



A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE IS A GREAT PLACE TO VISIT

**Sustainable growth strategy for tourism
in the Aarhus region from 2021**

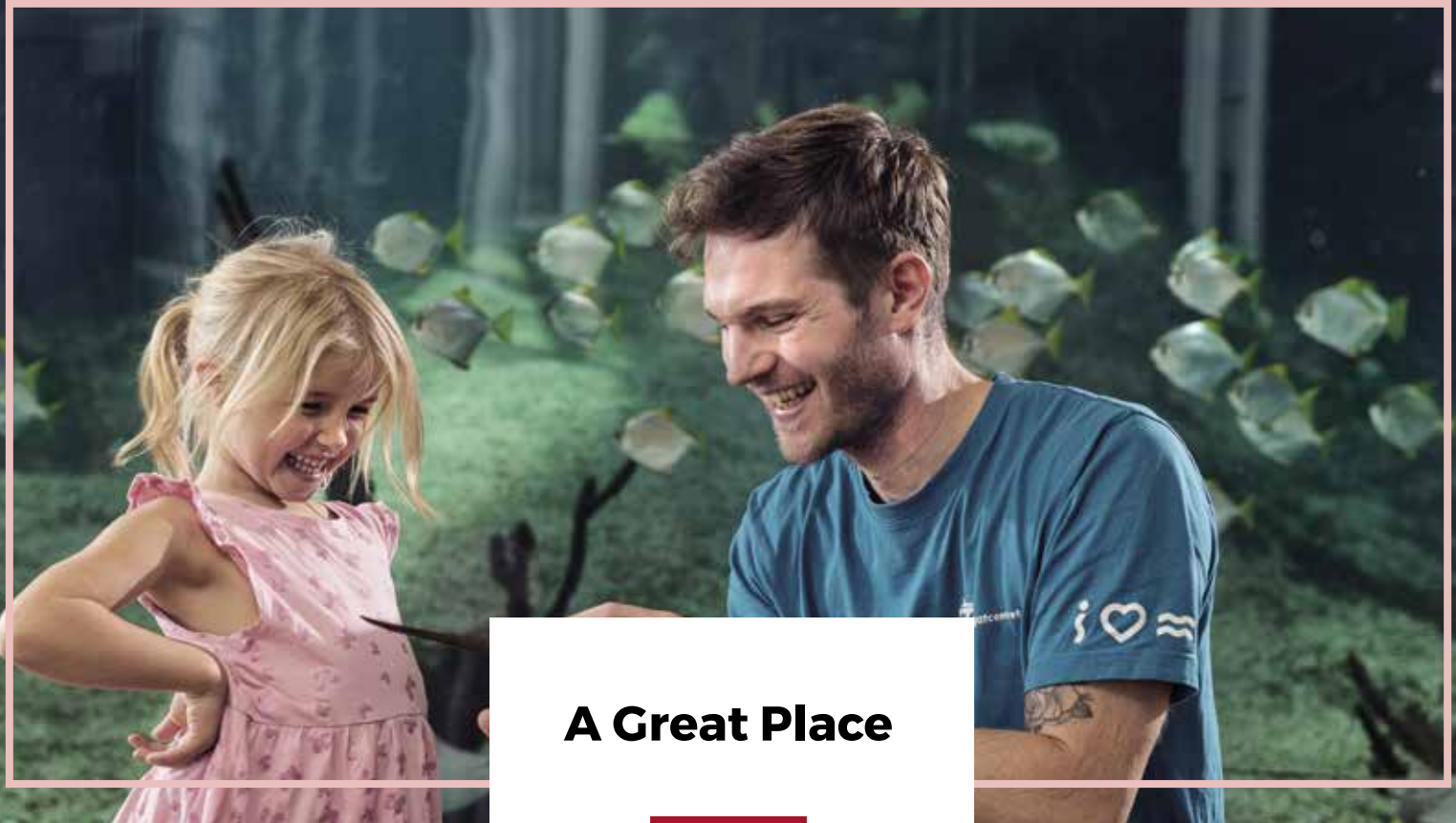

VisitAarhus



The dream of more and better tourism

In a time, where the world is turned upside down, we need more than ever to set the course for the future.

That is the reason why we launch this strategy for tourism in the Aarhus region now. We need to stand together and make targeted initiatives, which not only brings us faster through the crisis but also gives us a head start for the future after the crisis. The strategy is our plan for tourism in a world, where we travel again and where we bounce back.



A Great Place

A Great Place is more a rebuilding strategy than a crisis strategy. We are convinced that we need to restart the visitor economy and revisit our approach to development of tourism and destination at the other side of the pandemic. Tourism is on the way into a new era.

A Great Place is an ambition to improve tourism in balance with nature and culture and the approx. 824,000 citizens in the Aarhus region. A good place to stay, is a good place to visit and a strong visitor economy also makes the Aarhus region a better place to live.

