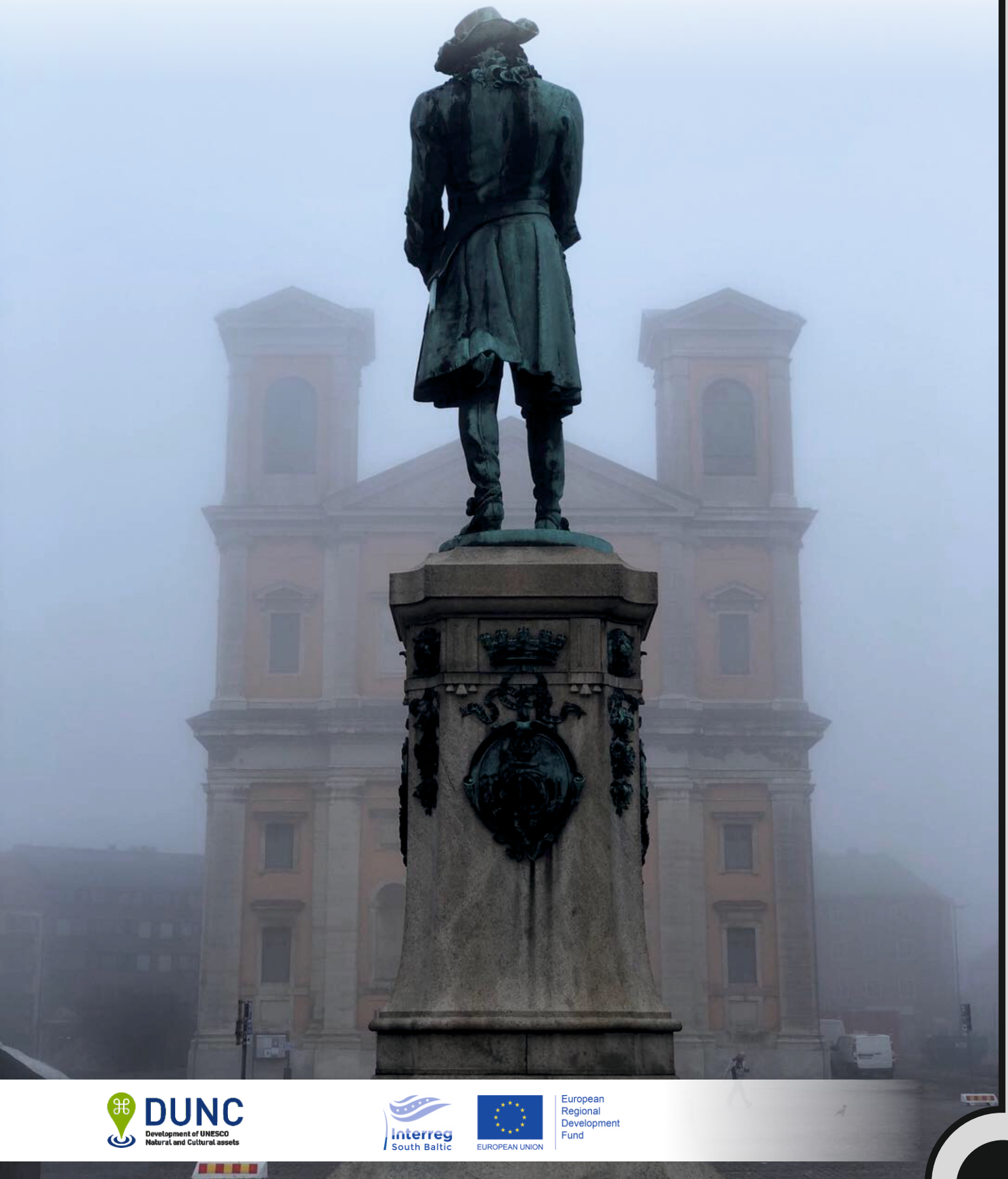


# SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY

## THE NAVAL PORT OF KARLSKRONA (SWEDEN)



# SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY THE NAVAL PORT OF KARLSKRONA (SWEDEN)

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## FOREWORD

As of 2020, there are 1121 World Heritage sites listed by UNESCO in 167 countries worldwide. Of all this abundance and diversity of the sites, we have elicited and focused on the coastal cultural World Heritage ones. A UNESCO-listed property is considered as coastal if it was established or flourished thanks to the sea, maritime trade or coastal processes, even though today it might be further away from the sea (e.g., Ostia Antica, Bruges or Vanha Rauma). Currently, there are 258 coastal and hinterland cultural World Heritage sites: 127 - in Europe, 52 - in Asia, 47 - in the Americas, and 32 - in the rest of the World.

A vast Eurasian continuum of maritime civilizations, crafts, industries, trade, commerce, warfare and other sea-related activities - from Europe to the Far East - has engendered the largest number of coastal cultural UNESCO World Heritage sites. It comes as no surprise that almost half of all coastal cultural World Heritage sites are in Europe bearing in mind a long cultural tradition of coastal and maritime economy and a very indented coastline of Europe. Most of these coastal cultural World Heritage sites throughout Europe are well preserved, restored, and became appealing assets for tourism development of various kind - from cultural tourism to cruise ship calls.

Five of the 258 coastal cultural World Heritage sites in the World are either transboundary ones or listed in more than one country, including the Curonian Spit, a transboundary coastal cultural landscape in the South Baltic Area shared by Lithuania and the Russian Federation. Altogether, there are 17 coastal and hinterland cultural UNESCO World Heritage sites in the South Baltic Area: one heritage city of European naval history, two prehistoric cultural World Heritage sites at the seaside, three cultural landscapes at the seaside, three properties of modern coastal architecture and industry, and eight properties of the classical European coastal cultural heritage.








The South Baltic Area is a region where coastal cultural World Heritage sites, without exaggeration, are unique on the World scale. Throughout the Middle Ages and the Modernity, it was the playground of several Northern European superpowers (including the Hanseatic League). Nowadays, there is a clear added value in coastal cultural World Heritage sites in the South Baltic Area since these are valuable assets for sustainable tourism development. A South Baltic seaside-heritage-experiential tourism cluster emerges comprising World Heritage sites, seaside resorts, coastal cities and creative sector outlets sharing a common vision, the key brand elements, unique selling points, and iconic images.

Promotion of sustainable coastal and maritime tourism in the South Baltic Area is among the key priorities of the Interreg South Baltic Programme 2014-2020. The Programme aims at unfolding South Baltic's potential for blue and green growth through cross-border cooperation between local and regional actors from Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. Regarding tourism, the Programme aims to increase the development of the South Baltic area's natural and cultural heritage assets into sustainable tourist destinations. In this effort, the Interreg South Baltic Programme focuses on blue and green tourism services, products and tools that help to increase the number of visits in cultural and natural heritage sites.

DUNC (Development of UNESCO Natural and Cultural assets) is a three-year project of the Interreg South Baltic Programme 2014-2020 jointly implemented by seven partners in three South Baltic coastal regions of Sweden, Germany and Lithuania and focusing on four coastal cultural World Heritage sites: the Naval Port of Karlskrona (Sweden), the Historic Centres of Stralsund and Wismar (Germany), as well as two cultural landscapes - the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland (Sweden) and the Curonian Spit (Lithuania/Russia). The strategies and action plans for the South Baltic coastal cultural World Heritage sites comprise one of the main deliverables of the DUNC project aimed to facilitate the South Baltic collaboration in building synergies between World Heritage conservation and tourism interests.

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# INTRODUCTION

DUNC (Development of UNESCO Natural and Cultural assets) is a three-year project of the 2014-2020 Interreg South Baltic Programme, part-financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund). It is a cross-border cooperation effort of seven partners located in Germany, Lithuania and Sweden. Five of the project partners - Municipality of Karlskrona (Lead Partner, Sweden), Municipality of Mörbylånga (Sweden), Curonian Spit National Park Administration (Lithuania), Hanseatic City of Stralsund (Germany), and Hanseatic City of Wismar (Germany) - represent four South Baltic coastal cultural UNESCO World Heritage sites: the Naval Port of Karlskrona, the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland (both in Sweden), the Curonian Spit (Lithuania/Russia), the Historic Centres of Stralsund and Wismar (Germany). The other two project partners, EUCC Germany and EUCC Baltic Office (Lithuania), represent EUCC - Coastal and Marine Union, which is the Europe's largest coastal and marine conservation network.

