the longest of them all is route 1 along the whole coastline, appr. 4 600 km. The NCN consists of 9 different routes, and covering the entire country. Many of the routes are crossing the Norwegian “highlands” (sorry Scotland), or as we say; *“they go over the mountain”*. The NCN also includes the beautiful landscapes, and

also the endless forests in south-east Norway, the spectacular fjords in west, the characteristic fishing villages, including Lofoten and of course the North Cape.

Euro Velo routes in Norway:

We see that North Cape also is a key point in the EuroVelo network. This is the only place in Europe including 3 EV-routes, the Atlantic coast route (no. 1), the Middle European route (no. 7) and finally the Eastern European route (no. 11). The Atlantic coast route from North Cape to Bergen is about 3 500 km, as a part of the EuroVelo route no. 1. In Bergen it meets the EuroVelo route no. 12, North Sea Cycle Route, which is 1100 km to the Swedish border. North Sea Cycle Route is signposted complete all around the North Sea, about 6 000 km.

In addition we have 780 km of the EuroVelo route 3, Pilgrims route Nidaros (Trondheim) – Santiago de Compostella in Spain.



The EuroVelo network is close to 5 900 km in Norway, and then close to 60% of the NCN also is EuroVelo network. To us, it's a pleasure that we are rather popular, having about 10% of the European International Cycle Network.

Another focus...

“Telemark Research” has done a job for us and through a report “Bike-tourism in frames of a cultural-economic perspective” in which they have given us advice about how to work with cycle-tourism in the future – and in addition to the NCN.

The report about Norwegians bike activities during holidays, tells us that a major part of them want, or usually spend, just a few days on bike. We suppose they combine cycling with other outdoor activities, very often in the same areas, where they probably stay for a week or longer. Norway is a perfect arena for several outdoor activities, and it is easy to go canoeing, bicycling, mountain waking, fishing or whatever you want at one destination.

The report “Bike-tourism in frames of a cultural-economic perspective” talks about focusing on the unique in Norway and the several different places we have. The tourists want to see, discover, get new knowledge about things, old craftsmanship, old farming, local geology, traditional food, folk music etc. Cycling is what you can do everywhere. At many of all our small places, there are a lot of local attractions, stories to tell, local traditional food to taste, activities to take part in etc, and the good thing is, you can reach as many of these attractions as you want by bike. In the last few years we have developed what we call;

Project "Cycling-friendly destinations"

The Institution for Cycle Tourism has a project in progress to develop cycling-friendly destinations in Norway. The work started in the autumn of 2003 and concluded in spring 2005.

The development of such a concept, with processes of quality control and other necessities to establish a cycling-friendly destination, will provide even better facilities for cyclists in Norway.

About the project:

The project's main aim is to prepare and test a concept for the development, organisation and promotion of the cycling facilities within a limited geographical area or destination. It should be possible to use the concept at all destinations wishing to develop their cycling facilities.

The concept shall give the cycle tourist the opportunity to use a destination as a base, and either make arranged cycling day trips in the area or generally use the bicycle as a means of transport.

The project had the following mandate:

"Develop and test a concept for cycling-friendly destinations".

In co-operation with the destinations Rauland, Smøla and Sandnes, that wish to deal in cycle tourism, the concept shall be prepared with regard to product development, adaptation, organisation and quality control of the destination, plus promotion. An important part of the concept development will be to prepare quality controls in order to be able to call a place a cycling-friendly destination.

Evaluation of the entire project took place following the summer season of 2004 and the first "cycling-friendly destinations" in Norway were ready for the summer season in 2005.

We are working so that you as a cycling tourist can be sure that a cycling-friendly area is a safe and good place to cycle!

The "Jungle phone" has been in function and the interest for the "Cycling-friendly destinations" project has exploded. Now there is a long list of places who want to be the next project..

Thank you for your attention – and – welcome to Norway!