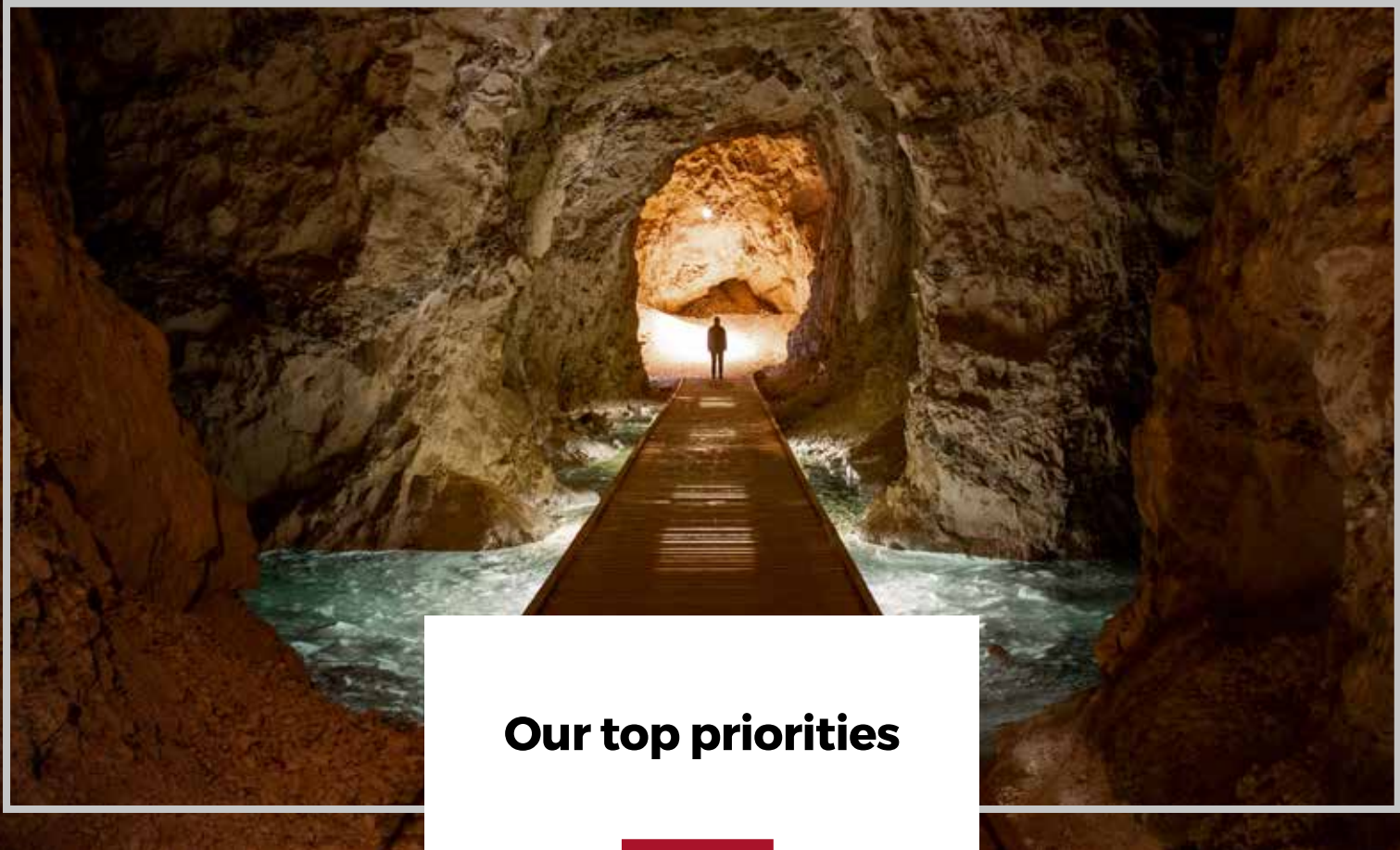
A Great Place focuses attention on the new rules and values ensuring the transformation of tourism in the Aarhus region into a new era. An era, where tourism takes a broader responsibility for the place and society in which it is a part.

The mission of VisitAarhus is to develop tourism and promote the Aarhus region as a sustainable destination for holiday and business tourism as well as contribute to creating value locally, regionally, and nationally.



Our approach is that tourism is not a goal, but a means to create results in several areas and to support quality of life and sense of coherence in sustainable urban and local communities. The sustainable approach to development of tourism is the beacon of this strategy and the foundation for the destination collaboration between the eight municipalities in the Aarhus region.





Our top priorities

Our top priorities – thing we **must succeed with:**

REBUILDING

We must rebuild tourism after the pandemic. As a destination management organisation we must contribute to re-establish what has been lost in the tourism and experience industry and we must help companies and business areas through the long-term structural changes resulting from the crisis.

LEADERSHIP BASED ON SUSTAINABILITY

We will prioritise our resources and competencies to ensure sustainable tourism and we will unfold the potential of the visitor economy to contribute to a sustainable urban life and nature experiences. We will take on leadership by sustainable development of tourism both financially, socially and environmentally.

LOCAL SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION

At its core, tourism is the meeting between people and the experience of culture and communities. The Aarhus region has strong communities and a strong tradition for participation and voluntariness. We must make use of this to exploit the full potential of tourism and we must ensure long-term public support for tourism.

