





SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY FOR THE AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF SOUTHERN ÖLAND (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.

Hanny

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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.

sharing of best expertise. It is directly linked to the Main Output 1 of the DUNC project: Strategies for sustainable tourism

The term 'alvar' denotes not only a typical barren limestone grassland, but the one which was, and still is, a historical agricultural landscape used for, and moulded by, grazing. According to local World Heritage managers, two statements concisely explain the uniqueness of the Great Alvar as a coastal area of the Baltic Sea and its Outstanding Universal Value as a UNESCO-listed cultural landscape. The first statement is that the hard work of generations of farmers formed the landscape in a way that is unique for the world. The second statement is that farmers continue to shape it in the same traditional way, and the very existence of this unique landscape depends on the sustained work of the local farmers.

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.

Considering the Outstanding Universal Value of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland as a UNESCO-listed World Heritage cultural landscape, in a concise interpretation, it is the result of combined work of people and nature in a specific terrain with specific environmental conditions. It is produced and maintained by the continuous work of many generations and featured by unique semi-natural ecosystems and habitats. The southern part of Öland, the fourth-largest island of the Baltic Sea adjacent to the southeast coast of Sweden, exactly fits this broad definition. A vast limestone plateau dominates it - the Great Alvar (Stora Alvaret in Swedish), which is the most extensive alvar landscape terrain in Europe with the term 'alvar' denoting a barren limestone grassland with rich biodiversity.

Indeed, centuries of sustainable use of the barren landscape, where the fields closest to the villages have been cultivated with sheep and cattle grazing the alvar pastures, have shaped the landscape of the Great Alvar. The UNESCO-listed World Heritage Area encompasses the entire southern quarter of the island and goes from coast to coast. The boundary is drawn in the water's 5-meter depth line. The area coincides with the area of Mörbylånga municipality except its northernmost districts of Torslunda, Glömminge, Algutsrum and Norra Möckleby.

1. AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF SOUTHERN ÖLAND AS A WORLD HERITAGE TOURISM DESTINATION

FROM SURVIVAL AGRICULTURE TO UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

With the surface area of 1342 km², Öland is the fourth - largest island in the Baltic Sea. Yet, it is the smallest one of the three limestone islands that rise from the sea behind Gotland (2994 km²) and Saaremaa (2673 km²). It is a very elongated island that is 137 km long from north to south and 14 km wide at the widest point. The limestone bedrock, a mild, sunny, but crispy climate and limited groundwater resources have set the limits and conditions for how the inhabitants can use their landscape. The limestone of Öland was formed about a half-billion years ago as bottom deposits of a Palaeozoic (Ordovician) tropical sea. It contains a rich fossil record of some of the marine creatures that contributed to its building-up.

An alvar is a landscape formed on a limestone plain with thin or no soil and sparse grassland vegetation. Often flooded in spring, and very dry in summer, this semi-natural grassland supports many rare plant species with some relict species from the Ice Age.

Only as recently as 11,000 years ago did the first portions of Öland emerge from the Baltic Sea, after the isostatic pressure of the last glaciers of the latest Ice Age was relieved by melting. This bedrock is best seen on the western side of the island where it protrudes as West Landborg, a 20 to 50-meter-high coastal ridge. It is the highest feature of the island (Högsrum hill is 55 m high) prominent in comparison with lower surroundings. It serves as a watershed for surface- and groundwater. From West Landborg, the entire island slopes gently to the east and the rainfall mainly flows eastwards to the Baltic Sea either as surface water, in streams, or seeps into cracks in the bedrock and forms groundwater.

Finally, the Great Alvar, the dagger-shaped limestone plateau in the southern half of Öland, is the most distinctive landscape feature of the island. The area of the plateau, which is 37-km long and about 15-km wide at its widest northern end, exceeds 260 km². This landscape comprising almost a quarter of the surface of Öland Island is the largest alvar in Europe. Because of the thin soil mantle, this stressed habitat supports a very specific range of steppe-like plants, which is found only there. Lichen and mosses are also common on the plateau.



Early purple orchid

The Great Alvar is a habitat for diverse flora and fauna adapted to the difficult living conditions. When the water after the last Ice Age retreated, durable low-growth plants gained a first foothold in the harsh environment. Later on, not many trees could settle in these hard conditions, with the

Great Alvar still remaining an almost treeless plateau leaving plenty of space for wildflowers and grasses. Disturbance by grazing also plays an important role in the maintenance of a unique character of the alvar landscape.



A wide variety of wildflowers and shrubs, such as Stonecrop, Dropwort, Shrubby Cinquefoil and Kidney Vetch, shape the landscape on the Great Alvar. Certain plants occur only here. Most of the wildflowers blossom from May to July making an additional attraction for visitors. Numerous grasses are also found on the Great Alvar including Meadow Oat-grass and Sheep's Fescue. As would be expected, many fungi grow there as well.

Noteworthy are 34 orchid species, including Common Spotted-Orchid. Artemisia oelandica is endemic to the island. Bushes, shrubs, pygmy trees as well as water pools of the Great Alvar and the low-lying coastal meadows are attractive for a species-rich birdlife of nesting and migrating birds alike.

Yet the Great Alvar is not devoid of any trees, contrary to a common misconception. It holds many sparse stunted trees similar to a pygmy

forest. Although Öland is known for its severely dry conditions, there are some seasonal wetlands and vernal pools, notably the vestigial lagoon area northwest of the village of Alby. Montagu's harrier is often mentioned as a characteristic local bird. Ottenby Nature Reserve is the most important bird sanctuary located on the southernmost tip of the coast of Öland, which also houses a research station for ornithology.

The first wave of Stone Age hunter-gatherers migrated ca. eight to ten thousand years ago across the ice bridge from the mainland following large mammals in the final stages of the latest Ice Age. They led the life based on hunting, fishing and gathering. The best-known early Stone Age settlement occurs at Alby on the east coast of the island, where excavations have revealed vestiges of wooden huts around a prehistoric lagoon. Artefacts retrieved include evidence of bear, marten, seal and porpoise, and also reveal hunting and gathering technologies through the discovery of bone spears, harpoons and processed flint.

In this historical agricultural landscape, there are numerous pre-historic evidences. Stone Age tombs, Bronze Age burial mounds, castles, house foundations and grave fields from the older Iron Age indicate that people lived permanently on Öland for at least 8,000 years adapting their way of life to the physical constraints of the island. From the Stone Age between 6,000 and 3,800 years before present, traces of significant and continuous human activity with ancient dwelling sites, agriculture and livestock relics can be found in some areas of the Great Alvar. Historically, it was used as a pasture, mainly for sheep, and the land-use today, due to the natural geographical conditions, is mostly the same as in the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age.

The Great Alvar for many centuries was a landscape of starvation or, better, of survival. The skinny soil layer meant that the number of grazing livestock had to be limited. Most of the linear villages, were located in the places where they are still today.

Farmland and meadows were cultivated together, with all neighbouring farms sharing the same area. In the Bronze Age and an early part of the Iron Age, the inhabitants had severely depleted the limited timber resources available on the Great Alvar and its margins. This impact had led to the decline of the human population living there around 500 AD documented at Fort Eketorp and other sites.

Viking settlements reappeared on the fringes of the Great Alvar around 800 to 1000 AD. Today's land division goes back to the Middle Ages when the land on Öland was divided into infields (mark in Swedish) and pastures (äng). The alvar pastures - were used solely for grazing. The Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland is symmetrical along its longer axis with the Great Alvar lying in the middle bordered by the village grounds and farmland further descending to the low-lying coastal meadows (sjömarker).

