

# QUARTERLY INTERIM NARRATIVE REPORT

## 1. Description

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- 1.1. Name of beneficiary of grant contract: **Háskólafélag Suðurlands – University Centre of South Iceland (UCSI)**
- 1.2. Name and title of the Contact person: **Sigurður Sigursveinsson, director of UCSI**
- 1.3. Name of partners in the Action: **No formal partners**
- 1.4. Title of the Action: **Katla Geopark: Regional development for the Eyjafjallajökull area**
- 1.5. Contract number: **CRIS 2012/293-200**
- 1.6. Start date and end date of the reporting period: **26.3.2013 - 26.06.2013**
- 1.7. Target country(ies) or region(s): **Iceland, Eyjafjallajökull area which includes the municipalities of Rangárþing eystra, Mýrdalshreppur og Skaftárhreppur.**
- 1.8. Final beneficiaries &/or target groups<sup>1</sup> (if different) (including numbers of women and men): **The three municipalities in Katla Geopark and their population**
- 1.9. Country(ies) in which the activities take place (if different from 1.7):

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<sup>1</sup> “Target groups” are the groups/entities who will be directly positively affected by the project at the Project Purpose level, and “final beneficiaries” are those who will benefit from the project in the long term at the level of the society or sector at large.

## 2. Assessment of implementation of Action activities

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### 2.1. Executive summary of the Action

This report is written by Steingerður Hreinsdóttir.

Steingerður is located in the UCSI office in Selfoss with access to offices in Hvolsvöllur, Vík and Kirkjubæjarklaustur while implementing projects and working on local issues as well as for offering support both to stakeholders and innovators.

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USCI and Katla Geopark have regular meetings with tourist officers in the area to coordinate operations and follow the goals of the IPA contract.

The weather has not been totally to our benefits so much of the geosites working on building up picnic areas and making geosites more accessible have been slower in process. Work with landowners and building and planning committee is finished for the areas although some building permits are still in the process of advertisement for local annotations.

Work has started on all 15 sites and the other 10 scheduled for year 2 are in the process of being selected, planned and designed.

### 2.2. Activities and results

Activity 1:

Organising seminars for local service providers and farmers; support to the local entrepreneurship and providing business support

The second education expert started on the first of June. She has therefore only just started the planning for the third and the last seminar, planned to run from September 2013 until April 2014. That seminar is called Leadership, innovation and local guiding and will be taught in three separate sections. The first section on local guiding will start in September and will be finished before December.

The curriculum for the full 250 hours seminar with timing and teachers will be ready in August.

The seminar local food production that was taught in March was a great success and interest in local products seems to have gone up considerable since then. There are growing amount of restaurants and local producers that are now using the local product logo as part of their menu and on their production.



## Activity 2: Upgrading the infrastructure and facilities for 25 selected geo-sites

As of last report 15 geo-sites had been selected, designed and prepared for construction. The planning process was long and ownership issues were at times rather complicated. However, since the end of March when 15 sites are ready for construction, finance had been secured, landowners are in agreement and the weather seemed to be getting good for groundwork, one site is completed with three information signs including hiking map, picnic area, two picnic tables, car park and marked hiking route. The national road authorities are still to mark the area from road 1 to indicate it as a geosite, but that is a work in process.



Hjörleifshöfði Geosite: two picnic tables on a 35 m2 area, build up stonewall, three information panels on the nature geology and history of the place as well as marked hiking route and a 70 m2 parking space.

These are pictures from the panels and the area.



**KATLA GEOPARK**

# Hjörleifshöfði 6

**Jarfræði og náttúra**

Hjörleifshöfði er 221 metra hæðingurinn milli rás og egi í hál, samantega á mjógrum Myrkvættum. Höfðinn er í raun einn egi og á stórum svæðum var hann öftrin landnáttúru og þá gættu. Höfðinn er í raun einn egi og á stórum svæðum var hann öftrin landnáttúru og þá gættu. Höfðinn er í raun einn egi og á stórum svæðum var hann öftrin landnáttúru og þá gættu.

**Geology and Nature**

Hjörleifshöfði is a 221 metre high flat promontory that rises like an island in the sea, towards the south of the sand flat of Myrkvættum. The promontory was actually once an island, but during the period of settlement it became attached to the mainland when a land, called Landveggröfður, cut across it. Today it is surrounded by sand and stands approximately two kilometres away from the sea. Several evidence from the Katla caused these alterations - the volcano and accordingly the same flat south of Hjörleifshöfði is called Kvitárgata (Kvitárgata peninsula). During the eruption of Katla in 1918, an iron deposit occurred but the beach moved forward about two kilometres on the first day of the eruption. Kvitárgata then became towards a submergence point of sand, however, the sea has ended on a level of 100m (Dyngjubey) located just beyond the submergence point. The promontory has probably been formed during the later part of the last ice age during a subglacial erosion. The magma made the ground dense when rapidly over the magma. Volcanic sands around the site around the volcanic orifice and the sea. If the eruption stops before the volcanic sands reached the flat of the glacier, there will be a volcanic ridge in a triangle, like at the Fingurhlíð mountains, but a flat ridge on a volcanic orifice. If the volcanic sands, however, manage to break up in the glacier, they come to the site and form a ridge, which often can be most regular mountains like Hjörleifshöfði, Pálmeyri and Hólabakkur.