A BROADER CONVERSATION ON TOURISM

You must earn the role of being a destination management organisation. As an organisation, we have a high visibility, and we are clear on our values, competencies, and value creation. With this strategy, we invite more than 400 tourism companies, eight municipalities and more than 2,100 volunteers to collaborate. We also reach out to those we do not know yet. With tourism as a means rather than a goal, tourism will be relevant for more and we assume a new role to strengthen, push and inspire the development across.

As a strategy, **A great place is a compass rather than a checklist. It guides all our activities and is a framework for our perceptions of the future. It is also the start of a new conversation with all interested in being a part of the development of tourism in the Aarhus region.**

As a destination management organisation we have the overall responsibility, but VisitAarhus cannot do this alone. The strategy is an invitation to tourist companies, businesses, organisations, and municipalities in the Aarhus region to contribute to and take responsibility for the development of our experience economy and the destination.

Tourism is an economic engine for the Aarhus region



VisitAarhus is the official tourist organisation in the Aarhus region, which is the name for a destination established on 1 January 2020, including eight municipalities in Aarhus, Syddjurs, Norddjurs, Randers, Favrskov, Viborg, Silkeborg and Skanderborg

There are approx. 824,000 citizens in the Aarhus region

Tourism as a business in the Aarhus region employs approx. 15,400 people, equivalent to 3.7% of the total employment in the eight municipalities. The total revenue in 2018 was DKK 11.6 billion, which makes the destination the largest outside Copenhagen in terms of tourism revenue

The Aarhus region had 3.85 million commercial overnight stays in 2020 at the 64 hotels, 19,500 holiday houses, 46 camping areas and 4 holiday centres. Additionally, approx. 2,500 units were rented through Airbnb and a broad selection of B&Bs, inns and motels

The Aarhus region is based on three areas: business tourism, city tourism as well as coast and nature tourism. The destination is a unique starting point for development of business synergies and potentials between city and coast and nature, respectively

70% of guests in the Aarhus region are Danes. Foreign guests come primarily from Germany, Norway, Sweden and Holland

A total of 4.8 million visits at 35 museums and tourist attractions took place in 2019. The three most visited museums in Denmark are situated in Aarhus and Djurs Sommerland and Tivoli Friheden are number 6 and 10, respectively of the most visited attractions in Denmark. One-day tourism accounts for 33% of the total tourist consumption in the Aarhus region

The Aarhus region is characterised by several international business strength positions in 1) energy, climate and environment, 2) IT & smart city, 3) medico and health, 4) food and 5) creative businesses; all represented by strong companies, massive investments and internationally acknowledged research and education. Aarhus University has a top 100 global ranking

Aarhus is Denmark's Second City, European Capital of Culture in 2017 and appointed as the world's second happiest city by the UN in 2020 and 2021. Aarhus has a very strong profile in gastronomy as well as cultural attractions, architecture, festivals, and events of international standard

The nature strength positions in the Aarhus region are 360 km coastline, Nationalpark Mols Bjerge, future national park at Fussingø, Himmelbjerget, Gudenåen, Hærvejen, Søhøjlandet, Naturpark Randers Fjord, unique landscapes from the Ice Age and large areas with heath and woods. The Aarhus region includes cosy and historical royal boroughs in Viborg, Silkeborg, Ebeltøft, Skanderborg, Grenaa and Randers.





Tourism is on its way into a new era


We do not think the pandemic will be over this year or in 2022. International tourism will grow again as it has done following previous crisis because international tourism is a part of the globalisation and is the foundation for our coexistence in the world community. However, things will hardly be as they were. First of all, tourism was in some way in crisis even before the pandemic. Secondly, new crises will surface after COVID-19, not least the accelerating climate crisis. Finally, we believe the pandemic will make a long-term footprint on travel patterns and

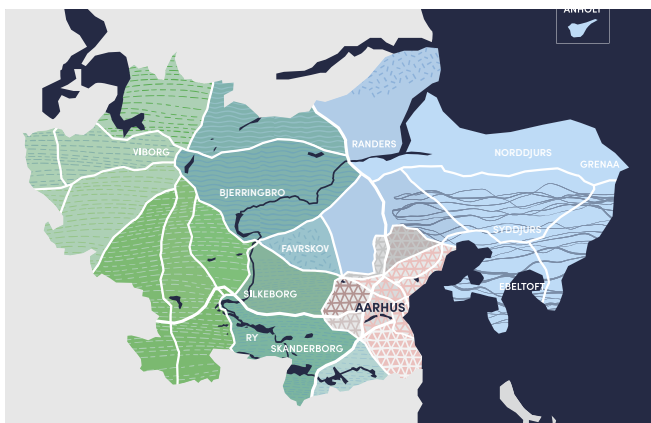
business structure in our urban spaces, settlements, trades and industry and local development.

Paying attention to the major changes in our surroundings, the task right now is to make a clever and fast transition of products and value offers. We do that with an intense focus on tendencies affecting tourism. Several trends have been intensified by the pandemic. A wide range of analyses and discussions among professionals point out that the following trends will impact of future tourism:

CHANGED CONSUMPTION AND TRAVEL PATTERNS

Although we expect people will travel again, we must prepare for changes in travel patterns. Reduced accessibility by plane means that the degree of internationalisation of the Aarhus region will decrease on the short term and more visitors will arrive by road or ship. It is also a global trend that the time frame for booking is very short because travel possibilities are highly uncertain. During the pandemic where travelling is in smaller groups and across segments, there will be focus on cancellation terms, hygiene, and safety. The business tourism is hit particularly hard by the pandemic and we must expect that business tourism will undergo permanent structural and behavioural changes, which e.g., makes it possible to spread new technologies for meetings and hybrid formats.