When the reform of agriculture was carried out in Sweden during the 18th and 19th century, the common farmland, pastures and meadows were divided between the farms. Low stone walls, which are so typical of the Great Alvar landscape today, marked new private possessions of different farms.

The coastal plots, which stretched on both sides of the island, were about five to six times the size of the farmland and served to harvest hav as winter fodder for the livestock. Stone walls surrounded the meadows and pastures. On the Great Alvar, the sheep and cattle herds from the adjacent villages grazed, but also semi-wild herds of horses roamed around. With the transformation of agriculture elsewhere in Europe, the farmers preferred to move from their linear villages to the new farmsteads, and the medieval linear villages disappeared. On Öland, this was impossible because of the barren soil, and the old pre-reform division of land, along with the linear villages, was retained.



Stone wall on the Great Alvar

A major stone wall (Mittlandsmuren in Swedish) was erected in the middle of the island in the mid-1800s. The island-long stone wall stretches for 40-km from the south to the north and separates the western part of the island from the eastern part. The farmers on the eastern part were poorer since they had just dairy farms, and the farmers on the western part were richer as they had more cultivated land. Yet, despite these slightly different conditions, the use of the land as well as the land division were the same on the western and the eastern sides of the island.

The islanders still cultivate the area which had been cultivated for many generations and let the livestock herds graze the Great Alvar for thousands of years. On the barren limestone plateau, animals had to eat bushes since there was not enough grass for them.

Öland was an impoverished region for many centuries. The Great Alvar was indeed an example of the landscape where neither people, nor livestock felt good. From the mid-1800s, the island became over-populated there were too many people and too many animals for sustainable living and, therefore, large-scale emigration to the United States happened. As the population increased later on, massive land reclamation efforts were launched to create more agricultural land. Along with the dredging and draining of wetlands, the canals were dug to divert surface water and lower groundwater levels to cultivate larger areas and ensure food supply.

In modern times, like centuries ago, houses and roads are continued to be built along the seacoast. Linear villages on the historical village grounds with period wooden houses and tiny windmills are still featuring the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland to this day. The appeal of the Great Alvar as a well-preserved historical heritage landscape resulting from continuous and arduous toil of many generations of local farmers had led to considerations about its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site in the mid-1990s.

Today, grazing on the Great Alvar is still necessary, both for agricultural production and for conservation reasons to prevent overgrowing of the area by bushes. The Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland was the first Swedish property to be UNESCO-listed as a World Heritage cultural landscape.

Being a pioneer in terms of UNESCO-listing meant that no one was quite sure what it would mean for the area. As the local World Heritage manager has remarked, the original idea was to designate just the Great Alvar as a natural heritage site due to its biodiversity. During the work on the application documents that took place in 1998 and 1999, Mörbylånga Municipality and Kalmar County Administrative Board made extensive information efforts aimed at the local population. Several information meetings were held where all farmers were invited and they were told that they had the decision in their hands.

Through their local units of the Swedish National Farmers' Association, farmers were entitled to vote on the World Heritage issue in the spring of 1999. According to the Association's representatives, no previous issue has been dealt with more democratically within Mörbylånga Municipality than that of the World Heritage nomination. The overall result was in favour of a World Heritage site creation. Still, the final boundary of the listed World Heritage property excluded some of the northernmost villages that voted against the designation. It is visible from the indented shape of the World Heritage property of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland, which was UNESCO-listed in 2000.

A prerequisite for the creation of a UNESCO-listed cultural landscape is that the local population is positive about it. When it comes to a living cultural landscape, this is an indispensable condition, since the users' participation is a prerequisite for maintaining the heritage values.

Farmers realized that World Heritage listing means that the Swedish state assumed responsibility for preserving the agriculture in southern Öland for the future. The discussions and the nomination also led to establishing a consultation group which was formed to address issues related to World Heritage management, later called the World Heritage Council of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland. It is the only agricultural World Heritage site in the Nordic countries, which includes active agriculture in a living landscape. Hence, for the unique natural and cultural values to be maintained, there must also be an agricultural use of the area continued in the future.

The unique feature of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland is that it results from a constant and altering interplay between natural and human environments under very specifically defined geographical conditions. The presence of living and modern agriculture which uses the Great Alvar and its adjacent areas is a prerequisite for the World Heritage integrity. Since the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland is a living cultural landscape where values depend on active agriculture, the managers of the area are faced with the question: What means the conservation of a changing site? First and foremost, the answer lies in the condition.

The Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland is a historical landscape shaped by nature and man in collaboration. It means that modern agriculture which is present there, should continue to develop. It is this continuity in close interaction between man and nature that forms the basis for the UNESCO-listing.



2. GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF THE REGION

Öland has a semi-continental temperate climate with relatively significant air temperature differences between summer and winter. The highest average monthly air temperature (19.8°C) is in August, whereas the lowest average monthly air temperature (-1.1°C) is in February. Located in the rain shadow of the Småland highlands, the island is one of the driest places in Sweden. It is mainly the central part of the island that gets most of rainfall while the northern and southern parts dry to a crisp each summer.

Quite paradoxically, in spite of a more northerly latitude, Öland's northern edge is far milder than its southern tip, since during days, air warms-up over larger surrounding landmasses while retaining substantial maritime features during nights. The northern edge of Öland is also more representative for the island's overall climate features, while only the deep south is much cooler on a narrow peninsula. The average annual precipitation in the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland is just 400 mm, and the annual sunshine duration in Mörbylånga is ca. 2000 hours.

The mild insular climate with many hours of sunshine is favourable for both tourism and agriculture on Öland. Yet, the island's warm, dry and sunny weather, which is appreciated by millions of tourists, causes many problems for farmers due to very scarce surface- and groundwater resources.

The number of agricultural companies in Mörbylånga Municipality has decreased by 20% between 1999 and 2016, while roughly the same acreage of land is still cultivated and grazed. The farms have thus become larger but fewer in the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland. They became more efficient and agricultural production is increasing in recent years, although with some perturbations. It is also a challenge for local young people to stay in agricultural business which is a demanding profession with a low-profit margin and dependence on the weather as well as on EU and national subsidies.

If a farmer is too old and leaves the farm to a son or a daughter, there is a risk that she or he will not be interested in continuing farming. If there is a farm for sale, someone will buy it, but there is no guaranty if the farming remains on southern Öland in the next decade or so. If the remaining farmers stop farming, it will take seven to eight years before there are dramatic changes in the Great Alvar landscape. On the other hand, considering the conservation goals, it is not the number of farmers, which is essential for the maintenance of the World Heritage values, but the number of cows and other livestock grazing on the Great Alvar.

Due to an intensive international competition in the agricultural sector, it is impossible to sustain small farms in Sweden anymore. Farmers need to increase the size of their farms. Now, the future of the living landscape is in the hands of 100 to 150 farmers only.

So instead of four different farms in a village, there can be just one left, but it may be enough for the maintenance of the World Heritage landscape because that farmer will keep the same number of cows. For keeping its traditional farming alive and competitive. new investments are allowed on the World Heritage area: larger tractors, bigger barns, silos etc. Naturally, the regulations of landscape protection have to be respected, and several permits are required for any larger-scale change. These permits have nothing to do with the World Heritage status. However, the values and integrity of the area are already well-protected by the Swedish law. and there is no conservation legislation specifically tailored for World Heritage sites in Sweden.

