



Innovately investing in Europe's Northern Periphery for a sustainable and prosperous future



## NEWS-2

### Craft and design set the tone

The project steering group met in Höfn in southeast Iceland in July. Even before the meeting proper ever got underway, the visit to Iceland proved a wonderful start to the company selection. Icelandic partner Ari used the visit to show the delegates an Icelandic craft and design centre in Reykjavik. Located in the oldest building in the capital, the centre would be worth a visit even without the crafts. Add such an important ingredient and the result is irresistible.



*Impressive craft products displayed for sale in Reykjavik*

The blend of historic building, ultramodern design and traditional materials set the tone for a very successful meeting. The Centre includes a well stocked shop selling a wide range of well-designed products including some spectacular lamps. We were also very interested in the super handbags made from fish skins, using a revolutionary new process which strengthens the skins. As always, the visitors boosted the turnover of the shop.

<http://www.handverkoghonnun.is>



*Lamps made from cod, beautiful fish skin handbags, and knitted bottle warmers in Reykjavik*

### Ice

It would not be right to travel all the way across the southern part of Iceland without seeing any ice. The elements cooperated very successfully and as we approached the one place where large blocks of ice falls off the huge glacier and floats towards the sea in full view from the road, the skies parted and granted us a spectacular view.



The meeting itself was very successful and each of the regions presented some of the companies they had considered for participation in the project. The steering group has to be very careful that they pick the best craft business from each sector to ensure that the Économusée tradition of high quality businesses is maintained. Fortunately the Canadian partner is on hand to use their expertise

Salted fish

The fish theme continued in Høfn. The large fishing port is still a key landing site for modern fishing and it is not surprising therefore that one of the candidate companies for participation is a local company providing locally, sun-dried fish. The texture, taste and smell of fish salted and then dried in the open cannot be bettered by more modern processes. Although the quality of the product is unrivalled, very few still continue this method of preservation due to the time it takes. It is therefore very important to assess such an operation in the context of the Economusée project.



*Sun dried fish*



*Discussing salting*

### **Handbags**

London and Italy trained designer Agusta Margret Arnardottir [www.gustadesign.is](http://www.gustadesign.is) Produces a super range of handbags, hats, belts and other bespoke fashion items which proved very popular with the members of the steering group. The raw material is a range of specially treated fish skins to bring out the unique texture using colouring. The designs are unique and sell out as quickly as they are produced.



*Augusta and Claude*



*Handbags and belts*



*Olga*

### **Shoes**

Norwegian shoe manufacturer Aurlandskøen is currently undergoing radical changes. The traditional moccasin, based on an old American design was very popular in Norway. Based on skills from a bygone age of leather crafts developed for visiting, salmon fishing English lords, the comfortable shoe has captured the best in design and materials. Located at the top of the world's longest fjord, this is a location tourists are prepared to pay money to see – and to spend money on when they arrive.

### **Jewellery**

Northern Irish Marion Woodburn is currently located near Ballymena, on a tourist route. Her unique designs already grace the pages of important Investment literature. Marion has already proven that high quality jewellery has a future; she has taken on and trained a full-time assistant.

### **Donegal tweed**

Across the border in Donegal, Studio Donegal produces hand made tweeds as jackets, hats, scarves and coats. This is a company which will help keep the high-quality looms working in cottages across the county for a long time to come. Their innovative designs ensure that they can maintain their established part of the tweed garments market. Their location is on a tourist route, which makes visits from coach parties an attractive possibility. [www.studiodonegal.ie](http://www.studiodonegal.ie)

### **Change Island, the combined effort**

Bringing the true depth of their experience to bear has helped the Canadian partner develop a special version of the Economusee for a small island community on the very edge of the Atlantic Ocean. In such a setting the Economusee concept has been adapted to allow for a central focal point for customers and the hub and virtual spokes running out the individual participants of the enterprise. Skilled knitters will be producing superb socks whilst others will use their sail making skills to turn remnants of old sails into mats.

### **Faeroes**

The Canadian model lends itself well to the work at the outer islands in the Faeroes Archipelago. With less than 20 inhabitants some of these islands are wonderful places for solitude and a fantastic experience with nature, but less encouraging when looking for customers. The project will look carefully at the crafts interested in participating in the project to find the best candidate.

### **Business support**

The project is expecting to see more candidate companies presented to the next steering group meeting in the Faeroes in October. Once the final list of craft businesses has been approved the project moves to the next step in the development process, the conversion plan. Each company will benefit from an expert assessment of their business, the company premises and the plans for the future. As well as looking at the business in the market place, the project hopes to use Canadian expertise to assess the suitability for the premises for inclusion in the Economusee brand. In most cases the assessment results in a proposal for alterations in the physical lay-out of the company.

Towards the end of the year the project steering group will commence work on a specially developed business support manual, which will only be available to the participants of the project. Helped by the manual, the business plan and regular expert support from the Economusee project team the plan is to develop a total of 18 new Economusees either side of the Atlantic.

University participation.

The prestigious national art and design college in Bergen was represented at the project launch in Quebec City in April along with Canadian Laval University. In fact, all the participants of the first week-long intensive course on Economusee development received a certificate issued by Laval University.

For further information on any of these issues, please contact:



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