 **For VisitAarhus this means that we must be at the forefront of new demands in communication, product development and innovation. We must take initiatives and be in front concerning “safe travel” and innovation in new hybrid formats for meetings and conferences as well as the culture and experience industry.**



DEGLOBALISING

As a reaction to the pandemic, we expect a movement towards deglobalisation on the short term, affecting global value chains and causing negative growth. In tourism this will mean that the mobility of markets and the competitive situation will be far more local.

For VisitAarhus this means that the experiences offered in the Aarhus region will more often compete with other Danish, Swedish and Norwegian destinations. We must therefore join forces in campaigns focused on the markets close by with a high awareness of our destination. Our new marketing strategy will also be more independent and local.

DIGITISATION

The pandemic means that the digital transformation, which has already started, is accelerated. In tourism, the potential is considerable in all parts of the value chain, but digitisation also challenges existing business models e.g., in the market for meetings. Digitisation also changes retailing and culture, as online shopping and online entertainment have taken a giant leap forward during the pandemic. Especially online shopping and working from home may have serious consequences for our retail shops, pedestrian streets, and city arcades and eventually for the attraction of urban spaces.

For VisitAarhus this means that we together with the municipalities and stakeholders from the business and culture sectors must take initiatives in projects and activities which can support the transition and innovation of companies to maintain and strengthen life around and attraction of urban environments.

SITUATIONAL AND INTEREST-GUIDED CONSUMPTION

In digital marketing and market distribution it is no longer relevant to talk about or to the nationality and demographic characteristics of the consumer. Markets are not target groups – people are. The target groups in the Aarhus region are people in interest-guided communities. We travel and experience as anglers, mountain bikers, couples in love, new family members, football fans, concertgoers and much more. Most often the main motive is to travel, the desire to meet other people and take part in meaningful communities. There is thus a movement from the professional meeting between host and guest towards creating a framework for guests and local citizens sharing and cocreating experiences.

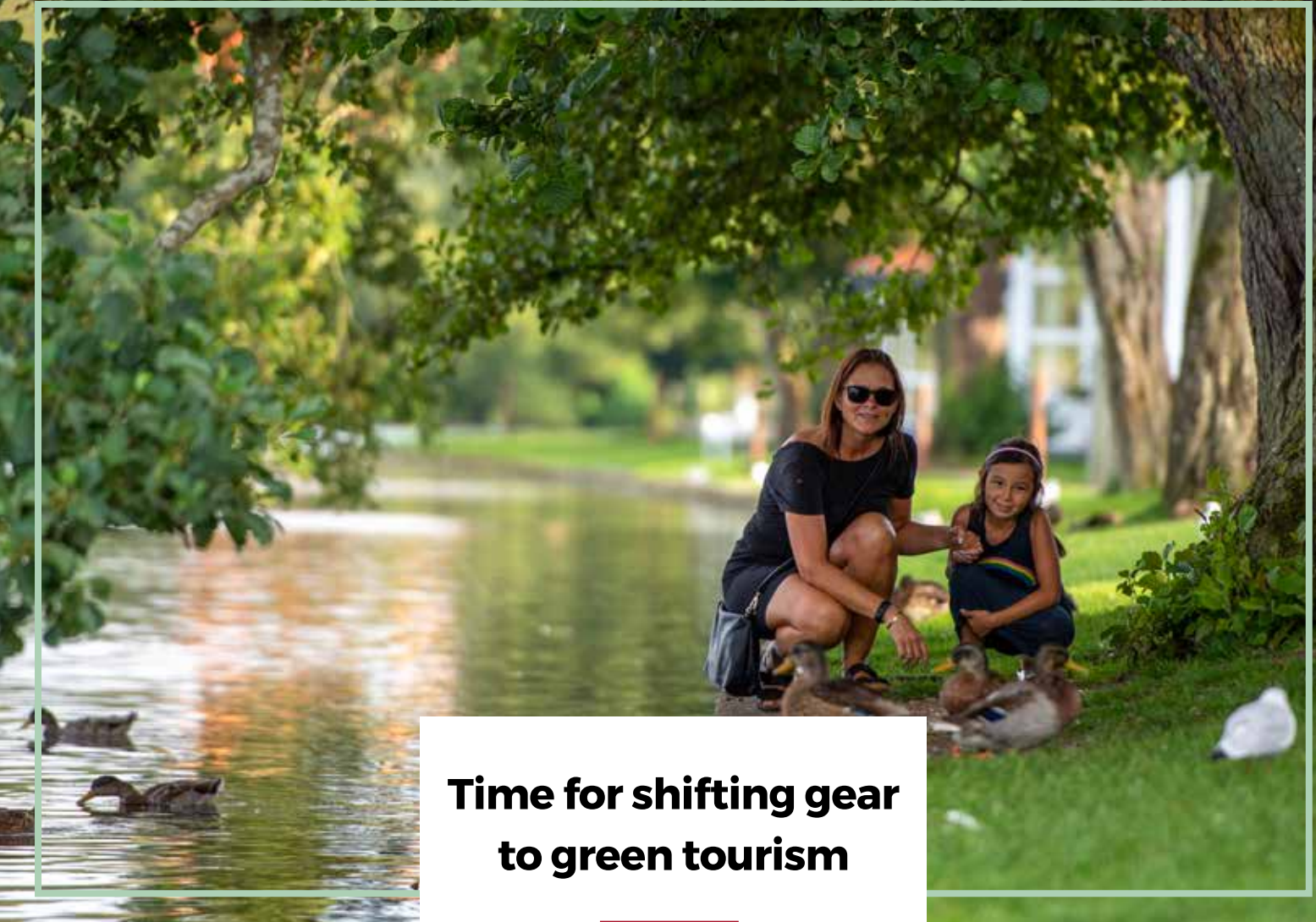
For VisitAarhus this means that our marketing must go beyond geographical market segments and generic campaign messages. To a larger extent, we must adapt our market communication to communities of interest and specific occasions. Moreover, we must strengthen product development of community-based experiences when we develop new attractions, in our guest service concepts and in projects with tourist companies.