It is not the number of farmers, which is essential, but the number of cows and other livestock grazing on the Great Alvar. The management plan does not impose any restrictions on land use. Even the ancient stone walls can be moved to make fields wider.

It is mainly the Environmental Code, the Planning and Building Act and the Cultural Environment Act that preserve the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland as a UNESCO-listed area. National interest areas for nature and cultural environment. supporting an active outdoor life are regulated by the Environmental Code and the European network of Natura 2000. These areas also cover large parts of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland. Brown beans are a very typical regional agricultural product. In 1999, all brown beans grown in Sweden were grown on Öland. In 2010, the Association for Brown Beans of Öland applied for this agricultural commodity to be protected geographically. Later that year, the European Commission approved the application.

New agricultural practices can be introduced along with new varieties of crops like legumes, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, onions, strawberries, red beet and pumpkins. Thanks to the World Heritage listing, brown beans are still grown on Öland. It is the area with the largest acreage of brown beans in Sweden.



Brown beans of Öland

The existing EU NATURA 2000 regulations are much more essential for the farmers on southern Öland than those defining the World Heritage status. If the EU subsidies disappear, then the Swedish Government should take over the responsibility of keeping the open landscapes and pastures of the Great Alvar. Two types of agricultural support, which are not unique to World Heritage farmers, but which are particularly relevant for insular

farmers include the support for grazing on alvars (Alvarmark in Swedish). It is available only on Öland and Gotland, which limits the number of farmers who can apply for the support within this specific category. The pasture support has somewhat varied over the years. Another type of agricultural support is for cultivating traditional brown beans mentioned above.

THE DROUGHT

In recent years, Öland has suffered from severe droughts with declining precipitation, dropping groundwater levels, and regular shuttle traffic of water tankers to and from the mainland in summer. when the island most probably will experience rainless summers more often. The drier climate means a further loss of groundwater, which in turn means the loss of agriculture and the loss of the Great Alvar as it is today.

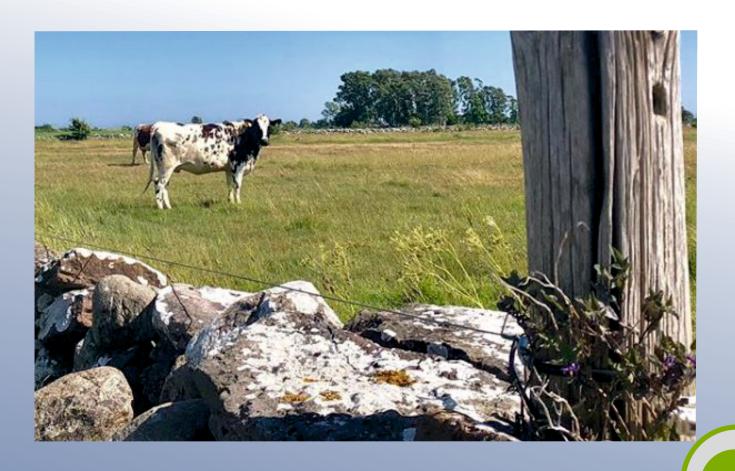
Too little water at critical times can be the decisive factor for the future of agriculture on Öland and thus, ultimately, crucial for the World Heritage. According to one farmer, in 2018, when there was no rain for two months, the drought has caused a significant loss in the harvest. It was ca. 40% lower than average. And not one or several villages have been affected, but most of them were left without drinking water for cattle and for people. And it has become an ever-bigger issue during the last three to four years.

The farmers are desperately looking for groundwater resources. Many farmers are considering the construction of irrigation

ponds or expanding the existing ones to deal with future droughts. Yet even under the current stress and ever-worse perspectives, forcing the farmers to reduce the numbers of livestock drastically would cause adverse effects on the biodiversity of the Great Alvar because it depends on grazing. Therefore, it is quite a vicious circle.

It is possible to keep just one animal sustainably on 10 hectares of alvar pastures. The European Union contributes money for the maintenance of open landscapes and pastures, which many local farmers consider as a prerequisite for keeping animals on the Great Alvar.

It is a challenge to make the Swedish government realise that this problem of droughts is threatening the very survival of the World Heritage and the farmers, which must keep the landscape alive. The Farmers Association is working on this situation, but the situation is depending on the goodwill of the central government.



The water shortage is the most severe threat to the World Heritage integrity as the groundwater deficit each summer might become critical with advancing climate change. If the farmers do not have enough fodder for a sufficiently large number of cattle, then it would be difficult to maintain the open landscape.

Dry summers on Öland are followed by wet autumns and winters when the rainfall floods large areas. Yet, due to the existing drainage canals, when it rains, the rainfall water doesn't seep into the bedrock to refill the groundwater aquifers. Instead, it runs straight out into the Baltic Sea carrying away all the nutrients with the runoff. As a result, not only the ground gets very dry, but also, the Baltic Sea gets polluted, which is also a huge issue. The restoration of the formerly drained wetlands could provide at least some solution to both problems. Currently, there are a lot of wetland restoration projects ongoing and a new desalination plant is up and running.



In the summer of 2016, a fire happened in a historical linear village, and it was difficult to extinguish it because there was not enough water available locally. The water had to be brought from as far as 30 km away. Thus, the lack of water is felt not only by farmers, but

it also poses a direct threat to the very survival of the linear villages as an integral component of the World Heritage property. It is always windy on the island, and it is an arid landscape.

OTHER SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES

As we see, the agriculture sector is permanently on the verge of sustainability on the Great Alvar and hence the broad support for the World Heritage designation among the farmers two decades ago. In the 1990s, high unemployment on the island, depopulation, low-quality of services to the residents when shops could not keep open all year round and agriculture was to a large extent dependent on EU support, opportunities for a change were welcome. For the farmers on Öland. ensuring that the land was continued to be used and grazed as a World Heritage site was of greater importance than more sources of income from eventually more intensive agriculture.

The fire could destroy the entire heritage village very fast, and this possibility terrifies the World Heritage managers. Also, depopulation is still a major issue with many estates, especially along the coast, converted into second homes. Most of the still-active farmers are in their fifties.

As of 2016, the following settlements of Mörbylånga municipality were within the UNESCO site of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland: Gräsgård, Gårdby, Hulterstad, Kastlösa, Mörbylånga, Resmo, Sandby, Segerstad, Smedby, Stenåsa, Södra Möckleby, Ventlinge, Vickleby, Ås. Two largest of them are Mörbylånga (1841 inhabitants as of 2018) and Vickleby (469 inhabitants). Altogether, there are over 15,000 inhabitants in Mörbylånga Municipality, but only ca. 3000 of them live within the UNESCO World Heritage site. The Great Alvar is bounded on the east, west and south by the perimeter public two-lane highway which circumnavigates the entire island. At several places there are roads that run east-west across the Great Alvar.

Small villages such as Vickleby, Gettlinge, Hulterstad, Alby and Triberga lie on the fringe of the Great Alvar along the perimeter highway. There are fewer and smaller villages within the alvar expanse itself:
Möckelmossen, Solberga and Flisås, for example. Some of the old villages are totally deserted such as Dröstorp. Fort Eketorp is a medieval fort located on the Great Alvar in Gräsgård district on southeast Öland. During the 1900s, Eketorp was reconstructed under the supervision of the National Antiquities Office. Ottenby, a nature reserve lies at the extreme south end of the Great Alvar.



Fort Eketorp

By continuing the traditions of farming which existed for thousands of years, the farmers have achieved something unique and of value for the whole world. But visitors struggle to perceive what is so special about the Great Alvar beyond the open landscape and the traditional linear villages.