The overall objective of the DUNC project is to achieve that these coastal cultural UNESCO World Heritage sites in the South Baltic Area jointly develop a concept which makes use of the World Heritage sites and their Outstanding Universal Values as catalysts for developing sustainable tourist destinations. To achieve the main objective of the DUNC project, altogether over 30 activities were planned throughout the three-year project implementation period. All the activities within the DUNC project are divided among six work-packages: WP1 was dedicated to Management and Coordination, WP2 - Communication and Dissemination, WP3 - Joint Quality Management, WP4 dealt with identification of synergies and collaboration on development and provision of products/services, WP5 - Stakeholder involvement, and WP6 - Long-Term Governance.

The main objective of WP3 was to jointly form strategies and action plans for sustainable heritage tourism through exchanging good practice, learning from other South Baltic coastal cultural UNESCO World Heritage sites and cross-border sharing of best expertise. It is directly linked to the Main Output 1 of the DUNC project: Strategies for sustainable tourism and accompanying action plans jointly produced and integrated in or added to management plans.

To achieve the main objective of WP3, as well as the main project objective, two project deliverables (intermediate steps of the project that can be both tangible and intangible) were delivered in WP3:

- **Deliverable 3.1.** Producing a baseline for the partners in the project.
- **Deliverable 3.2.** A cross-border framework for sustainable tourism strategy implementation in the South Baltic Area.

It is clear from what is said above, that delivering the Deliverable 3.2 (A cross-border framework for sustainable tourism strategy implementation in the South Baltic Area) was the pivotal project activity in the final phase of the DUNC project implementation providing a solid basis for continuity of project achievements. There is only one coastal cultural UNESCO World Heritage site in Blekinge County of Sweden, which is the Naval Port of Karlskrona. Considering the Outstanding Universal Value of the Naval Port of Karlskrona as a serial UNESCO-listed World Heritage property, in a concise interpretation, it is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a naval port from a period when major European powers contested each-others positions mostly through maritime warfare and naval battles.

# 1. NAVAL PORT OF KARLSKRONA AS A WORLD HERITAGE TOURISM DESTINATION

## Historical Features of Blekinge

In his travelogue, Wulfstan, an Anglo-Saxon traveller (ca. 890) mentions Blekinge for the first time in the written sources. He notes it as belonging to the Sweans. Already in the 1060s, Bishop Egino of Dalby Christianized Blekinge. Historically, Blekinge was part of Eastern Denmark, which, besides Blekinge, included the areas of Halland, Lister, Scania and Bornholm. Adam of Bremen, a German medieval chronicler wrote in the fourth chapter of the fourth book of his chronicle: "But if we return to the mouth of the Baltic Sea in the north, we will first meet the Norwegians, then the Danish province of Scania will show up, and in the east [Swedish] inhabitants will occupy an extensive area up to Birka".

Adam further wrote: "Scania is the outermost part of Denmark and forms a peninsula". At that time, all of Scandinavia was under the Archbishop of Hamburg and Bremen. Therefore, the church in the different countries of Scandinavia did not compete with each other. Blekinge does not appear to have been part of the Lund's diocese until the 13th Century, according to the Knytlinga saga and the Necrologium Lundense collection, among others. Between 1231 and 1658, Blekinge belonged to Denmark. In 1231, there was the first sure proof that Blekinge was part of Denmark in the chapter of the census book of King Waldemar II of Denmark.

Since the 13th Century, Blekinge was a borderland between Denmark and Sweden for several hundred years. The province was often the scene of clashes between the two countries. The cities and countryside were burned and destroyed by both Swedish and Danish troops. From 1332 to 1360 Blekinge was part of Sweden comprising a part of the Swedish Scania province under the king Magnus Eriksson but then was taken back by Danes again. However, Sweden dominated the South Baltic Area for the better part of early Modernity.

The Swedish Empire had almost turned the Baltic Sea into its 'inner lake'. Such a vast country from Pomerania to the Arctic Circle had greatly influenced economic, urban and cultural development of the South Baltic Area best witnessed by the Naval Port of Karlskrona.

After the Thirty Years' War in 1648, the Kingdom of Sweden expanded throughout the Baltic Sea Region. It stretched from the Gulf of Bothnia in the north to the Lübeck Bay in the south. Remarkably, for a brief period from 1628 to 1635 during the height of the Thirty Years' War, Sweden ruled over all the future South Baltic World Heritage sites - partners in the DUNC project. Baroque edifices in the historic centres of Wismar and Stralsund, as well as other heritage monuments witness the period of the Swedish Baltic superpower in the 17th to the 18th Centuries.

The province of Blekinge was annexed permanently by Sweden in 1658 as the major result of the Roskilde Peace Treaty. With Blekinge's transition to Sweden, the king Charles XI immediately revoked town privileges for Kristianopel, the Danish administrative centre of Blekinge, and nearby Ronneby after the Swedish army had destroyed Kristianopel. Several ancient cities, Avaskär, Elleholm, Lyckå and Sölvesborg, had lost their city privileges already earlier in the 1600s. Looking for a place for his stronghold in Blekinge, Charles XI first built Karlshamn in 1664, at the site of the fishing community of Bodekull, but he was not satisfied with its location in strategic terms.



The sheltered location in Blekinge archipelago, where fortifications could defend the naval port combined with an abundant supply of oak, was considered decisive when choosing the site of the new naval base. This ideal location helped controlling links with the mainland protected by the archipelago.

Until 1679, farmer Vittus Andersson owned Trossö and nearby islets but was forced to sell his properties to the Swedish Crown. In the same year, the king began to relocate most of the Swedish naval fleet to Trossö. On August 10, 1680, Karlskrona received the city privileges, which meant that Karlskrona's trade and growth increased as many inhabitants from the nearby Ronneby and Kristianopel were forced to move there. Karlskrona also benefited from several years of duty-free trade during its construction. Shipbuilders for the new naval base with shipyards came from as far as Stockholm and even Österbotten.

After King Charles XI founded Karlskrona in 1680, it was first of all thought of as a naval base, with numerous fortifications and defences exploiting the topography of the area. The key fortifications were on the main island (Trossö) such as the Bastion Aurora, constructed in 1704. Yet much of it was located on the nearby islands of Mjölneholmen, Ljungskär, Koholmen, Godnatt and Kurrholmen or more distant, such as the islands closing the bay, with the main fortress of Kungsholmen and its circular port.

In 1679, Charles XI founded the Royal Naval Base and Shipyard. Next year he founded Karlskrona as a city on the island of Trossö. Naturally, it got the name of its founder - the Crown of Charles. On August 10, 1680, Karlskrona received the city privileges.

Already in 1681, the military fortifications were almost complete and could protect the naval base. Sweden wanted to place its fleet in Karlskrona because it wished to

demonstrate its maritime strength to Denmark and other adversaries in the Baltic Sea and in Europe. Also, the port of Karlskrona is ice-free most of the year. In 1682 bridges were built which linked the Trossö island with the mainland. At the founding of the Admiralty Church in 1685, the Navy's music choir gave a concert for the first time as predecessors of the Admiralty Musicians. It makes the orchestra the country's second oldest cultural institution. Only the Royal Court Chapel Choir is older.

The first city plan, designed in 1683 by Erik Dahlbergh, Hans Wachtmeister and Carl Magnus Stuart, shows Karlskrona as a military fortress only. But the civil part of the city was also carefully planned. It had a rectangular grid plan. Some diagonal streets were created because of the topography of the city centre. Architect Nicodème Tessin the Junior (1654-1728) was responsible for the design of the buildings, and he gave the city a very uniform Baroque style. The city plan designed in 1694 by Erik Dahlbergh (1625-1703) paved the way to civil urban development of full scale.

During the period of the Swedish dominance in the Baltic Sea Region, Blekinge enjoyed its 'Golden Period'. Albeit Karlshamn was founded earlier than Karlskrona, but its role soon became secondary, while the older established cities of Ronneby and Sölvesborg further declined. New development centres, Karlskrona and Karlshamn, were near the medieval trading centres of Lyckeby and Elleholm and thus replaced these in maritime and land-based trade while Kristianopel had never recovered again. From 1658 till 1680, Blekinge was incorporated into Kristianstad County. In 1683, a separate Blekinge County was established, which remained unchanged ever since.

That Karlskrona had the ambition to become a future capital of the Swedish Empire is apparent from its central part. The outline of its Grand Square (Stortorget), which is the largest main square in Scandinavia, follows the ideal design of how the imperial capital of a European superpower should look like.

Karlskrona developed rapidly throughout the 1700s. During the 18th Century, Blekinge was Sweden's most urbanized province, with a quarter of the inhabitants living in cities. Karlskrona soon became the nation's third-largest city with more than 10,000 inhabitants, second to Riga in today's Latvia and Stockholm. It was not only a central naval

port of Sweden but also an important maritime trade hub. With a vast Grand Square where the churches, the town hall and the edifice of state administration are all located on the outer edges of the square, it follows the Baroque urban planning pattern for capital cities.