A photograph of two young boys ziplining through a lush green forest. They are both smiling and looking back towards the camera. The boy in the foreground is wearing a dark blue jacket and light-colored pants, while the boy behind him is wearing a blue jacket and light-colored pants. They are suspended from a blue rope. The background is filled with dense green foliage and trees.

In addition to the trends in tourism described here, we are in the era of sustainability, which is very important for our future as a destination and a destination management organisation. For VisitAarhus it is natural that all stakeholders in tourism assume a co-responsibility for climate changes and other sustainable challenges. In the light of this, we think it is time to shift gear in tourism.

A photograph of a woman relaxing in a bathtub outdoors at night. She is sitting in a large, dark-colored bathtub filled with white foam, holding a glass of red wine. The bathtub is placed on a wooden platform. In the background, there is a large white tent with warm lights inside, and a tree decorated with string lights. A fire pit with a fire is visible on the left side of the image.

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Time for shifting gear to green tourism

On a long-term basis we expect tourism to grow internationally. More people will travel more and as a business we must relate to this and be responsible for growth in tourism being sustainable and in compliance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as tourism taking on the responsibility for the financial, social and environmental consequences and meeting the needs of guests, business life, environment and society. Denmark has made ambitious goals for a green future and the same goes for several municipalities and leading companies in the Aarhus region. It is thus natural to take the work with green transition to the very core of the strategy. Our starting point is that our destination must contribute to create value and results both socially, environmentally and financially. The three dimensions – the triple bottom line – is the foundation for **A great place**.

The work with sustainability and growth includes difficult choices, but it also holds a huge potential, which is basically about finding the balance between

on the one side the positive effects of tourism on growth, and on the other side employment and environmental and social considerations as well as prioritisations. It is also about offering attractive experiences to the conscious and attentive consumer of tomorrow. International analyses show that the market for sustainable travels and experiences, meetings and events is big and growing.

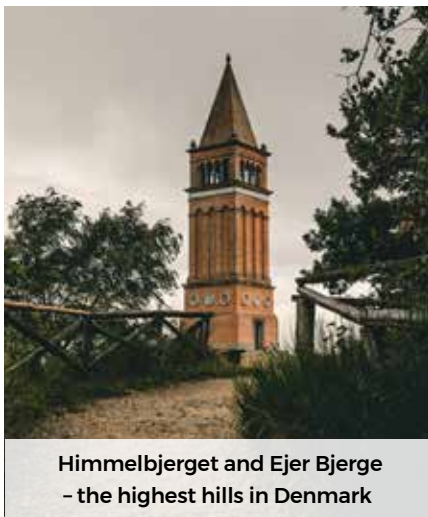
Using the pandemic as a starting point, we have a great opportunity to push the green transition. The work to rebuild tourism starts an important and necessary conversation on what and how to rebuild. VisitAarhus is committed to base this rebuilding process on a 'Build Back Better' mindset to come out stronger and more sustainable on the other side.

Tourism can and must contribute broader to the sustainable development of society beyond the classic goals for economic growth in terms of overnight stays and revenues. We will work with climate-related, social, and economic sustainability as a prerequisite for a balanced growth in tourism instead of just talking about higher growth.

For VisitAarhus this means shifting gear to become more sustainable and to prioritise our resources for marketing and development based on sustainable possibilities for experiences. As an organisation the change to sustainable tourism development means that we develop and expand our competencies to develop attractions, take initiatives and be more visible in new binding partnerships.



As a tourist destination – a place to experience and consume in a short time – the Aarhus region has very much to offer. We have a compact geography and strong offers within nature, culture and experiences. We are well prepared for the type of demand expected to grow after the pandemic.



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Tourism is not a goal but a means to create results on several parameters: as a basis for employment, settlements, physical development, infrastructure, attraction of talents, quality of life and investments.

Tourism takes place in our local community every single day – at the museum around the corner, in your summer house, in our culture house, at the local restaurant at the harbour outside your workplace. Tourism affects our everyday life and contributes positively to a strong and varied local life with cultural offers, shops, restaurants and grocery shops. It is decisive that tourism takes place in a dialogue and is balanced in relation to the local community if citizens should continue to support tourism.