For many local farmers, the World Heritage designation has become a kind of confirmation of the work they and their ancestors have done. However, for outsiders, there is some difficulty to understand what the World Heritage of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland really means. Therefore, there is a need for more information and explanation to convey the Outstanding Universal Value both to local inhabitants and to many visitors - that it is the right way how the landscape is kept open and why it is essential. It is how the Great Alvar was maintained in the same manner for thousands of years which has heritage value.

It is also an ancient way of dividing, or rather not dividing, the land. As a result, the linear villages have been preserved intact on Southern Öland. However, there is also a feeling locally that the UNESCO designation is only acceptable under certain conditions. The management plan for the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland is partly based on previous agreements within the Council and provides comprehensive knowledge of the World Heritage and its values. The plan also serves as a tool to protect and cherish the site's values as well as make them more understandable for the locals and the visitors alike.

The way of living on the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland is closely related to the problem of depopulation and conversion of the linear villages into exquisite second home areas on a sunny Baltic Sea island as houses are sold to newcomers.

The homes are costly in the countryside like this, and the local population is becoming quite old on the southern part of Öland. There is indeed the problem of depopulation in some villages on the southern tip because there are ever more summer houses there. On the other hand, the farmers on Öland are younger on average than in the rest of Sweden. There is still a hope locally that there are quite a few younger locals to take over the farms after their parents retire instead of moving to Stockholm or some other big cities.

Some of the second homeowners stay on the island longer than merely during the summer season. They come for the Easter and remain well until the Harvest Festival in September and beyond. So, most of the summer houses are used for a rather long time throughout the year. Yet, there is a need for more young families to settle in the southern part of the island. It is necessary to keep the schools open. There is one school in the south of Öland with 40 children. The depopulation in the south of the island might have also happened because traditional commercial fisheries have disappeared and some local harbour settlements like Grönhögen, or even Degerhamn, have dwindled in population size.



3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

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 Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland belongs to the group of cultural landscapes and botanical gardens at the seaside along with the Curonian Spit, a transboundary UNESCO World Heritage property shared between Lithuania and the Russian Federation. Apart from three botanic gardens listed among the coastal World Heritage cultural sites, the other 32 World Heritage sites in this group feature a wide variety of cultural heritage landscapes at the seaside with a rather broad spectrum of uses for tourism.

According to the official summary of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland provided by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the southern part of Öland, an island in the Baltic Sea off the south-eastern coast of Sweden, is dominated by a vast limestone plateau. People have lived there for some five thousand years, adapting their way of life to the physical constraints of the island. As a consequence, the landscape is unique, and there is abundant evidence of a continuous human settlement from prehistoric times to the present.

Southern Öland is a living agrarian landscape where villages, arable lands, coastal lands and alvar plains make up this World Heritage property. The Öland farmers, in their various everyday lives, are a necessary part (sine qua non) of the history and future of this landscape.

This outstanding human settlement has made optimum use of diverse landscape types on a single island. Limestone bedrock and a warm, dry climate have set limits for how the islanders can use their landscape. Earlier, the land was divided into infields and pastures. The infields lay closest to the village and consisted of arable lands and meadows. The pastures - the alvar plains and the coastal lands - were used for grazing. With the transformation of agriculture in the 18th and 19th Century, this distinction disappeared on the mainland and elsewhere in Europe. On Öland, barren soil ruled this out, and the old division, with linear villages in 'lawful location', was retained and is easily discernible today.



The villages are almost entirely located along West Landborg, and there are a large number of archaeological sites from the prehistoric period. The present agricultural landscape and the community of southern Öland have a unique cultural tradition which still exists in land use, land division, place names, settlement and biological diversity as far back as the Iron Age.

Criterion (iv): The landscape of Southern Öland takes its contemporary form from its long cultural history, adapting to the physical constraints of the geology and topography.

Criterion (v): Southern Öland is an outstanding example of human settlement, making the optimum use of diverse landscape types on a single island.

Integrity

The property encompasses 56,323 ha which comprise the entire cultural landscape that demonstrates the historical land-use and land division system. The landscape is preserved in all its necessary parts and contains all the necessary attributes to convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. It preserves abundant traces of its long settlement history and continues to demonstrate human ingenuity and resourcefulness in utilizing a physical landscape and environment that are not at first sight favourable to human settlement and exploitation. The farmers are a living part of the agrarian landscape hence the integrity of this World Heritage property as a cultural landscape is fully maintained.

The functional relationship between the elements of the agricultural landscape of southern Öland is very distinct, well-preserved and highly authentic. Also, the medieval land-use pattern of villages and field systems is still clearly visible, which is a very rare survival in northern Europe.

Authenticity

The present-day agrarian landscape is characterized by several distinct and historically significant chronological strata, which together reflect a considerable chronological depth: a) the abandoned Iron Age landscape, b) the far-reaching medieval distinction between infields and pastures, with settlements structured as villages and c) the land distribution reforms of the 18th and 19th Centuries, resulting in the redistribution of holdings and the erection of stone walls to mark the boundaries between them. Successive protective measures have ensured the survival of the significant cultural features of Southern Öland with a minimum of extraneous additions or modification. As a continuing landscape, therefore, its authenticity must be considered to be high.



Protection and management requirements

The Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland is protected according to various Swedish statutes, most importantly the National Heritage Act, the Planning and Building Act and the Environmental Code. These safeguard the archaeological sites and monuments, historic buildings, landscape and wildlife of southern Öland. Under the terms of the Environmental Code, the entire island of Öland is designated an Area of National Interest, and several additional areas, which include much of this World Heritage property, are also designated "areas of national interest for natural and cultural values or for outdoor recreation."

Within the World Heritage property, ownership is principally vested in a large number of private individuals and enterprises, the State and Mörbylånga Municipality. Throughout the municipality, the number of farmers has decreased from 428 to 150

between 2000 and 2018. However, no agricultural land has been taken out of production. The agricultural policy of the European Union and Sweden may have a decisive impact on the future of southern Öland. As noted before, in order for the natural and cultural attributes of the property to be sustained, the future must also include a living agriculture.

A declaration of intent regarding the property has been agreed upon by Kalmar County Administrative Board, the Federation of Swedish Farmers, Regional Council of Kalmar County and Mörbylånga Municipality. The guidelines for cooperation and objectives for the World Heritage property are set out in this policy document. A management plan for this property was adopted in 2008 and includes a clarification of the division of responsibility between these parties as well as provisions for its conservation and protection.



4. WORLD HERITAGE TOURISM SUPPLY SIDE

ACCOMMODATION

Kalmar County Administrative Board considered that UNESCO-listing could imply increasing agritourism that could provide farmers with an extra source of income by, for example, renting out spare rooms to tourists and launching a system of local produce sales directly from farms. Some farmers living on the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland have indeed chosen to rent out the spare rooms or provide their product sales to visitors directly from the farm. The farmers who decided not to get involved directly were also likely to have some business collaboration with a colleague who is directly involved in the tourism industry.

However, recent statistics indicate a reduced interest in room rentals on the farms of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland.

The main reason for the decline in agritourism offers is that it is a challenging task to take good care of tourists on the farm. It is a labour for which there is not enough time while farming since in both sectors, the most labour-intensive periods coincide in summer. The farmers of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland see that there are benefits from tourism for the area, but they also see that providing hospitality services requires very special psychological attitude and social skills.