*The Grand Square (Stortorget)*

The number of churches and government administration buildings also witness the city's intended function. The sizeable military area and the shipyard show that Karlskrona as the southern gateway of the kingdom was long considered a significant city to defend. Karlskrona therefore, most probably, was supposed to take over Stockholm's place as the capital of the country, but these plans never realized. Karlskrona retained the role of the third-largest city in the Kingdom of Sweden until the 1830s. However, it was regularly hit by crises and stagnation due to frequent wars and epidemics. In 1701-11, about 7,000 people (i.e., ca. 70% of population) died in Karlskrona when the plague hit the city.

In 1741 and 1789, the city was once again hit by the plague, each epidemic claiming 6,000 casualties at least. In 1790, most of the town burned down in the fire but was soon rebuilt in masonry. Also, in 1887 and 1909, Karlskrona was ravaged by major fires. Karlskrona lost its significance along with the superpower status

of Sweden in the 19th Century. Its growth slowed down, and the city lost much of its former glory and development ambitions. With the increasing role of Gothenburg as Sweden's gateway to continental Europe, Blekinge County has experienced a slower development than other parts of the Kingdom of Sweden. It fell into oblivion and was sometimes called 'Sweden's backyard'.

Throughout the 19th Century, the city suffered from stagnation. Still, even in the situation of economic and political decline, Karlskrona had nevertheless always maintained its position as an active and most important royal naval base of the country. For the city, which was the most important naval base in Sweden with a large shipyard, the need for the railway was great. The development of the industry and the arrival of the railway (Karlskrona-Växjö railway in 1874, Blekinge coastal railway in 1889, and East Blekinge railway in 1899) meant a new boom for Karlskrona.



By the end of the 19th Century, several important industries were established, including for the production of paving stones, beer, tobacco, clothing, hats, tiles, lamps, castings and porcelain. Karlskrona was once the city entirely dominated by the shipyard which until the shipyard crisis in the 1970s was the city's largest employer. And the naval base retained its importance. English historian David Kirby has aptly named the 'Cold War' period (1945-1989) in the history of the Baltic Sea as "living with the bear". He noted Sweden's readiness to defend its neutrality.

Therefore, for the inclusive and sustainable governance of the Naval Port of Karlskrona both as a World Heritage site and as a sustainable heritage tourism destination it was critically important to make the Swedish Fortifications Agency interested in both naval heritage conservation and the accessibility of the restricted area for organised excursions. Both challenges were successfully met by the Karlskrona municipality and tourism office thus turning the Naval Port of Karlskrona into a unique example of an active naval base which is regularly open for tourists of various nationalities.

The naval base of Karlskrona, an outpost and an object of Swedish national pride, played the pivotal role in maintaining Sweden's neutrality. In 1981, a Soviet spy submarine U-137 ran aground in the Baltic Sea near the naval base becoming a symbol of the Cold War.

The military government agency - Fortifikationsverket (Swedish Fortifications Agency) - is still the owner of the naval base. It is also one of the most critical stakeholders in the World Heritage site management in Karlskrona in financial terms contributing substantial financial resources for the site conservation.

The last decade of the 20th Century was also the beginning of close cooperation between coastal cities and regions in the South Baltic Area. For instance, Karlskrona, which until the 1990s was a closed military base restricted to foreigners, became an open cultural city twinned with Klaipeda in Lithuania, Gdynia in Poland, Baltiysk in Kaliningrad Oblast of Russia, and Rostock in former East Germany.



## 2. GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF THE REGION

Karlskrona Municipality (Karlskrona kommun) is a municipality in Blekinge County. It covers the eastern part of the county and Blekinge Archipelago, and with its more than 1000 km<sup>2</sup> area is the largest of the county's municipalities. Karlskrona Municipality borders with Ronneby Municipality in the west of Blekinge County, and with Emmaboda and Torsås municipalities in the north in Kalmar County. In the northeast, the municipality also has a maritime border with Mörbylånga Municipality on the Island of Öland in Kalmar County. The city of Karlskrona, including the UNESCO World Heritage site of 'Naval Port of Karlskrona', is located in the very centre of the municipality.

The territory of Blekinge County accounts for 0.7% of the total area of Sweden. From the Småland highlands at an altitude of 130 to 170 meters above the sea level, the landscape descends both south and east towards the Baltic Sea. The northern part of Blekinge County, the forested region, is barren with

many mountains and marshes, and the forests mainly consist of conifers there. The subsequent middle part with its many small lakes and streams and even more the coastal region of the county have fertile soil where deciduous forests and agricultural areas prevail.

Blekinge County is the smallest county of Sweden. Compared to the rest of Sweden, Blekinge has relatively mild winters and pleasantly warm summers and is sometimes called "Sweden's garden". Blekinge Archipelago stretches along the better part of the Blekinge coast and comprises several hundreds of islands and skerries.



*Karlskrona archipelago with the Naval Port*



The topography of the coastal region of Blekinge County is an uneven valley terrain with prevailing straight and narrow gullies widening towards the coast. The bedrock in Blekinge is mostly gneiss and granite of the Blekinge-Bornholm rock province. The nature of the coastal region of the county is typical for the northern subregion of the Atlantic biogeographical zone represented by beech and oak forests with an abundant undergrowth of hazel and common hornbeam. The main direction of the numerous short waterways is southerly. Most of these streams discharge into the Baltic Sea at Blekinge Archipelago.

The climate in Blekinge does not vary to a greater extent but is fairly evenly distributed over the parts of the county with a prevailing maritime character. The average annual air temperature is 7°C. In January, it varies from about 0° on the coast to -2° in the north of the county, while in July it is around 16° in the whole county. Autumn is exceptionally mild as the Baltic Sea accumulates heat and moisture after summer, although sometimes it causes a lot of rainfall and wind gusts. The lowest average annual rainfall is about 550 mm on the outermost and the easternmost islands of Blekinge Archipelago.

In contrast, the lowest average annual rainfall, about 700 to 800 mm per year, is in the northernmost parts of the county. Blekinge has a drier and sunnier climate than large parts of the rest of Sweden. It is because Blekinge is located in the southeast of Sweden and on the Baltic Sea coast. It causes the weather in Blekinge to have quite a lot of influence from frequent high-pressure areas above Russia, Ukraine and the Baltic States. The average number of sunshine hours per year is about 1700 to 1800.

Karlskrona Archipelago is in the eastern part of Blekinge Archipelago, which consists partly of smaller islands with no fixed connection and partly of larger islands with a continuous bridge connection, including Sturkö, Tjurkö, Aspö, Hasslö, Almö. The city of Karlskrona covers 34 islands, Trossö being the main one. Outside Ronneby, there are several smaller islands, and east of Karlshamn there is Hällaryd Archipelago, whose

largest island is Tärnö. To the south of Karlshamn lies Hanö. In 2011, Blekinge Archipelago was designated a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO.

The population of Karlskrona was slowly but steadily increasing throughout the 2000s. Although Karlskrona still has plenty of space for urban development with appealing coastal amenities and vistas, the process of suburbanisation goes on with nearby satellite settlements also gradually increasing in size.

Karlskrona is the central town of the municipality and by far its largest settlement the other two largest ones - Rödeby and Nättraby - being ten times smaller. As of June 30, 2019, Karlskrona Municipality had 66,743 inhabitants (55.7% living in Karlskrona), which places it in the 35th place in terms of population in Sweden. In spite of its island position, Karlskrona enjoys quite a convenient road, train, ferry and air connections with the rest of Sweden and with other Baltic Sea countries.

The city is nearby the European Highway 22, connected by a small section of the national road 28. The E22 links the main cities of southern Sweden such as Malmö, Kristianstad, Lund, then heads eastwards along the coast to Kalmar and Norrköping. Karlskrona is an end-station for trains of the Coast to Coast Line and Blekinge Coastal Railways. Skärgårdstrafiken (a local ferry company) provides daily services to Aspö by car ferry from Karlskrona and from Torhamn to Ytterön. In summer, it also offers regular services to Nättraby.