Especially for Aarhus as a city, international visibility, attraction, and accessibility are decisive for an international university and business life. The hosting of international events, congresses and conferences as well as marketing and publicity put the Aarhus region on the map and attract investments, air routes and talents. This is not alone valuable for the tourist industry but also for the small and large companies in the region within technology, food, water and design. And ultimately, for the future prosperity of the Aarhus region.

For VisitAarhus this means that we must support the internationalisation of the Aarhus region when attracting international events, congresses, air routes and talents (e.g., knowledge employees, researchers, educators and students). The local perspective on tourism means that we as a destination management organisation must be in close dialogue with local stakeholders to create ownership and commitment in the development of tourism.





This is how we will create value with tourism

Tourism in the Aarhus region must contribute to create growth and results both financially, socially and environmentally. We will strengthen and develop tourism through three tracks:

- 1. Balanced growth**
- 2. Local pride and community**
- 3. Greener tourism**

We must balance the development of a healthy and strong tourism industry, attractive living conditions for the local citizens and considerations to the climate and environments. It is a basic principle that the three tracks are mutually dependent.

We will use our commitment and resources in areas of vital importance to succeed with an ambitious and balanced development of tourism in the Aarhus region. We will focus on efforts where we in VisitAarhus can use our own resources and in collaboration with our partners contribute significantly to achieve the specific goals.



1.

Balanced growth

The continued growth in tourism in the Aarhus region holds a great potential for the local economy and employment. The ambition is to strengthen and secure the tourism industry as the foundation for a balanced economic development in the region. This development can only succeed with our new destination geography and the strong and committed collaboration between all relevant stakeholders.

In the short run, VisitAarhus and our collaborators will rebuild the tourism and experience economy in the Aarhus region. It is our top priority to rebuild tourism. The efforts must prepare the tourism business to recapture markets, create visibility and accessibility in pace with the reopening of society and build a long-term sustainable business:

- ▶ **Tourism must get back on the growth track with ambitious goals for attracting meetings and conferences as well as a higher number of overnight stays and tourism revenue.**

Together with businesses and public sector partners, we will focus our marketing and communication efforts to attract meeting and conferences. In the rebuilding phase, we will focus primarily on the Danish market and inspire local citizens to experience their own destination. Regarding meetings and conferences, VisitAarhus will contribute to give the Aarhus region a leading position in new meeting formats and to gain new market shares.

- ▶ **International guests will visit the Aarhus region again.** We will have a specific focus on recapturing international guests by prioritising international communication tracks reflecting the strength positions in the region, the new demands, and the new needs among travellers. VisitAarhus will continue to attract new business from cruise tourism. We will prioritise ships which can be connected to the future land-based power system at the harbour and put sustainable development high on the agenda in relevant cruise networks.

► **Tourist businesses must be strengthened in a time of crisis through innovation, business development and new partnerships.** For many tourist businesses, the focus during the crisis has been survival. VisitAarhus will ensure there is room and possibility for innovation and business development, which will secure businesses in the future. We will launch several targeted projects with specific focus on the businesses and ensure further financing from national funds for rebuilding activities within prioritised core products and business areas.

► **The accessibility to the Aarhus region must be restored.** In the short run, accessibility to the Aarhus region must be restored and strengthened in a long-term perspective. VisitAarhus will work strategically in partnerships with airports, harbours, airlines, transport companies and others to strengthen the overall accessibility to the destination. Access to the entire Aarhus region by plane, car, ferry or train must be ensured, meeting the demand across target groups, local citizens and the broader industrial development.

In the longer run, VisitAarhus will focus on creating a balanced, continued sustainable development in the tourism and experience industry to the benefit of the entire Aarhus region:

► **Guests must spend more money.** In collaboration with the many stakeholders in tourism, we will take responsibility for the overall 'customer experience' and contribute with tools, knowledge and innovation to optimise the positive impact of the guest on the destination – including the financial impact. We will strive to increase the consumption of each guest and focus particularly on the consumption supporting and strengthening what makes the Aarhus region an attractive place to live. We will work for a strengthening of guest loyalty and recommendations and in this way ensure value beyond the single visit. Our efforts in this area will be data-based to target offers, products and services to the guests. Data will also provide the basis for cross-selling and additional sales efforts across platforms and business areas.

► **Tourism must be strengthened in the entire Aarhus region and attract as well as yield interest on investments in a broader business development perspective.** In VisitAarhus we are convinced that tourism can create more value for business clusters and knowledge environments in the Aarhus region. In a broader group of partners, we will strengthen business development and attract talents. This perspective will be an integral part of our efforts to attract meetings and conferences

► **The capacity must be increased, developed and used better.** The overnight stay capacity in the Aarhus region is very varied. To increase and further develop this, we must optimise exploitation of potentials across target groups, business areas and seasons. We must optimise use of the capacity from an all-year tourism perspective. Sustainability must be prioritised when attracting investments in new capacity and upgrading of the existing capacity. Together with relevant municipalities, VisitAarhus will launch physical-strategic development plans for the Aarhus region and create a foundation for investments in sustainable capacity solutions.