The attitude towards tourism is favourable among the farmers, regardless of whether tourism provides them with direct income or not. There is also a need to diversify the agritourism offer. So far, neither the farmers who rent out rooms to tourists nor those who own a farm-shop fully use the label of World Heritage in the marketing of their offer, which is a pity. The farmers who specialise in agritourism could play an essential role as World Heritage ambassadors. They possess knowledge about the connections in nature. Many locals consider the possibility of taking part in tourism to some extent, for example, through alvar tour guiding or sale of local products.

The interviewed locals believe that tourism can increase further without any problems. However, many locals also consider that the number of tourists must not be too high there. It is the small-scale tourism which can benefit Southern Öland best. Even though the number of genuine agritourism farms decreases, there are ever more private owners offering accommodation on the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland. However, none of them practices agriculture anymore. Most of the accommodation facilities in Southern Öland are typical in the sense that the offer is quite significantly skewed to a higher price range.

As a tourist destination Southern Öland caters to a higher segment of visitors lacking accommodation diversity. Local people do not want large-scale tourism like in Northern Öland. It would be difficult to drive agricultural machinery if there were tourist car congestion on the roads.

In Mörbylånga Municipality, the median prices for double rooms in the shoulder season, which means April to May and September to October are in the range from 100 € to 150 € per night, which is way much higher than in other similar not so big municipalities. Although the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland is attractive to more active visitors having more basic needs for their accommodation, yet about three-quarters of the total hotel accommodation supply comes

from the lower half of the upper segment from 50 € to 150 € per night for accommodation in a double room on a weekend night in the shoulder season.

However, the high cost of hotels in Southern Öland is for different reasons than those in Stralsund, Wismar or Karlskrona. These high prices can be explained by the fact that the vast majority (from 75% to 85%) of tourists visiting Southern Öland either stay in bungalows or on camping sites, or they come to their own second homes. And, therefore, they don't need any hotel accommodation. Hence, the hotels cater to the overnight needs only of a small proportion of visitors to Southern Öland.

Quite a few of these expensive hotels are in Färjestad which is outside the World Heritage area, but that doesn't mean that it does not affect the accommodation supply in the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland. There are only a few accommodation places in the whole World Heritage area, which are classified as hotels. The remaining facilities are camping sites, caravan parks, hostels and airB&Bs and alike. Hence if tourists want to stay at a hotel, most probably, they will have to stay overnight in Färjestad and pay an extra price for the comfort even though they might have come to look at the World Heritage further south.

Tourism sustainability on Southern Öland is first of all about saving groundwater. The owners inform their guests well before the arrival that they have to be ready to save water. Many agritourism farms succeed in convincing their guests to save water as the awareness about sustainability is high,

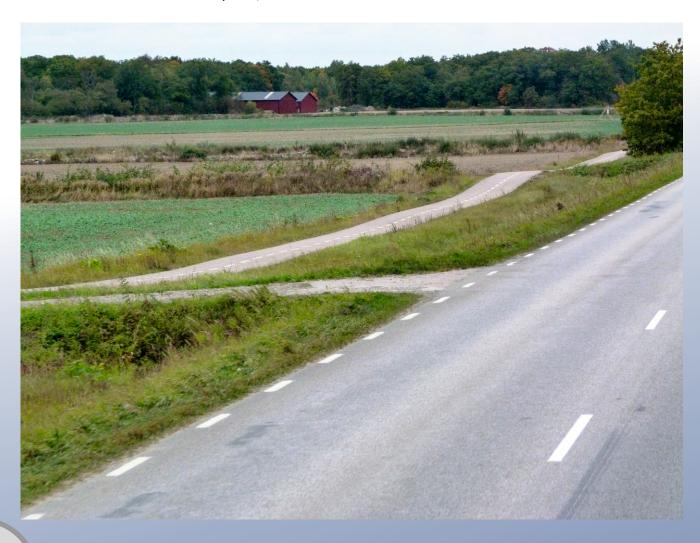
In summer, some linear villages are completely left without drinking water as mentioned above. For agritourism farms it is very hard to survive. They are hit as hard by the drought as everyone else around the Great Alvar. The quality of services at agritourism farms fully depend upon sufficient water supply. During summer, when there is a severe shortage of water, the hosts of accommodation facilities around the Great Alvar are not allowed to fill their swimming pools with the water from the Municipal Water Source. Instead, they have to use their pond and refill it during rainy seasons. And they are not allowed to water the lawns with a hose.

OUTDOORS AND INFORMATION ABOUT WORLD HERITAGE

To appreciate the uniqueness of the World Heritage and to experience the tranquillity of Southern Öland, people need to get into nature with a guide. The World Heritage managers want the visitors to move around and explore, to

increase the accessibility of the landscape by developing hiking, biking, and horse-riding trails. The shoulder seasons are particularly attractive for outdoors on Southern Öland as they extend the tourism season to almost half a year since in fall, island destinations enjoy warmer temperatures than inland ones due to a moderating effect of the maritime climate.

Over 140 km of hiking trails criss-cross the Great Alvar. Also, there is a network of over 130 km of biking routes. It is impossible to experience the entire Southern Öland in one day by bike. Therefore, there is a need to develop the cycling route network further.



Mörbylånga Municipality has launched a project in the World Heritage area as a way to enable more people to enjoy the treasures of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland. The World Heritage managers produced a detailed cycling map focusing on 'creating a content'. There still are areas for further improvement, particularly extending the hiking routes. Visitors must be motivated to get out of their car and to use the car as little as possible. Most of the tourist facilities on Öland are specifically adapted for tourists having a vehicle. Yet new alternatives are likely to make people use a bicycle much more, first of all, to have two other cycling routes designed or at least the existing ones better equipped.

A species-rich birdlife offers possibilities to see more different species of birds on the island than anywhere else in southeast Sweden. Ottenby Nature Reserve is an important bird sanctuary that houses a research station for ornithology and an extraordinary nature centre.

On the southern tip of the island, bird monitoring activities have been carried out for a long time. Since 1946, bird research has been conducted there. The nature centre of Ottenby provides an opportunity for visitors to learn more about the local plants, animals, geology and cultural history that are linked to the World Heritage. It attracts over 150,000 visitors each year. The nature centre of Ottenby is an excellent place for getting an initial information about the Great Alvar and the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland, but also for a more in-depth discovery of the World Heritage. Here the visitor will find guided tours, an interesting exhibition, a high-quality bookstore, a restaurant and even the Sweden's tallest lighthouse, Långe (tall) Jan.



Ottenby Nature Reserve

There is a 50-km long birdwatch hiking trail within the World Heritage area from Gårdby in the north to the naturecentre of Ottenby in the south. In the villages along the trail, there are information columns with QR codes providing information, accompanied by birdsongs related to the

Hole # 11 of Grönhögen Golf Course is appreciated as one of the 18 most beautiful golf holes out of the total 8500 golf holes available in Sweden. In the online marketing materials, Grönhögen Golf Course uses the visual appeal of the World Heritage landscape.

The birdwatch hiking trail is a good alternative to seaside tourism which prevails in the southeast of the island. Although for local hospitality businesses it is easier to survive relying on mass seaside tourism, yet birdwatchers help to prolong the tourist season since they come in April and May, then return in September and stay until the end of October. Locals welcome any active experiencing of the World Heritage landscape, including hiking, biking and playing golf. According to one of the World Heritage managers: "if anyone wants to play golf in the World Heritage Site, that's great!"