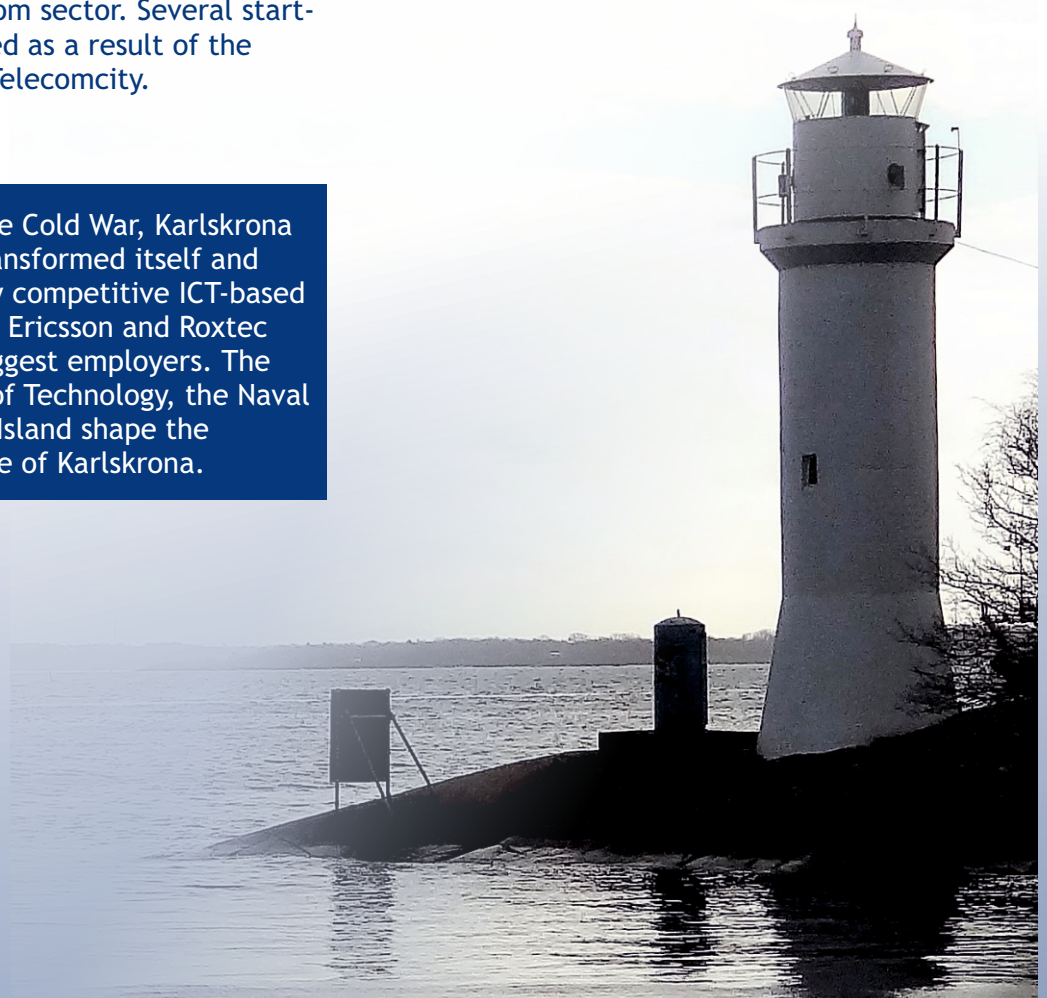
Since Karlskrona is in the southeast of Sweden, it enjoys a unique geographical situation in Sweden, and, as a result, excellent links with the southern and eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. From the port of Karlskrona, daily ferry departures operated by the Swedish ferry operator Stena Line take the route to Gdynia in Poland transporting both goods and passengers, with an average of two return trips per day. This line carries ca. 0.5 million passengers a year. The nearest airport Ronneby (Kallinge) is located west of Karlskrona about 30 km from the city centre, with regular flights to Stockholm (Bromma and Arlanda). In 2018, 224'000 passengers used this airport.

As already mentioned, Karlskrona was once the city entirely dominated by the shipyard, which until the crisis in the 1970s was the city's largest employer. Also, the end of the Cold War in 1989 has substantially reduced the economic role of the naval base for Karlskrona. Europolitan, now Telenor was established in Karlskrona in 1991 and together with the Blekinge Institute of Technology, has advanced the development in the ICT technology and telecom sector. Several start-up companies emerged as a result of the collaboration called Telecomcity.

After the end of the Cold War, Karlskrona has successfully transformed itself and now it enjoys many competitive ICT-based industries. Telenor, Ericsson and Roxtec are some of the biggest employers. The Blekinge Institute of Technology, the Naval School, and Hyper Island shape the academic landscape of Karlskrona.

Karlskrona is the main campus of the Blekinge Institute of Technology founded in 1989, which is one of several university colleges in Sweden with the right to issue a doctorate. The institute employs about 600 people and hosts about 8,000 students. Hyper Island is a Swedish innovative education entity founded in 1996 in Karlskrona and specializes in digital and interactive media. It operates in various locations and has offices in Karlskrona, Stockholm, London, Manchester, Singapore, São Paulo, and New York.

Tourism is also one of the sectors with a long history and deep regional roots in Blekinge. The maritime industries, especially shipbuilding and the port industry, also play a significant role in Blekinge, particularly in Karlskrona, which is the engine of the regional economy. Both Karlshamn and Karlskrona have large ferry terminals - the one in Karlshamn provides regular link with Klaipeda (Lithuania) operated by DFDS whereas the one in Karlskrona provides regular link with Gdynia (Poland) operated by Stena Line.



### 3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

Based on the typology presented in Part I of the WP3 Baseline Study of the DUNC project, 16 coastal and hinterland cultural UNESCO World Heritage sites at the seaside or in the hinterland of the South Baltic Area (in a broad sense) could be split into four groups. The Naval Port in Karlskrona belongs to the largest group of classical cultural heritage and the

sub-group of urban heritage sites along with the Historic Centres of Stralsund and Wismar. It was purposely planned as the significant base of the Swedish Navy in the Baltic Sea in the 17th Century. It represented Sweden as the most significant military power of the Baroque period.



At that time, Sweden opened up widely to the advanced European technology, economy, warfare and arts. As already mentioned, the Grand Square (Stortorget) is the largest main square in Scandinavia. Karlskrona also contains Sweden's largest wooden church, the Admiralty Church (also called Ulrica Pia, consecrated in 1685), as well as one of the first dry docks in the world (built 1712-24). The Naval Port of Karlskrona is a serial World Heritage property situated on a Baltic Sea archipelago in southeast Sweden.

It is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a naval port from a period when major European powers contested each-others positions mostly through maritime warfare and naval battles. Founded in 1680 by king Charles XI of Sweden and planned from the

very outset as a naval port, Karlskrona became a new base for the Swedish fleet, a significant power at that time. It was designed by Quartermaster General Count Erik Dahlbergh in a grid plan with Baroque features. The city included the complete range of necessary military functions.





*Drottningkärs Citadel*

### **Authenticity**

The Naval Port of Karlskrona is authentic in terms of its location and setting, forms and designs, and materials and substances, as well as some of its uses and functions. Various kinds of cultural environments as well as individual buildings are largely preserved. In 2005, when Karlskrona became Sweden's national marine port, its role as an active naval base was strengthened. The Swedish authorities believe that the continued use of this historical environment will provide the best protection, and will assist in maintaining the property's authenticity. Several older buildings and constructions in the port area have been restored in order that they may be reused.

### **Protection and management requirements**

The serial property of the Naval Port of Karlskrona consists of ten components, within which a total of 91 buildings are protected under the Swedish Ordinance for State-owned Listed Buildings. An additional 47 areas with buildings are protected by the Historic Environment Act (1988:950). The property is also designated as an Area of National Interest

and its cultural environment is protected under the Swedish Environmental Code. Karlskrona Municipality is responsible for preserving the values of this area through physical planning pursuant to the Planning and Building Act (1987).

Blekinge County Administrative Board has supervisory authority over the Naval Port of Karlskrona. In this role, it is responsible for protecting the attributes that express the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property by ensuring that the values of the Area of National Interest are not tangibly damaged.



These functions are reflected in military fortifications and defences, naval base facilities, a shipyard, a civil city with administration and trade, areas for provisions, supply areas, as well as residential areas for groups from various tiers of society. The city's planners and architects were inspired by examples such as the French naval city of Rochefort, the Venetian Arsenal, and the English maritime port of Chatham. Karlskrona in turn influenced subsequent towns and naval bases of this type. In addition to the urban infrastructure and the grid plan, the World Heritage property includes large parts of the island of Trossö with the naval base and many of its environments and buildings.

The best European urbanists and architects were invited to plan an optimal, or even perfect, naval port 'from scratch' with all the essential features of an invincible maritime military outpost. Karlskrona has preserved its buildings and its layout virtually intact since its foundation in 1680.