We will work to obtain the following goals:

- ▶ **Growth in number of overnight stays.** By the end of 2023 at the latest, the number of overnight stays in the Aarhus region will be back at 2019 level and subsequently increase by 4% annually
- ▶ **Growth in tourism revenues.** The tourism-related revenue will increase from DKK 11.6 billion in 2018 to DKK 13 billion in 2025
- ▶ **Growth in tourism employment.** By the end of 2023 at the latest, the number of tourism-created full-time equivalents will be back at 2019 level and subsequently increase by at least 5% annually. This is equivalent to an increase of at least 1,600 jobs in tourism in 2025
- ▶ **More visitor ready guests.** The number of visitor ready guests where VisitAarhus has influenced their travel decision, must increase by 5% annually measured at VisitAarhus' own platforms
- ▶ **Increased overnight stay capacity.** The commercial overnight stay capacity in 2025 will be increased by 1,000 new holiday house units, 300 hotel rooms and three new international hotel brands. We will monitor the number of sustainable units.

In continuation of A great place, VisitAarhus will initiate more specific initiatives to achieve a **balanced growth in tourism.**





2. Local pride and community

The Aarhus region IS a great place to live and visit. In 2020 and 2021, Aarhus has been appointed the second most happy city by the UN. The active co-ownership, co-decision and commitment of the local citizens are decisive for the attractiveness of a destination. Tourism frames and supports stories about places and contributes to creating identity among both local citizens and guests. We believe that tourism has a great potential for contributing to local pride, which rubs off on visitors.

By focusing on happy and proud citizens and on creating attractive places, we have a good starting point for a strengthening of tourism and tourist businesses. If guests are welcomed by proud and committed people – both local citizens and professionals – they will be more satisfied with their visit. VisitAarhus must make it visible and support the positive contribution of tourism to our local life, which is much more than increased growth and consumption.

In the short run, focus is on creating positive meetings between guests and local citizens in the Aarhus region and on inviting visitors into the community tourism also creates. It is our top priority to ensure local support and participation:

► **More conversations about tourism.** Extended local co-ownership and commitment in tourism must be ensured. To achieve this, we must invite to further and continuous conversations about the role, potential and value creation of tourism. The goal is not only to gain support for tourism, but to create active co-ownership and commitment in tourism. We created the proper dialogue-based formats for these conversations, and we will develop and adapt our brand and communication to represent and support our local DNA and the citizens in the local community

► **Voluntariness and active local involvement.** Co-ownership is also a consequence of active involvement. There should be more ways to be actively involved in e.g., local activities and events. Today, our voluntary programme is at international best practice level and the 2,100 committed volunteers is a major driving force. This programme must be supported and further developed to strengthen the future local ownership and commitment as well as strengthen voluntariness as a value in our local community

► **Feeling welcome in the community.** We wish to be a destination offering people to join the community. Many channels and digital communities today have no geographical borders. We wish to focus more marketing and service efforts on interest and value communities, reflecting and supporting our destination. We identify and activate relevant local and international communities and facilitate

meetings between people with mutual interests – guests and local citizens – in our marketing and product development. We adapt and further develop our guest services from professional hosting to community and co-creation.

In the long run, focus is on creating a broader collaboration on developing attractive places and local communities as well as increasing guest satisfaction:

► **Sustainable places.** The attractiveness and authenticity of places must be a lever for improved and sustainable tourism. We support development of authentic places and urban spaces such as cultural offers, accessibility to recreational areas, events etc. benefitting both local citizens and guests. The municipalities have the main responsibility, but VisitAarhus will seek opportunities and partnerships to activate the potential of tourism and its integrated role in the development of places and urban spaces to create and strengthen the sustainable attraction of these in relation to everyday life and experiences

► **Guest satisfaction must be increased.** Guest satisfaction when visiting the Aarhus region is an indicator that we have succeeded in including guests in our communities, initiating meetings between local citizens and guests as well as developing attractive places. We will focus on monitoring guest satisfaction and gather as much feedback from our guests as possible through relevant channels and data sources.

We will work to obtain the following goals:

► **More volunteers and highly committed local citizens.** The number of volunteers must increase from 2,100 in 2020 to 2,500 in 2025 and reflect a broader diversity and a larger geographical spread

► **More backing from citizens.** Before the end of 2021, indicators and target figures will be defined for local backing at the destination, which will be incorporated in the strategy

► **More satisfied guests.** The number of guests who are "very satisfied" with their stay in the Aarhus region must increase from 64% to at least 74% by the end of 2025.

In continuation of A great place, VisitAarhus will initiate more specific initiatives to achieve **local pride and community.**



3. Greener tourism

Tourism stakeholders in the Aarhus region must take a joint responsibility for strengthening of the positive contribution of tourism to a sustainable future and to reducing the negative climate footprint. VisitAarhus will work towards more sustainable tourism by strengthening and motivating tourist businesses and guests to make green choices.

It is a top priority that we as a destination management organisation take on a leading role in promoting green transition in tourism. We do this in close collaboration with tourist businesses and municipalities in the Aarhus region and by taking part in relevant national and international networks and collaborations.