Two 18-hole golf courses are located in Southern Öland, and the developers of one of them have converted a wasteland into a high-quality golf course. The course outline respects the existing landscape conservation regulations and are as friendly as possible to the local semi-natural environment. They are highly appraised by Mörbylånga Municipality and Kalmar County Administrative Board for being very environmentally conscious, and for doing a lot of good work in that area. Grönhögen Golf Course is located right in the World Heritage landscape and is widely considered to be one of the most visually appealing golf courses in Sweden.

Information material (web and printed) about the Great Alvar and the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland is available in Swedish, English and German. The Management Plan for the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland adopted by the local World Heritage Council anticipates continuous reviewing and developing new information material, such as brochures, signs, regular updating of the World Heritage official website and more. There is a UNESCO sign and label on the official website of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland. There is also a board with information about the World Heritage in Färjestad, i.e., at the gateway to the island. Therefore, the visitors who know nothing about the World Heritage, but are curious to learn, can get off the car there and read about it.

Locals should be able to convey the essential messages about the World Heritage to visitors. Each farmer meeting visitors on the Great Alvar should be able to guide them, show them around or at least tell them what UNESCO and the Outstanding Universal Value is.



FESTIVALS AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The efforts to prolong the tourist season can be assisted by popular events held in shoulder seasons. Engaging experiences in the form of traditional festivals celebrated at the site are potent means to extend the tourist season as an example of the Harvest Festival of Öland shows. With a suitable and dedicated organisation, staged heritage events can be useful marketing tools. Notably, the World Heritage-themed and branded 'hallmark events' might be instrumental in prolonging the tourist season at coastal World Heritage sites if held in spring to kick-start the season or in fall to close it. The Harvest Festival of Öland is one of the best examples of community festivals and local celebrations which can be labelled as hallmark events.

The Harvest Festival of Öland (Ölands Skördefest in Swedish) in late September is the most exciting and best-known event on the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland. The festival offers over 900 different events and activities throughout the entire island from south to north.

The Harvest Festival of Öland also provides an opportunity to sell locally-produced products to a broad array of customers arriving to buy the local specialities from as far as Germany. The Harvest Festival organisation announces the Öland Village of the Year and awards it

with the Golden Pumpkin. Mass -media are present at the event, and on that week, the eyes of the whole country are directed towards Öland. On Week 39, the festivities take place from Wednesday to Sunday, which means for five days and four nights.

There is an official inauguration of the Harvest Festival on Wednesday evening. There are also many other celebrations in almost every village on the island. Saturday is the peak day because then all the people attend who work on Thursday and Friday. The weekend visitors come on Friday evening, stay for Saturday and then go back home on Sunday. The villages of Öland exhibit and showcase everything they have best in crafts, agriculture, and food. Here visitors can sample all the Öland products, wander around the Öland villages and enjoy all the wonderful Öland produce.

Journalist Sven Ekberg (b. 1944) with his colleague, also with media connections, both local inhabitants of the island, were the originators and authors of the Harvest Festival of Öland, which currently attracts 350,000 to 400,000 visitors to the island every year. They saw the harvest festival on Guernsey Island in the English Channel and decided to create a similar event on their home island. And now this tradition is in its 23rd year (since 1997). Naturally, the event wasn't that big in the first years. Still, it has increased ever since then, and became ever larger and more popular among visitors and media with each year.



Currently, the organisation of the Harvest Festival is the responsibility of an institution established for preparing, coordinating and managing the whole event. It is a limited company, although, in the beginning, it was just a grass-roots network of local farmers. Yet later it grew also financially, so the organisers had to transform it into a limited company instead of the grass-roots network. Now three people are working in the organisation of the Harvest Festival all year round. As the event approaches, ever more people join the organisation of the event as volunteers. The company has a magazine published in June where everybody who has something to show puts an ad and, in this way, they support the organisation financially.

The World Heritage Week was born some years ago on the initiative of local history societies, the Mörbylånga Municipality, the Öland Guide Association, the nature centreof Ottenby and the Swedish Church among others. It has become an annual event celebrated every July. The number of visitors is 3,000 to 4,000.

It is a week full of activities with a definite purpose: together, local stakeholders put the focus on the unique cultural heritage. In 2010, there was a World Heritage weekend, but in 2012, the weekend was extended to become a week. The idea, however, is the same - through many and varied activities, carried out by different associations, companies and other stakeholders, visualise the unique values of the World Heritage of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland. The number of contributing companies and organisations is about 35, with an estimated number of individuals of the network being 80.

There are almost 2,000 small enterprises registered in Mörbylånga Municipality. However, it doesn't mean that there are 2,000 shops or galleries because the entrepreneurs might run two or three enterprises in parallel. 75% of all the businesses are a one-person or one family business, and about 90% to 92% of the enterprises have no more than ten employees. Hence it might be difficult to label them as entrepreneurs. It is more a kind of a lifestyle: instead of being employed by

anybody else they enjoy having their own business. Yet they have no interest really in growing as an enterprise and employing more people.

The heritage atmosphere and unique light on the Great Alvar and the seacoast is an excellent source of inspiration for artists. At the Harvest Festival, the artists open up their studios during the art nights, Visitors can visit them in their studio and look at everything they had created.

There are many creative industries among the small companies now with a lot of art galleries and small boutique shops. The sunny climate and tranquillity invite many artists to move to the villages of Southern Öland either permanently, or temporarily in their purchased or rented houses. The island boasts the most extended summer in Sweden. Therefore, it became quite fashionable among people of creative professions to move there. Some artists come each year for the Easter and stay even until Christmas.



FOOD IN THE WORLD HERITAGE

Sustainable World Heritage tourism is also about products, what the local people are going to sell to visitors, and how will the visitors appreciate it. Kalmar Öland's Garden Products (Kalmar Ölands Trädgårds-produkter in Swedish) is an economic association, consisting of 180 growers who deliver their harvest from Öland, including the World Heritage site, and the surrounding area to the processing and sales companies. It turned out that it was possible to distinguish and position locally produced organic food products with a World Heritage label, and to earn a little more on the market.

World Heritage-labelled strawberries from Southern Öland are more expensive on the market in Stockholm than ordinary organic strawberries. Still, the UNESCO logo is not permitted in their marketing. The World Heritage has high value in local people's minds, but it is necessary to strengthen it as a local brand.

Food in the World Heritage (Mat i världsarvet in Swedish) was an agricultural fair held each summer for two days in Mörbylånga back-to-back with the World Heritage Week. The Local Business Association of Mörbylånga Municipality was the initiator of the fair. LRF-Sydost (Southeast Chapter of the National Farmers' Association), the Household Society, Öland Tourism Organization and Mörbylånga Municipality were also involved in the organisation of the event and committed to its success. Food in the World Heritage primarily focused on local food production, which is an essential prerequisite for Southern Öland.



World Heritage-labelled strawberries from Southern Öland



The organisation of the fair was a collective effort of six local organisations. Mörbylånga municipality and Kalmar County Administrative Board covered part of organisational expenses. There were lectures given for farmers and visitors where they can learn more about the World Heritage sites which are similar to or different from the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland. Visitors could also buy and taste food and thus support small local enterprises which are at the heart of the World Heritage site. Local farmers found the fair very useful for selling heritage-labelled products made with local knowledge and sold with higher added value.

5. WORLD HERITAGE TOURISM DEMAND SIDE

After agriculture, tourism is second most important industry on Öland. In 2018, the island had enjoyed a total of 1,443,214 commercial guest nights spread over hotels, holiday villages, hostels and campsites. Yet, Mörbylånga Municipality received 386,318 guest overnights, which was 1,8% less than 393.399 guest overnights received in 2017. Bearing in mind that tourism seasonality is high in Mörbylånga, it might be that the main reason for the decrease in the number of overnights is related to an unusually hot and dry summer. In the spell of sweltering weather, many holiday-makers prefer to spend their vacation in seaside resorts of Northern Öland better suited for 'sun, sand and sea' tourism than Southern Öland suffering from the water deficit.