The Naval Port of Karlskrona, which includes installations that illustrate its subsequent development up to the present day, is the best-preserved and most complete of the surviving European naval cities. It is because it has not been affected by wars or battles, and partly because it continues to operate as a naval base. The serial World Heritage property also includes several inner and outer fortifications that surround Trossö, intended to defend the city and the naval base, as well as the Crown Mill at Lyckeby and Skärva Manor House, satellites within this larger area that are representative of the hinterland:

**Criterion (ii):** Karlskrona is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a European planned Naval Port, which incorporates elements derived from earlier establishments in other countries and which was in its turn to serve as the model for subsequent towns with similar functions.

**Criterion (iv):** Naval bases played an important role in the centuries during which naval power was a determining factor in European Realpolitik, and Karlskrona is the best preserved and most complete of those that survive.

### Integrity

The Naval Port of Karlskrona does not suffer from adverse effects of development or neglect. While the original vision for and planned functions of the Naval Port are still legible today, the majority of the property is part of a living urban environment facing continual pressures for change.

All the elements necessary to express the Outstanding Universal Value of the Naval Port of Karlskrona are located within the boundaries of the 320.417-ha serial property, including the city of Karlskrona and its grid plan; the naval dockyard and harbour; the inner fortifications at Ljungskär, Mjölmarholmen, Koholmen, Godnatt, and Kurrholmen; the outer fortifications at Drottningkärs Citadel and Kungsholms Fort; and Skärva Manor House and the Crown Mill at Lyckeby located in the naval port's environs. The boundaries of the property adequately ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that convey the property's significance, and there is a 1,105.077-ha buffer zone.

Blekinge County Administrative Board may issue statements when, for instance, Karlskrona Municipality's detailed plans are circulated for consultation. Actions taken outside the defined Area of National Interest must also ensure that this area's values are maintained. The Naval Port of Karlskrona is included into the buffer zone of Blekinge Archipelago Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme, declared in 2011). The serial property is owned and/or managed by a combination of public and private concerns. The Swedish Fortification Agency owns and maintains buildings and objects in the military area used by the Swedish Armed Forces.

The National Property Board also owns and maintains a number of buildings, including the Drottningstads Citadel. Both owners have long-term conservation plans. The Parish of Karlskrona manages two of the three church buildings; the Municipality of Karlskrona manages the Crown Mill at Lyckeby; and private stakeholders own the Kungshall Storehouse and Skärva Manor House, among other components. Blekinge County Administrative Board awards grants for the conservation of privately-owned listed buildings. Their maintenance is carried out under the supervision of experts in heritage conservation. A management plan adopted in 2005 and revised in 2009 aims to preserve and develop the Naval Port of Karlskrona.

But because an evaluation of older plans has only just begun, the cultural values in large parts of the World Heritage property are currently not safeguarded. This is evident in regard to the rebuilding of certain protected buildings and in decisions involving newly declared listed buildings. Extensive new construction has taken place in some areas, and additional construction is planned within central parts of the World Heritage property. Sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value of the property over time will require further protecting its attributes and reformulating the present management plan to ensure that these attributes are managed appropriately.

It is important in the context of the ongoing development of the city and the continual pressures for change that face this living

urban environment. As mentioned above, the city's planners and developers had been inspired by preceding masterpieces such as the Venetian Arsenal. Karlskrona in turn influenced subsequent naval outposts of this type all over the world. It is a real masterpiece of Baroque architecture. The majority of naval ports or seaside cities, which had both a commercial and a defensive function, were designed and planned following the Karlskrona's example.

Karlskrona has served as a pattern to other naval ports around the world - whether they were in the Baltic Sea, such as Suomenlinna (Sveaborg) in Finland, or Kronshtadt in Russia, or the British, Dutch, Danish, Portuguese and French colonial naval ports overseas.

Karlskrona, like both Hanseatic cities - Stralsund and Wismar - could be considered a prototype of a specific type of port towns. However, the main modern management feature of Karlskrona as a World Heritage town is specific heritage-linked urban development principles which are different from, e.g. Stralsund and Wismar. The authorities of both German World Heritage cities aspire to restore the original Hanseatic and Baroque urban fabric as completely as possible by filling-in the gaps considering not the authenticity of the edifices but their place and size as being most important heritage feature.

The Naval Port of Karlskrona is a serial World Heritage property with separate components comprising the Outstanding Universal Value interspersed by areas with little or no heritage value, including typical blocks of four and five storey dwelling houses. This is partly because it continues to operate as a naval base. The latter circumstance, however, might pose the greatest challenge for inclusive governance of the core zone of the World Heritage property in the Naval Port of Karlskrona as it still has a closed part, an operating base of the Royal Swedish Navy, where one needs a permission for the excursionists to enter.



The architecture of the old part of Karlskrona features a rectangular grid plan of the Old Town with few diagonal streets. The Grand Square (Stortorget) follows the ideal design of how the imperial capital of the European superpower should look like with two churches, the town hall and the state administration from the first half of the 18th century located on the outer edges of the square. The original city plan and the Baroque buildings are mostly intact along with the installations that illustrate the subsequent development of the naval port up to the present day.

There are two most important churches at the Grand Square (Stortorget) in Karlskrona - the St Frederick church (Fredrikskyrkan) and the Church of Holy Trinity (Trefaldighetskyrkan), also called The German Church. The Church of Holy Trinity is the earlier one built between 1697 and 1709. It was designed by Nicodème Tessin the Junior (1654-1728), who was

largely inspired by the contemporary Italian Baroque architecture. The dome-shaped roof takes its influence from Italian Baroque architecture and is rarely seen on Swedish churches. Yet the central sacred building of the Naval Port was the St Frederick church also erected on the Grand Square, in the heart of the would-be imperial capital of Sweden, which was also the highest point on the Trossö island.



*Church of Holy Trinity*



The St Frederick church differed from typical Swedish churches in its orange colour, lavish adornment, and its two towers despite not being a bishops' seat. It was built in 1720 to 1744 also following the design and drawings of Nicodème Tessin the Junior who couldn't oversee its completion. Crown Prince Adolf Frederick was present at the opening ceremony. Yet, the church was named after the ruling King Frederick I of Sweden. In 1790, Frederick's Church was damaged by fire,

which was, however, less devastating than for the neighbouring Holy Trinity Church and was soon restored.



*St Frederick church*



The Admiralty Church (in Swedish Amiralitetskyrkan, also called Ulrica Pia) is the church which belongs to the Swedish Admiralty. The church is named Ulrica Pia after the queen Ulrika Eleonora the Elder (1656-1693). The church stands on the south-eastern part of the island Trossö and is also part of the World Cultural Heritage property

of the Naval Port of Karlskrona. It was built in 1685 in red-painted wood and is Sweden's largest wooden church. Outside the Ulrica Pia church, there is a famous statue of the Old Man Rosenbom immortalized by Nobel-winning author Selma Lagerlöf.



*Admiralty Church (Ulrica Pia)*



The Kungsholm's Fort is a military facility in Blekinge Archipelago, which still today belongs to the Swedish Navy. The Kungsholm's Fort began to be built on the orders of Sweden's then king, Charles XI, and would protect the Naval Port of Karlskrona at the southern inlet of its archipelago. In July 1680, the first artillery pieces were in place, and construction was underway.

At the same time, construction works began at the Drottningsskär's Citadel on neighbouring Aspo. The idea was that the two fortifications would together protect the 1,200-meter wide fairway between the two islands.



*The Kungsholm's Fort*



The citadel began to be erected in connection with the construction of the new naval base of Karlskrona in 1680 and was designed by the same architect Erik Dahlbergh. The development was a consequence of Charles XI's decision to move the Swedish Navy's main base to Blekinge and to build a new city, Karlskrona, around the base. Few more fortified naval facilities which belong to the World Heritage property and could feature Karlskrona as an attractive heritage tourism destination are located closer to the city. The Cannon Tower is rising out of the water right next to the city centre. It is a small round island with a gunpowder tower turned into a lighthouse. There exist plans now to convert it into a very exotically-located conference centre.

Chapman to move to Karlskrona to develop a build-up for the Crown's fleet. Skärva was also an important workplace as there was a pool in the park where hydrodynamic experiments could be carried out for testing the advancements in shipbuilding art and engineering. Skärva Mansion is now privately owned and is an architectural monument since 1976. The mansion is also part of the World Heritage site 'Naval Port of Karlskrona' and is located within the Skärva Nature Reserve.