**Géologie et nature**

Hjörleifshöfði est un mont de pagangeir de 221 mètres de haut qui émerge comme une île au milieu du plateau, dans sa partie sud des cotes de Myrkvættum. Ce mont fut d'abord une île et fut rattaché à la terre à l'époque de la colonisation, il était déjà une île à terre et émergeait même un pont, Landveggröfður. Aujourd'hui il se trouve à deux kilomètres de la terre, entouré d'un large plateau de sable. Plusieurs preuves de la cause de ces changements sont visibles dans les rochers, les cratères et les dépôts de sable qui ont été déposés au sud de Hjörleifshöfði. Pendant l'éruption de Katla en 1918, le dépôt d'acier de fer a été découvert, mais la plage s'est déplacée d'environ deux kilomètres le premier jour de l'éruption. Kvitárgata est devenue un point de submergence de sable, cependant, la mer s'est terminée sur un niveau de 100m (Dyngjubey) qui est la partie la plus méridionale de l'île. La formation de Hjörleifshöfði résulte probablement d'une érosion sous-glaciaire, au cours de laquelle le magma a rendu le sol dense. Les sables volcaniques autour de l'orifice et de la mer. Si l'éruption s'arrête avant que les sables volcaniques n'aient atteint le plateau de glace, il y aura une crête de pagangeir, comme à Fingurhlíð, ou un autre de pagangeir autour de l'orifice nord de l'orifice, comme à Kvitárgata. Si les sables volcaniques, cependant, parviennent à briser la glace, ils viennent à la surface et forment une crête, qui est souvent régulière comme les montagnes de Hjörleifshöfði, Pálmeyri et Hólabakkur.

**Velkomin í Kötlum jarðvang** **Welcome to Katla Geopark**



We have continued to work very closely with local authorities, the planning and permission department of the area as well as working with landowners, business owners and other stakeholders.

Although the whole process takes longer than anticipated my estimation is that we are only about two months shy.

### **Activity 3:**

#### **Producing educational and promotional material based on needs analysis**

Our second educational expert started work on the 1. June 2013. She is located in Kirkjubæjarklaustur for the summer at least. She has only been in the job for 3 weeks but is working closely with Rannveig on creating educational and promotional material for information panels and for the website. The information panels will be the priority for the next couple of months or until the fifteen geosites are ready.

Moreover information text for three hiking maps is ready as well as the maps themselves and will be printed in the next two weeks.

August will be dedicated to making educational material for the seminar; leadership, innovation and local guiding, followed by booklets for tourists and students.

The website is becoming very good and efficient. There were technical problems within the design and the representation of the information, but the problem seems to be solved now. As a part of the overall strategy and management plan we are exploring option of a new booking system that can be linked to all the tourist service providers in the area.

### **Activity 4:**

#### **Developing a marketing strategy, marketing plan and management plan**

A work is in process with Promote Iceland. Currently an internal analysis is being made by the so called GrowthWeel 360°screening process. The idea is to make a detailed map of the area by:

1. Diagnosing problems
2. Mapping opportunities
3. Evaluation competencies

In order to do so we are:

- a. Working with three municipalities trying to make the overall heading simpler.
- b. Creating an umbrella for tourism and information centres in the whole of the geopark – i.e to take the responsibility from the municipalities and develop a sustainable system for information and marketing Geotourism in Katla Geopark.
- c. Developing a new source of income for Katla Geopark by being a travel agency as well with booking opportunities as well as developing own tours.

We already have a licence of a tour operator and that is a step taken in August 2012 towards strengthening the tourism industry within the area as well as creating new opportunities of innovation for stakeholders.

We continue to work very closely with stakeholders and local businesses on the marketing and management plan – all ideas of local businesses are being looked at and plan will be made in accordance with different management strategies. The first draft of sustainable financial management plan for the Geopark will be introduced to stakeholders in August 2013.

Presently offers are being sought from consultants in marketing while working on the management plan. In the end of August the plan is to have a prototype of a management strategy to work towards, and the marketing plan will be developed simultaneously. Meetings with the municipalities' authorities are planned in order to provide the best solution for all involved.