The neighbouring Borgholm Municipality has also experienced the decline of 4.3% in guest overnights in 2018 albeit, according to statistics, the number of cars traveling across the bridge to Öland during the summer months of 2018 has increased slightly. Indeed. the arrival of Swedish visitors to Öland was lower by 2.1% in 2018 compared to 2017. Although the number of international guest nights has increased by 13% or 16,811 more guest nights compared to 2017 but it could not compensate the loss of Swedish visitors. There is another possible reason for this decline, which is the increasing number of motorhomes that are staying in free parking places and are not registered. Therefore, the actual number of tourists on the island might be higher.

There is indeed a very high tourist pressure on Öland during summer. In 2017, Öland enjoyed 1.45 million guest nights, of which 1.35 million were overnights by Swedish visitors, which was an increase of 103,500 guest nights or 8.7% compared to 2016. After having declining figures for a few years, Öland began to rise again as a visitor destination in 2015. The increase was most evident in Northern Öland, where there was also the highest capacity to receive guests. Mörbylånga Municipality was less popular than Borgholm and Västervik municipalities but more popular than Kalmar Municipality.

From June till August, Kalmar County is Sweden's 4th most visited area. Over half of all registered guest nights in Kalmar County each year are reported on Öland. Borgholm Municipality is always the most popular among visitors and Mörbylånga Municipality is third.

Only the metropolitan regions of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö have more visitors. Most of the domestic visitors come to Öland for leisure activities in summer. However, even in such a sharp seasonality, there is no problem with parking lots in Southern Öland since there is still space available even in summer. Due to its insular location, the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland receives most of its visitors coming by car over the Öland Bridge (State Road No. 137). Therefore, Färjestad located next to the bridge is the central transport arrival hub for the World Heritage area, which starts south from the town.



On the mainland side of the bridge, Kalmar is the primary transport arrival hub. The city is connected with the outside world by train (the Öresund train, Coast to Coast and Stångådal railway), regional bus and plane (Kalmar Öland Airport). Kalmar is located at E22 between Malmö and Norrköping and is the start/end point for the State Road No. 25 to Halmstad and Växjö. Two regular flight lines connect the Kalmar Öland Airport with two different airports in the Greater Stockholm area. The Scandinavian carrier SAS flies with Boeing 737, ATR-72, Airbus A320 and CRJ-900 to Stockholm-Arlanda and the southern Swedish regional low-cost carrier BRA flies with ATR-72 to Stockholm-Bromma. In 2018, ca. 240,000 passengers used this airport.

Tourist peaks are around specific events, and school breaks: "Öland Spirar" (a major event in May), Midsummer (traditional holiday in June) and the Harvest Festival (a major event in September). Currently, over 90% of the visitors arrive at Öland by own car.

With the opening of the Öland Bridge on September 30, 1972, car tourism quickly took over the island. The distribution of the car traffic over the Öland Bridge in 2018 clearly shows the primary peak season from Week 26 (mid-July) to Week 30 (mid-August) with a short secondary peak during the Harvest Festival in Week 39. At present, many visitors on Öland live in Kalmar and make day or weekend trips to Öland. The weekend traffic prevails over the workday traffic.

An absolute majority of the motorised visitors head north when reaching Öland, particularly in summer. However, quite a few of the motorised families with children, or elderly pairs, particularly those who favour active outdoors, also explore more tranquil and exciting places on the southern part of the island driving on the public two-lane highway which circumnavigates the island. They realise that southern Öland is different from the northern part of the island, which is not as special as the Great Alvar and coastal areas around it in the south.



The Öland Bridge

The impact of the World Heritage designation on tourism in Southern Öland is hard to measure as there are no precise statistics. The fact that the World Heritage is one of many travel reasons is evident, but there is likely to be further untapped potential. However, according to the local World Heritage managers, the average duration of stay in Southern Öland is three days which is pretty long. If it is true, it means that World Heritage exploration by combining various transportation means - car, biking and, maybe, horse-riding or hiking is attractive for visitors. In that case, the World Heritage status of the tourist destination may indeed prolong the stay of visitors on the UNESCOlisted site.

Camping guests still make up a large proportion of the visitors. The camping sector accounts for as much as 75% to 87% of all overnight stays on Öland. Domestic visitors prevail comprising up to 90% of visitors. This proportion is valid for all tourist seasons.

Öland has long been an essential factor for Swedish tourism. During the 19th Century, well-off people came from the cities to enjoy the tranquillity of the island. Traces are left in traditional period resort architecture by the upper class of the 19th century that sought quiet on Öland. As mentioned, during the 1950s and 1960s, Öland started to attract families with children when the boom of camping grounds kick-started in Sweden and continued on into the next century. Today, Öland is one of Sweden's most well-known visitor destinations, which attracts many different target groups.

Of the total number of visitors crossing the Öland Bridge, ca. 70% go north, and 30% go south and 75% of the northbound tourists go there just for 'sun, sand and sea'. Domestic visitors absolutely prevail in the total number of visitors, both in the more popular northern part and less popular southern part of the island. The other four of top five nationalities visiting the World Heritage site of the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland are Germans (5%), Danes, Norwegians and Dutch. Half of the overseas visitors come from

Germany, and this share is steadily increasing, although the number of visitors from neighbouring Nordic countries is growing as well.

Tourists going south are interested in culture, nature, birds, orchids and similar attractions. Many visitors who come to enjoy the southern part of the island are not only interested in nature but also go there due to scenic appeal of the vast open plateau of the Great Alvar.

There are not only more 3-S amenities in the north but also a lot of facilities for partying, dining- and wining-out. It means that only 25% of the northbound tourists might decide to visit attractions in the south during their stay on Öland. From the 1970s to the 1990s, Northern Öland was primarily associated with festive youth and Midsummer celebrations, whereas Southern Öland was traditionally attractive to wildlife fans. Southern Öland's abundant birdlife and biodiversity have long since attracted visitors who appreciate nature.

Perhaps they even don't understand why it's beautiful, but their reaction and also comments left on the online TripAdvisor review platform prove that the landscape is aesthetically very appealing. It is indeed a very different kind of visitors visiting the southern part of the island, looking for the quality of the offer, interested in genuine, unique, and inspiring experiences and knowledge. Therefore, contrasting tourist numbers in the north and the south of the island do not mean much. It's just two different kinds of tourist demand.

People visiting Southern Öland want to experience nature and the traditional farming life. The World Heritage designation's tourist appeal is related first of all to the unique environment of the Great Alvar and the inspiring story of the local farmers as its custodians.

In September, the Harvest Festival is about food and art, and Southern Öland is and has always been, an extraordinary place during the Harvest Festival. As mentioned, birdwatchers prevail on the south tip of the island. They come well before the Midsummer in May and return in September and October. In this way, they make a real difference in prolonging the tourist season. These 'new locals' also increase the demand for local ecological products and items produced by local creative industries.

Those who have their summer homes ('new locals') on the island help to prolong the tourist season and thus increase the local economic turnover. Therefore, the conversion of traditional living houses into second homes may be beneficial.