Skärva Manor (Swedish: Skärva herrgård) is the country house which shipbuilder Fredrik Henrik af Chapman (1721-1808) erected on the mainland, just northwest of Karlskrona and east of Nättraby. King Gustav III of Sweden was behind the project ordering



*Skärva Manor*

## 4. WORLD HERITAGE TOURISM SUPPLY SIDE

### WORLD HERITAGE HIGHLIGHTS MOST POPULAR AMONG VISITORS

Referring to the number of TripAdvisor reviews left in 2016 to 2019 by the visitors to the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Naval Port of Karlskrona, the most popular World Heritage assets they visit are the following ones:

The National Naval Museum is the most visited attraction in Karlskrona with an extensive collection of Swedish naval history artefacts. It attracts annually 300 thousand visitors, of which 30% are foreign tourists. The present museum building was opened in June 1997 by the King Carl XVI Gustaf.

**The National Naval Museum (744 reviews)** in Karlskrona is Sweden's national museum for the history of the Swedish Navy. Even if the main building is from 1997, the surrounding buildings that are part of the museum are inscribed as World Heritage objects. The Naval Museum is the most popular tourist attraction in Karlskrona. The museum is part of the Swedish State National Maritime and Transport Museums together with the Vasa Museum, the National Maritime Museum and the Railway Museum in Gävle.



*The National Naval Museum*



Notably, several museum buildings are part of the World Heritage property, and the museum is a pivotal part of the World Heritage site albeit it is not UNESCO-listed. However, it is one of the main reasons why tourists visit the city. This phenomenon is named a “Halo effect” when an object, which is not a component of the World Heritage, makes the World Heritage more visible and attractive to visitors. The foreign visitors consist primarily of Germans and Danes, but also there are ever more visitors from Poland. In 2018, the National Naval Museum was the eighth-most visited museum in Sweden. Children comprise ca. 30% of all visitors to the museum.

The model collection, which contains the models of all ships of the Royal Swedish Navy between 1780 and 1920, still forms the original core of the National Naval Museum's collection of artefacts. The collection also contains the exhibits that are directly related to the past of the Naval Port of Karlskrona as a prototype of naval port cities worldwide. Among its artefacts are authentic submarines and figureheads from tall ships, other historical exhibits: all that turns the National Naval Museum into a central point without which it is impossible to imagine Karlskrona as a tourist destination.

The foundation of the National Naval Museum was laid already in 1752 when the King Adolf Frederick of Sweden established the model chambers, where the ship models were assembled, stored and tested for shipbuilding purposes. There were three model chambers - in Karlskrona, Stockholm and Gothenburg. The one in Karlskrona had the largest collection that belonged to the navy shipyard museum (Värvmuseet). From 1953 to 1997, the National Naval Museum was in the former cadet Skeppsgosse barracks outside the naval harbour, and until 1963 was known as the shipyard museum. Since 1997, the museum is located on the islet of Stumholmen in central Karlskrona. The island was formerly the property of the Navy and was given away in the 1990s for public use to house the museum.

In their TripAdvisor reviews, visitors mention the role of Karlskrona as the main base of the Swedish Navy, its history and glorious past, how the port and the Swedish Navy based there helped to preserve Sweden's neutrality and peace in the Baltic Sea.



*Figureheads from tall ships in the National Naval Museum*

At the museum, there is a galleon hall with galleon images from various Swedish warships. Many are made by the Admiralty sculptor Johan Törnström (1743-1828), who worked at the Karlskrona shipyard in the 18th Century.

Along with the permanent exhibit collections and numerous temporary exhibitions, the National Naval Museum contains a drawings archive, a photographic archive and a library. Outside the museum, around the pier, there are several museum vessels, including Sweden's last full rigger HMS Jarramas, the minesweeper HMS Bremön, the motor torpedo boat T38, and the robot boat HMS Västervik, which was involved in the incident with the Soviet submarine U 137. The museum is also actively involved in the research.

The co-occurrence of 'submarines' in the visitors' reviews is also important since the impressive collection of authentic Swedish submarines is an essential exhibit in the museum. It is especially appealing for kids as they can enter the submarines and learn about the life of sailors on board, along with many other interesting facts. Hence, 'museum', 'submarines', 'history', 'Swedish' and 'Navy' are the key words posted by the museum visitors in their reviews on the TripAdvisor platform. The visitors who left their reviews on TripAdvisor also appreciate that the admission to the National Naval Museum is free.

**Ulrica Pia (92 TripAdvisor reviews).** The visitors who left their reviews on the TripAdvisor platform, mention UNESCO-listed elements defining the Outstanding Universal Value of the Naval Port of Karlskrona, albeit very few. Only the Admiralty Church (Ulrica Pia) is co-occurring in the reviews among the three Baroque churches of the city. Together with the life-size wooden sculpture of Gubben Rosenbom (Old Man Rosenbom), it is an indispensable location for the majority of the visitors to Karlskrona, especially those, who are retired Swedish Navy officers or sailors and visit Karlskrona with their families.

Ulrica Pia is a marvellous wooden Baroque church, a masterpiece of its kind. However, it became world-famous mainly because of the renowned statue of Rosenbom. The figure stands in front of the church since the mid-18th Century, or at least since its end. It serves as a box for collecting alms to the poor: if you lift the figure's hat, you can insert a coin. Selma Lagerlöf immortalized Gubben Rosenbom in her children novel *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* (original Swedish title: *The Wonderful Journey of the Little Nils Holgersson with Wild Geese*).

In the novel, the titular hero, a little boy named Nils Holgersson meets Rosenbom at night during his visit to Karlskrona and the statue speaks to the boy telling his life story. In 1956, the statue in front of the church was replaced by a copy whereas the original is placed now inside the church.



*Gubben Rosenbom*



**Kungsholm's Fort (80 reviews) and Drottningsskär's Citadel (73 reviews).** The Kungsholm's Fort and Drottningsskär's Citadel are the World Heritage assets of the Naval Port of Karlskrona as a serial UNESCO-listed property which together convey the image of Karlskrona as a maritime city along with the boat trip to the skerries. As popular tourist attractions, they are directly related to the marine environment of Karlskrona emphasizing the immense symbolic value of the Naval Port of Karlskrona as a guard of the country's neutrality and security. Both the Kungsholm's Fort the Drottningsskär's Citadel have been state-listed architectural monuments since 1935.

The defence facilities of Karlskrona consisted of an outer line and an inner line around the shipyard and surrounding islets. Soon from the founding of the naval base, the Kungsholm's Fort and the Drottningsskär's Citadel were erected on either side of the large southern inlet between Aspö and Tjurkö. The Kungsholm's Fort is the world's oldest continuously used fortified military facility, as it has been operated regularly since the 17th

Century till the 2000s. The Drottningsskär Citadel is located on the island of Aspö and is one of the best-preserved and impressive naval citadels. They both are remarkable naval fortifications whose environment best convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the Naval Port of Karlskrona as a World Heritage site to the visitors in its full scale.

**Blekinge Museum (45 reviews).** Blekinge Museum is a regional museum in Karlskrona. It functions together with the open-air museum Wämöparken which is the open-air museum featuring rustic buildings typical for Blekinge. The Blekinge Antiquities Association founded the museum in 1877, and the entity was then taken over by the Blekinge Museum Association. The task of the Blekinge Museum is to deepen the knowledge about the regional cultural heritage. The museum's priority areas are the coast and archipelago of Blekinge, the World Heritage of the Naval Port of Karlskrona and the Blekinge's Danish period. The museum actively works on creating V/ARV - a World Heritage Museum about the Naval Port of Karlskrona.



*Blekinge Museum*



There are several other places of interest featuring the UNESCO-listed serial World Heritage property of the Naval Port of Karlskrona which might be exciting and attractive to the heritage tourists visiting Karlskrona. Among them, first of all, Skärva Manor with possibilities for accommodation and the Lindholmen old shipyard should be

mentioned. Yet, although the World Heritage coordinator at Karlskrona municipality listed these two places as a priority for heritage tourism development in Karlskrona, so far, they did not attract any attention of the visitors who left their reviews on the TripAdvisor platform about Karlskrona.



*Resplagarbanan*

## POPULAR HINTERLAND ATTRACTIONS

**Blekinge Archipelago (74 reviews).** Blekinge Archipelago is the most attractive and popular tourist destination in the hinterland of the Naval Port of Karlskrona. According to the Blekinge County Tourism Strategy, the USP of Blekinge Archipelago is that it is closest to the European mainland. Therefore, it is the first among the numerous archipelagos of Sweden to welcome visitors from the European mainland. Furthermore, it is beautiful and

extraordinary regarding biodiversity. There are five coastal UNESCO Biosphere reserves designated in the South Baltic Area: Møn (Denmark), the Southeast Rügen (Germany), Słowiński (Poland), Blekinge Archipelago and Kristianstad Vattenrike (both in Sweden).