The proposed study visit to Europe next year is being prepared. The careful selection of the right area is important as we would like the participants to gain as much as possible from the visit and learn from a best practice, moreover after careful consideration and dialogue with local service providers we realised that in order for tangible results for the project, the best way is to include people already dedicated to innovation or those in the process of developing their own businesses or adding value to it in any way with us.

Therefore, the study visit has been postponed and will be taken place in March 2014 and linked with one of the courses in the Leadership, innovation and local guiding course held during the winter season.

#### **Activity 5: Dissemination of best practices**

A group of officials from Turkey have requested a meeting with Katla Geopark and are coming in the beginning of July for consultation on how to develop a geopark as a regional development project. Last April, Danish and Swedish representatives from a group called living local economies came and asked for a meeting with us for consultation regarding regional development. Reykjanes peninsula applied for a membership to the EGN (European Geoparks Network) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2012. Katla Geopark has been somewhat involved in the process from the start and has offered guidance on several occasions.

The peninsula is being evaluated now in June and a decision will be official on the EGN meeting in Italy in September.

If their project is a success and they will be a part of the European Geopark Network – a forum of Icelandic Geoparks will be developed.

On the same meeting in September the plan is that Katla Geopark will introduce the management plan for sustainable Geopark at the conference attached to the meeting.

### **2.3. Total amount spent in the reporting period**

The total amount of funds spent during the fourth quarter of the project is about 67.000 Euros.

### 3. Partners and other Co-operation

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#### 3.1. Relationship between the formal partners of this Action

In this project UCSI is the sole beneficiary, i.e. there are no formal partners.

#### 3.2. Relationship between your organisation and State authorities in the Action countries

There is a good and interactive relationship between the municipalities in Katla Geopark and UCSI the holder of the IPA project and all three municipalities have a member on the board of Katla Geopark. All the municipalities take responsibility in the project and provide access to facilities, data and work.

UCSI and Katla Geopark have good and supportive relationship with the state authorities in Iceland.

#### 3.3. Relationship with any other organisations involved in implementing the Action

Skógasafn (Skógar Museum) is one of the founders of Katla Geopark. It is the main cultural museum in South Iceland and a very important link in developing and sharing geotourism and cultural tourism.

Kötlusetur (Katla Center) is one of the founders of Katla Geopark and one of Katla Geopark visitors centres. It's a very important link in implementing the IPA project among stakeholders in Mýrdalshreppur. It's also responsible in collaboration with the municipality of Mýrdalshreppur, UCSI and Katla Geopark for strengthening the infrastructure in Vík and surroundings.

Visit Vík, a tourism and marketing cluster for stakeholders in Mýrdalshreppur. Kötlusetur and Visit Vík share a director which is also a member of Katla Geopark project council.

Kirkjubæjarstofa is also one of the Katla Geopark founders. It's an important link in implementing the IPA project among stakeholders in Skaftárhreppur. It's also responsible in collaboration with the municipality of Skaftárhreppur, UCSI and Katla Geopark for strengthening the infrastructure in Kirkjubæjarklaustur and surroundings. Kirkjubæjarstofa has one member in the Katla Geopark project council.

Friður og frumkraftar (At Ease with the Elements) is a tourism and marketing cluster of Skaftárhreppur. It works with Katla Geopark on implementing and developing a marketing strategy for the geopark. A project manager works part-time for the cluster and is also a member of Katla Geopark project council.

#### 3.4. Outline any links and synergies you have developed with other actions

Working with different Geoparks in the North on a project called Nordic Georoutes or Geo2nord on developing a travel packages within geoparks and remote areas in the Nordic countries.

We are applying to the European Commission as a partner with five Geoparks: Basque Coast (Spain), Bohemian paradise (Czech rep.), Naturtejo (Portugal), Terra Vita (Germany); for a project to support the enhancement and promotion of sustainable transnational thematic tourism products.

Within an existing Rannís (Icelandic Centre for Research) project with Matís (Icelandic Food and Biotech R&D Company) and the Development Centre of South Iceland (DCSI) progress has been made in developing branding for locally made products within the Geopark.

### 3.5. Previous EU grants in view of strengthening the same target group

The UCSI is a current partner in a Grundtvig project on handicrafts (HENCE: Handicraft Elements in the National Costumes in Europe). The focus of UCSI's involvement in this project is on the Geopark area, more specifically in cooperation with activities in the Saga Centre in Hvolsvöllur.

## 4. Visibility

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The project was very well made visible in the seminars held in March as well as in the advertisements in the local and national papers.

The website and the video that was produced have the EU logo and are being introduced widely.

All information panels and signs have the EU logo – see pictures in the report

A Sign with the EU logo and the text partly funded by EU is on every picnic table and toilet facility

Name of the contact person for the Action: Sigurður Sigursveinsson

Signature: .....

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Date report sent: June 25, 2013