The co-occurring visitor reviews about Southern Öland left on the online TripAdvisor review platform are not very diverse. The lighthouse named Långe Jan located at the end of the island occupies the central position. Visitors can ascend it and enjoy the beautiful views of the environs - the sea and the island. The co-occurring words are: 'birds', 'watch', 'Långe Jan', 'orchids', 'seals', 'Ottenby' and 'southern tip'. Also, the co-occurrence

network of the words in the reviews indicates that the Great Alvar is fun for kids: 'child', 'activity', 'fun', 'small', 'interesting', 'museum'. These TripAdvisor reviews are mainly associated with Fort Eketorp.

Not every tourist has an understanding of how the agricultural heritage landscape should live and develop. There is little understanding of modern agriculture with silage bales when large tractors start making noise early in the morning. Nor do they understand that the healthy animals are out on pasture during the summer, far from the farm, on the unique Great Alvar and seaside meadows. Nevertheless, the overall guest experience and satisfaction on Southern Öland is rather high - 4.58 on a 5-grade scale.

Many of the visitors have an oldfashioned romantic image of a Swedish farm with cattle and cows with calves at the farm. This non-existing 'village idyll' may easily lead to disappointment in the encounter with modern agriculture on an agritourism farm.



We may see that many visitors who visited Southern Öland and left their reviews on the online TripAdvisor platform are familiar with the term Southern Öland. They understand that is not a geographical entity but a UNESCO-listed property, although the name 'UNESCO' is almost non-existent in the reviews (only 3% of visitors mention the words 'UNESCO' or 'World Heritage' in their online reviews). In their co-occurring words, visitors emphasize not the cultural landscape or cultural heritage, but nature and scenery: 'birds', 'seals', 'orchids', 'Great Alvar', 'nice view'.

Visitors who left their reviews on TripAdvisor do not perceive the Outstanding Universal Value of Southern Öland as related to the traditional agricultural landscape. The only exception is the Great Alvar, which was the original motivation for the inclusion of Southern Öland in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Southern Öland is an extraordinary

cultural landscape for Scandinavia and even for entire Europe. But there are very few reviews on TripAdvisor affirming this exceptionality, and there is no semantic link between the terms' Great Alvar' and 'UNESCO' or 'World Heritage'. It is a situation, which is very typical for World Heritage landscapes, as an example from the English Lake District shows.



SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

- 1. Promotion of the Heritage Week: As the local World Heritage managers have a policy to be more working with information "everywhere", where people are, the World Heritage Week could serve this purpose with further brand building and product development: make visible and develop new World Heritage products as anticipated in the Management Plan. It has a clear purpose: through many and varied activities, carried out by different associations, companies and other stakeholders, together focus and highlight the unique cultural heritage and values of the World Heritage site.
- 2. Cooperation with the nature centre of Ottenby: At Ottenby Nature Reserve, besides the research at the bird's station, there is also a nature centre. It provides an opportunity for visitors to learn more about local plants, animals, geology and cultural history related to the World Heritage. One of the aims of sustainable tourism development on the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland is to develop special birdwatching tourism offers for bird ringing, watching and studying in close cooperation with the nature centre of Ottenby.
- 3. Outdoor experiences in the World Heritage: The priority interest of the World Heritage managers is to make the visitors to get out of car, move around in the landscape and explore it. There is a need to develop the cycling route network further, first of all, to have two additional cycling routes designed or at least the existing ones better equipped. The World Heritage managers, together with Mörbylånga Municipality, are currently producing a detailed cycling map focusing on 'creating the content'. Another opportunity could be to facilitate and motivate farmers to offer ancillary services, for instance, rent bikes and, at the same time, tell the tourists essential information about the World Heritage. This also implies promoting Southern Öland as an attractive destination for active leisure in the overseas priority markets, for example, Poland and Lithuania.
- 4. Agricultural experiences of the World Heritage: Rather than focusing on quality programs and certifications for the hospitality sector, the World Heritage managers of Southern Öland believe that education of local actors is one of the answers to tourism sustainability. Also, the Management Plan for the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland implies an in-depth dialogue with agricultural companies and other enterprises about the World Heritage as the farmers are the most important stakeholders, not the tourism sector. An opportunity should be provided for the farmers to offer ancillary services, for instance, rent bikes and, at the same time, tell the tourists essential information about the World Heritage.
- 5. Information collection, collation and delivery: The Management Plan for the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland implies an ongoing continued work on temporary exhibitions and events, as well as continuous review and upgrading of information material such as brochures, signage, a World Heritage official website and more. This option also implies regular efforts to augment knowledge of World Heritage in schools on the Island of Öland, as well as better engagement of tourism stakeholders in and around the World Heritage site.

SUMMING-UP

Sustainable heritage tourism could definitely help to continually re-discover and maintain the dynamic balance between the natural and human environments on Southern Öland. Yet, it is a very intricate issue. Each new phase, each period, and each new socio-economic trend create a new challenge to maintain that dynamic balance and, at the same time, to preserve the values for which this landscape was UNESCO-listed. On the other hand, the landscape is appreciated not only for its cultural, but also for its natural heritage values. The Great Alvar is essential for the conservation of plant biodiversity, especially for orchids. These values also need to be actively protected.

Sustainable tourism planning and management occur in the changing society, characterised by different individuals and groups, differing value systems, erratic and often conflicting interests. The heritage wardens typically cherish and promote 'scripted themes'. These themes concentrate on upholding the authentic Outstanding Universal Value regardless of its tourist appeal or interest. Meanwhile, many visitors and local tourism businesses prefer 'enterprise themes.' These themes focus on place-related myths and on the commodified tourist appeal, which is not necessarily associated with the authentic Outstanding Universal Value. Therefore, participation in heritage tourism is a means of demonstrating and upholding a commitment to the social and symbolic values associated with the heritage.

Agriculture and tourism are significantly different and require different skills. Providing hospitality and guiding services and experiences requires empathy and the ability to see what tourists need. It requires specialised training to provide visitors with good service and make both hosts and guests feel comfortable. The fact that tourists are placing ever-higher demands on the housing standard entails higher renovation costs to make the building suitable for rent, which in turn, makes it less profitable to rent out accommodation. There must be a sincere and profound willingness to cater to the needs of the guests.

For the economic welfare and tourist attractiveness of a heritage tourism destination like the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland, it is necessary to have agritourism farms and rural cafés along with a broad spectrum of creative industries, like galleries of antiquities or ceramics shops. All these enterprises must be owned locally and open for most of the year and find their place in the value chain offering unique experiences to visitors. A robust heritage destination also needs committed people to maintain such a heritage added value chain. Luckily, there are ever more entrepreneurs specialising in local specialities and creative industries who are committed to do something original and unique on Southern Öland.

One of the main strategic priorities to ensure the continued agricultural sustainability on Southern Öland is to position its products and experiences as a Unique Selling Proposal and to use them for prolongation of the tourist season. Another issue is locally produced food: it is an agricultural heritage landscape where farmers can market the local produce quite successfully. Local farmers consider themselves as landscape custodians: the primary role of farmers is no longer to produce food without caring for a landscape. They use the concept of World Heritage to add value to their locally produced food products.

On the other hand, the average annual occupancy rate of agritourism farms and other accommodation facilities on Southern Öland is just above 50%, according to official statistics. As mentioned, staying at hotels is pricey, and ever more people tend to stay at their motorhomes or summer houses. As the World Heritage managers invest many efforts in making the World Heritage Week more popular among summer visitors, they would like to see more of them coming in July (sic!). This intention radically contradicts with common reasoning about reducing tourism seasonality and therefore should be reconsidered.