*Blekinge Archipelago UNESCO biosphere reserve*

UNESCO biosphere reserves rely on local involvement. Operations and projects conducted in the area are based primarily on local needs and fields of interest and may vary based on time and place. Blekinge Archipelago is a UNESCO biosphere reserve, which includes Karlshamn Municipality, Ronneby Municipality and Karlskrona Municipality. Visitors to the biosphere reserve appreciate that the conservation work within the biosphere reserve, along with small-scale tourism promotion, is also cherished as essential means to maintain traditional long-term knowledge of sustainable use of natural resources alive. Examples of sustainable activities in Blekinge Archipelago include small-scale coastal fishing, Archipelago agriculture and the maintenance of wooden cottages.

**Utklippan (15 reviews).** Utklippan is the southernmost skerry of Blekinge Archipelago to which boat trips from Karlskrona and Torhamn are provided. It takes just 25 min. to reach Utklippan from Karlskrona by a speedboat. Utklippan consists of two islets of Norraskär (Northern skerry) and Södraskär (Southern skerry). It has been designated a nature reserve since 1988. The lighthouse on Södraskär was built in 1840 and combined a lighthouse and a fort. The main attractions for Utklippan visitors are diving or snorkelling with around 800 seals, climbing the lighthouse tower and enjoying magnificent views over the Baltic Sea. The consensus among the TripAdvisor reviewers is that Utklippan is a fantastic place with a fascinating grey seal colony to watch and enjoy.



*Utklippan skerry*

## TOURIST ACCOMMODATION OFFER

Karlskrona has a relatively wide range of accommodation facilities. It can offer double rooms that cost less than 50 € per night on a weekend of the shoulder season. It may be explained by the fact that Karlskrona is a rather versatile tourist destination compared with other South Baltic coastal cultural World Heritage tourism destinations. It is a popular tourist destination, with a plentiful supply of accommodation and also with broad possibilities for tourists to stay. However, in Karlskrona more than 80% of all accommodation offers are in the range from 50 € to 150 €.

Of course, one shouldn't forget that Karlskrona is the capital of Blekinge County. It is one of the biggest business hubs in southeast Sweden which means that the majority of visitors staying in hotels in Karlskrona are not coming for heritage tourism purposes, but rather for business purposes, which implies that they stay overnight at higher-end hotels. The fact that such prices hold even during the shoulder seasons shows that seasonality is not a significant problem for business tourists also

in Karlskrona like at other four South Baltic coastal cultural World Heritage tourism destinations.

According to the results of the survey, if guests stay overnight in Karlskrona, most of them are not looking for luxurious hotels, they just need some basic quality accommodation which is enough for visitors because their aims are more oriented towards exploring the site instead of having deluxe overnight. On the other hand, if people are disappointed with the quality of accommodation, their overall impression about the visit is spoiled. This should be kept in mind by urban planners and tourism service providers: accommodation services must be of a certain quality level, but there is no need to invest more in their further improvement.



*Kronohäktets heritage hostel in Karlskrona*



According to the survey results from 2018, those visitors to the Naval Port of Karlskrona, who were not satisfied with food, showed an overall disappointment with their visit to Karlskrona. The main expectations for local food and drink establishments are that they provide sufficient quality of catering for value.

Judging from the online reviews left by visitors of many nationalities on the TripAdvisor online review platform, in the Naval Port of Karlskrona, i.e., in the central part of the Karlskrona city, not including Skärva Manor, the Top-10 food and drink establishments in the eyes of tourists of any nationality who left their reviews on the TripAdvisor platform are the following ones (in the order of scores):

1. **Nya Skafferiet** - 'the best cod ever';
2. **Restaurant Pizzeria Montmartre** - 'cosy little place. A little gem in the middle of Karlskrona';
3. **Glassiaren** - 'delicious homemade ice cream';
4. **Niva** - 'a top steak restaurant';
5. **Restaurang Michelangelo** - 'a variety of vegetarian Italian meals and the risotto was fantastic!';
6. **Vinberga Vinkiosk** - 'fantastic food, nature wine directly from European vineyards and a personal touch and treatment that goes beyond expectations';
7. **Restaurang Skeppsgossen** - 'excellent lunch buffé with traditional Swedish food';
8. **Art's Thai Kok** - 'Best Thai food in Karlskrona made by a true Thai chef';
9. **The Fox and Anchor** - 'over 15 draft beers from all over the world made for a good start and the burgers are excellent';
10. **Sjorok Spis och Bar** - 'Good and tasty dishes in a modern setting with a harbour and sea view.'



*Nya Skafferiet*



## 5. WORLD HERITAGE TOURISM DEMAND SIDE

In 2018, Karlskrona Municipality received 204574 guest overnights, which was 7.7% less than 221754 guest overnights received in 2017. It is difficult to explain such a sharp decline. Bearing in mind that tourism seasonality is very high in Karlskrona, it might be that the main reason for the decrease in the number of overnights is related to an unusually hot summer. In the spell of sweltering weather, many holiday-makers prefer to spend their vacation in seaside resorts better suited for 'sun, sand and surf' tourism rather than urbanised Karlskrona.

It might be especially true, since, according to Visit Karlskrona, almost half of tourists visiting Karlskrona Municipality relate their visit with enjoying the archipelago and other natural amenities. However, Borgholm Municipality, which is a regional 'sun, sand and surf' tourism 'Mecca' on the neighbouring Öland Island, has also experienced the decline of 4.3% in guest overnights in 2018. Meanwhile, the summer of 2018 was very successful for Blekinge County in general. The number of guest nights in Blekinge during June to August 2018 has increased by 6% compared to 2017. In total, the county has had 583,957 overnight stays during the summer months of 2018.

The foreign overnight stays in Blekinge County increased the most, by 6.6% in June to August 2018. The guest overnight difference between Karlskrona Municipality and Blekinge County in 2018 is seen from a comparative histogram. It was the only year when the annual trend of tourist numbers differed between Karlskrona Municipality and the overall Blekinge County. Or rather this deviation could be more simply explained by the devaluation of the Swedish kronor which caused the increased influx of foreign tourists to Blekinge Archipelago and other attractive natural areas but not Karlskrona.

Over 70% of tourists who stay overnight tend to come in summer from June to August. In contrast, there is a tiny number of guest nights from April to May and from September to October, which means in tourism shoulder seasons. As observed by the

local heritage site managers, they would love to see a more extended season, but there are challenges like opening hours and public transportation amongst others. Yet, opening hours and public transport might not be the main reasons for the unsatisfactory values of the seasonality index (80%) in Karlskrona since the seasonality index in Stralsund, which is similar in tourism terms, is twice as little as in Karlskrona.

Visiting the seaside, the opportunity to enjoy the beach and bathing is a core aspect for visitors to Karlskrona. If some obstacles (bad weather, rough sea or other discomforts) prevented enjoying the beach, this led to decreased overall impression about the stay in Karlskrona.

This core aspect also means that the quality of sea beaches must be assured, but it is not necessary to invest more in any additional infrastructure. It is unnecessary to improve the quality of the ancillary services on the beaches. It is vital for Karlskrona Municipality just keeping the beaches clean, ensuring smooth access, maintaining clean water and nearshore, and providing an opportunity for swimming. The Blue Flag, the QualityCoast and the Green Destination awards can play an essential role as tokens that these core needs of visitors are met.

The fact that visiting the seaside, the opportunity to enjoy the beach and bathing is a core aspect for visitors to Karlskrona, might probably explain at least partly the discrepancy between the visitation trends in Karlskrona Municipality and Blekinge County in 2018. However, there might be other reasons which could reveal hidden problems of Karlskrona as an unsustainable tourism destination. The transportation, guidance and information services are also essential for the visitors to Karlskrona. These are the core aspects, and visitors who are disappointed with the quality of transportation, guidance or information have a worse impression of the destination.



Hence, these services must be of good quality. Yet, the appraisal of the quality of transportation, guidance and information services shows no relationship to the overall impression of the visit. Historical heritage is also the last core aspect without which it is impossible to imagine Karlskrona as a tourist destination. The friendliness of the local community is also considered a core aspect in Karlskrona, which determines the satisfaction of the stay as well. This aspect is particularly relevant regarding the influx of high season tourists when locals in many historic coastal World Heritage cities show hostility towards guests.