In the short run, we focus on establishing the right partnerships and dialogues and on strengthening and adapting our own communication:

► **The green transition must be strengthened in binding partnerships.** The tourism business lacks experience and consensus on the use of models, tools, and indicators for the green transition. Thus, it is of key importance that we as a destination management organisation seeks dialogue and collaboration with local, national and international partners to strengthen knowledge and innovation

as well as making ambitious goals for the green transition. We will enter binding partnerships with selected key stakeholders such as Tourism Declares and the Future of Tourism coalition and engage ourselves in setting up goals and monitoring both nationally and internationally

► **The green choice must be easy and accessible for guests.** The profiling of the Aarhus region as a sustainable destination must be strengthened by branding, communication and storytelling. We do that to increase visibility and motivation among guests to use the sustainable offers and to create incentives among tourist businesses to perform a green transition of their products and services. Moreover, we will support tourism businesses by visualising and communicating their own sustainable efforts

► **Sustainable growth from local markets.**

We prioritise that the growth in number of guests should to the widest extent possible come from Denmark and our local markets (Germany, Norway, Sweden and Holland). We believe the market potential will be highest in these countries and it makes good sense in a climate perspective. This means that we will prioritise local markets instead of other markets in our international marketing efforts

In the long run, we focus on strengthening innovation and product development in the green area and on developing better tools to measure progression:

► **Improved foundation for innovation and product development.** The experience of the Aarhus region as a sustainable destination must be strengthened by promoting the work of tourist stakeholders with green innovation and business development across business areas and themes – from cruises to meeting and business tourism, culture tourism, outdoor and gastronomy. As a destination management organisation we must motivate collaborators to use new innovative solutions to e.g., support less use of polluting products, services and technologies

► **Better ways to measure and ensure a real change is happening.** You get what you measure and specific goals and transparent measurement methods is a good way to be committed to continuous progression. We will work with focus on certification of the destination and support businesses in the green transition of their business, e.g., by recommending selected certifications. We will also contribute actively to the development of national indicators for sustainable tourism.

We will work to obtain the following goals:

► **Top-ranking on international list of sustainable destinations.** By the end of 2023, the Aarhus region will be among the top 10 sustainable destinations in the world according to the Global Destination Sustainability index compared with number 13 in 2019

► **More eco-labelled hotels.** By the end of 2023, at least 70% of the hotel rooms at the destination must be eco-labelled: by the end of 2025, the number will be at least 90%

► **Certification of holiday houses, camping areas and attractions.** By the end of 2023, a certification process must be initiated of both attractions, holiday houses and camping areas

► **Internationally certified destination.** Certification of VisitAarhus as a Green Tourism Organization (GTO) must be maintained and expanded to include the entire destination geography.

In continuation of A great place, VisitAarhus will initiate more specific initiatives to achieve **greener tourism**.



VisitAarhus is the destination management organisation of the future

As a destination management organisation we assume leadership and responsibility for the development of tourism in the entire Aarhus region. VisitAarhus does not own hotels, attractions or airplanes, which means that we strengthen and develop tourism in a co-creation process. VisitAarhus assumes responsibility for facilitating, stimulating and moderating the development of tourism in the Aarhus region by building a position as a go-to place for collaboration and investments from partners who wish to contribute to developing tourism at the destination.

As a new joint destination management organisation, we are with **A great place** facing a number of opportunities and challenges in the rebuilding and transition of tourism in the Aarhus region, and we are working intensely on preparing the organisation to manage this task. VisitAarhus has been reorganised with several new specialisations to optimise use of competencies and synergies across business areas and geography. At the same time, we work on a strong connection to the local communities and the

many tourist businesses in all the eight municipalities. We are busy building a project organisation to be better at attracting financing of projects and initiatives to benefit the tourism businesses in the Aarhus region.

The core resource in VisitAarhus is our staff and our ability to act as a relevant centre for development of tourism. VisitAarhus must also be **A great place** to work, and we prioritise job satisfaction and development of our staff to be able to attract and retain the most skilled and competent staff. As a destination management organisation, we must be able to contribute with professional, value-creating, innovative and agile solutions to the development of tourism at our destination. This means that we in VisitAarhus must have specialist competencies and our approach is based on knowledge and evidence when working with innovation, business development, communication, marketing, fundraising as well as when we meet guests and citizens, including the coordination of volunteers.



Invitation to collaboration

A great place is our plan for delivering our ambition for more and better tourism in the Aarhus region. The world changes rapidly, our collaboration is new and VisitAarhus has grown to take on this new task. We have never had a better starting point for taking tourism at our destination to the next level, but challenges are considerable, and all involved need to be ready to adapt to changes. We emphasise that the strategy is an agile document, and we work with tracks rather than checklist. In this way we can adapt activities and goals to the knowledge and experiences we acquire as an organisation.

We will implement this strategy in annual action plans. In 2021, we use all efforts to restart tourism – attracting guests back to the Aarhus region and rebuild the value chains. The Action Plan 2021 is our joint tool to achieve this.

This strategy has been made in a collaboration with businesses, municipalities and committed people in the Aarhus region. We thank you for your input and commitment and consider you as our partners in the realisation of our ambitions and goals. We have a huge amount of work in front of us; we will do this work together!

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