Accessibility is essential, in addition to these aspects. Karlskrona is still an active naval base, and most tourists know that many objects are difficult to access due to their location in the military area and they value how smoothly the visits to the restricted areas are arranged. Their availability is considered one of the vital core aspects which are determining the tourist satisfaction with the visit to Karlskrona. Last not least, cleanliness and tidiness of the city is also the core aspect that makes Karlskrona an attractive place for visitors.

The environment, quiet and peace are the main agents of exclusivity in Karlskrona. Comfort and beauty are among the most important competitiveness factors for heritage tourists in Karlskrona. If visitors enjoy the warmth and beauty of the city, they are overall satisfied with their visit to Karlskrona.

There are ten attractions or features of Karlskrona that can be considered as competitiveness aspects of visitor satisfaction. For the visitors to Karlskrona, sunshine is a competitiveness aspect: those visitors who enjoyed sunshine were happy with their visit to Karlskrona, while those who did not get enough sunshine in summer, were disappointed with the destination. Value for money is also a vital competitiveness aspect for Karlskrona. Many visitors consider that Karlskrona is quite pricey. Heritage sites are more expensive than ordinary destinations. If visitors are disappointed with what they get for the money, they do not like the destination itself, and vice versa.





*Björkholmen*

According to the heritage tourism manager in Karlskrona, their surveys do not measure guest experience specifically regarding the World Heritage, but the overall destination grade is estimated to be a 4 on a scale of 5. This assessment is especially pertinent considering the opinions of tourists visiting the Naval Museum as well as taking the popular boat cruises for viewing and enjoying the World Heritage property from the sea. Also, the guided tours by experienced guides, many of whom are retired Navy officers, in the city centre, to the fortresses and two main museums enjoy popularity among the visitors.

Summing up, according to the heritage tourism manager in Karlskrona, the overall quality of tourism services is excellent. The cruise companies give proof and confirmation that as a cruise tourism destination, Karlskrona offers a tourism product which is at a reasonable level and comparable to the other cruise destinations. Yet the pivotal role of sunshine for the visitor satisfaction in Karlskrona is confusing indeed. It is a yet another puzzle related to the decline of guest overnights in Karlskrona in a hot and sunny summer of 2018.

The vast majority (>90%) of visitors who travel to Karlskrona do it either as a couple or with relatives. The category “with relatives” means a trip with friends, relatives or a family. The type “with a group” means arriving collectively by bus or by other means of transport. The duration of visiting Karlskrona is very short. Just a quarter of all visitors stay in Karlskrona for a week or more. Remarkably, this pattern of the duration of stay does not concur on the popular anecdotal opinion that the World Heritage status of a tourist destination prolongs the stay. The length of stay in Karlskrona is more typical of the visitation pattern to non-destination seaside resorts.

The average length of stay of short-term visitors is 1.99 days in Karlskrona, according to the socio-demographic survey data and 2.5 days according to the data available from Visit Karlskrona. The length of stay in Karlskrona is more typical of the visitation pattern to non-destination seaside resorts.



The vast majority of surveyed visitors in Karlskrona are aware of the status of World Heritage awarded to this tourist destination, although only a small percentage of visitors came to see the World Heritage as their main visit objective. Primarily retired sailors, who served in the Swedish Navy, feel an urge for visiting the place of their Navy duty with their families. A high level of awareness of the World Heritage status provides a good foundation for the development and implementation of heritage tourism strategies in Karlskrona. However, there is an alternative opinion arguing that despite apparent importance of the UNESCO listing for cultural and heritage tourism, this is just an opportunity to be exploited.

The results of the surveys show that domestic visitors are well aware of the UNESCO World Heritage status of the sites while foreign visitors are not. It is justifiable as Karlskrona had played a unique role and has a particular symbolic value mainly for domestic visitors.

As mentioned, coastal cultural World Heritage sites located in the hinterland of attractive seaside resorts and port cities might struggle in conveying the UNESCO label as a USP to the broader tourism market. As Head of Tourist Office in Karlskrona observed: “What I am trying to do over the years is to play down the label World Heritage as a word because it is so abstract. It is hard for people to relate what they find interesting with the World Heritage label. I repeat for years now, let's forget the label of World Heritage, which is used too much, and let's focus more on attractions and experiences in the World Heritage city”.



## SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT NOTIONS

1. Improving the World Heritage infrastructure, creating a stimulating environment for entrepreneurs and making the World Heritage better accessible to visitors. This option implies measures aimed at linking and packaging the central and rural areas of the World Heritage (Skärva Manor), as well as developing the Drottningsskär Citadel as a visitor point. It also includes the development of closer tourism-related collaboration between the Naval Museum, Blekinge Museum and the Cultural House.
2. Facilitating access for guided tours into the enclosed part of the Naval Base as smoothly as possible and by this prolonging the tourist season. There already exists a close contact between the World Heritage overseers and the military authorities that functions well. However, still there are possibilities to make it even better. Military are not going to open completely the entire Naval Base to the public and there is a need to improve communication which could result in making tourists experience the feeling of a true naval base which is still used by the military for training, exploring 'military secrets' ('Forbidden fruit' effect), especially in shoulder seasons.
3. Promoting food in the World Heritage and the World Heritage with food should focus on finding new synergies. Blekinge has many good local food producers and therefore there is a wish to develop a synergy between already existing food-related activities/experiences, such as Gårdsbutiksrundan and KliMATval with the World Heritage, to leverage the World Heritage in collaboration with these events.
4. Cultural experiences in the World Heritage. In Karlskrona, there are a number of local associations, individuals, companies, organizations and museums who have extensive knowledge of local history and World Heritage. By coordinating these experiences in interesting and exciting way, we can create greater interest in the World Heritage and attract visitors with special awareness of heritage and history. Examples of activities could be special theme weeks, during spring, summer and early autumn, with a different focus on the World Heritage (such as period dishes and clothing, boat construction, architecture and music).
5. Outdoor experiences in the World Heritage. Karlskrona and its surroundings offer a wide range of possibilities for outdoor activities, on land as well as on and in water. The hope is to coordinate these activities and to further develop and create some major events, such as a World Heritage bicycle event or a City Activity Adventure Festival with opportunities to try out various outdoor activities in one week, such as kayaking, mountain biking, beach volleyball, scuba diving, stand up paddling etc.
6. Development of six attractions on the nearby islets and by this increasing tourism sector's diversity. Karlskrona's focus lies mainly on adapting nearby islets for tourism, and therefore there is a need to find and implement new ideas to improve boat transport. Blekinge County has a fantastic archipelago and it would be nice to increase accessibility in order to experience it better, including scuba diving to the numerous ship wrecks.



## SUMMING-UP

As mentioned, in the case of Karlskrona, “accessibility” is the critical issue ensuring that visitors could reach fascinating components of the World Heritage property in the military zone, while the decisions about heritage management and accessibility are made in Stockholm, not in Karlskrona. This issue is highlighted both by Karlskrona visitors and by the local World Heritage site managers alike. Therefore, a good governance of the South Baltic coastal cultural World Heritage sites, first of all, requires a continual process of interaction between the site managers and local stakeholders. In other words, for multi-level governance.

It is not sufficient to search for a 'win-win' solution to conservation and development challenges and conflicts. Instead, reconciling coastal cultural World Heritage conservation, heritage-based and seaside tourism, and local community interests are the process of seeking for a 'win-win-win' type of resolutions and compromises. It is a tall order, but it can be a rewarding one. For a sustainable heritage tourism development strategy to be truly successful, the priority should be to create a collaborative network that could include all pivotal stakeholders in heritage and tourism management in Karlskrona and, more widely, in Blekinge County.

Karlskrona Tourist Office should collaborate more closely with Blekinge Archipelago UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and further strengthen Ark 56 - Karlskrona, Southern Oland, and Blekinge Archipelago - as a single sustainable heritage tourism destination. Blekinge Archipelago Biosphere Reserve already provides an excellent example of small-scale tourism sustainability in an attractive protected environment. It is challenging to ensure a genuinely active grassroots participation from the city inhabitants in World Heritage conservation, promotion and management. The goal should be to make them proud of the World Heritage and feel that they own it; they are welcomed in the management structures and processes and the sharing of ideas.

The successful experience of Karlskrona sends an excellent message to other South Baltic coastal cultural World Heritage sites: with dedication, patience, and goodwill, different stakeholders at the World Heritage site can indeed find a consensus and establish a collaborative operational structure. It indeed can lead to the process which is beneficial for heritage property managers, residents, the governmental agency that owns the heritage property and, last not least, for tourists visiting the site as well. Good collaboration with the military on heritage conservation is not so frequent on a global scale. The case of Karlskrona is exceptional, indeed, since the military presence and the innovative use of the naval base is part of the long-lasting tradition.







