

# QUARTERLY INTERIM NARRATIVE REPORT

## 1. Description

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- 1.1. Name of beneficiary of grant contract: **Háskólafélag Suðurlands – University Centre of South Iceland (UCSI)**
- 1.2. Name and title of the Contact person: **Sigurður Sigursveinsson, director of UCSI**
- 1.3. Name of partners in the Action: **No formal partners**
- 1.4. Title of the Action: **Katla Geopark: Regional development for the Eyjafjallajökull area**
- 1.5. Contract number: **CRIS 2012/293-200**
- 1.6. Start date and end date of the reporting period: **26.12.2012 - 26.03.2013**
- 1.7. Target country(ies) or region(s): **Iceland, Eyjafjallajökull area which includes the municipalities of Rangárþing eystra, Mýrdalshreppur og Skaftárhreppur.**
- 1.8. Final beneficiaries &/or target groups<sup>1</sup> (if different) (including numbers of women and men): **The three municipalities in Katla Geopark and their population**
- 1.9. Country(ies) in which the activities take place (if different from 1.7):

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

## 2. Assessment of implementation of Action activities

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### 2.1. Executive summary of the Action

This report is written by Steingerður Hreinsdóttir.

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

Steingerður's email is [steingerdur@katlageopark.is](mailto:steingerdur@katlageopark.is) and her mobile is +354 848 6385.

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

The reporting period has been dedicated to catching up with the project working with the municipalities towards building up picnic areas and making geosites more accessible. The work related to landowners and building and planning committee in the area is a long and slow process.

However, coming April construction work will have started on a few of the sites and by the end of June next to all 15 sites will be finished.

### 2.2. Activities and results

Logical framework has been amended in accordance with recommendations since the last quarterly report submitted on the 3.1.13 and is attached.

#### **Activity 1:**

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

The seminar Local food production was advertised in January with Fræðslunet Suðurlands (Adult education in the South of Iceland) with the plan to be held on the 6 and 7<sup>th</sup> of March and 13 and 14 of March. We did however have to postpone the seminar because of weather. Therefore we had to change it into 3 long days from the 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March.

The seminar was held in Hvolsvöllur in the facilities of Fræðslunet Suðurlands and sent to Vík and Kirkjubæjarklaustur via web and video conference.

The seminar was a great success 26 attended in Hvolsvöllur 8 people in Vík and 5 in Kirkjubæjarklaustur which is a high number for such a sparsely populated area and confined subject.

The agenda was as follows:

Day one:

- 1) Local food production in Katla Geopark – the use of local production for value creation.

Steingerður Hreinsdóttir

- 2) Marketing, sale and logistics – Þórunna K Jónsdóttir
- 3) The art of valuing and pricing - Bjarnheiður Jóhannsdóttir

Day two:

- 1) The support system, how to work your way through the maze of laws and regulations.  
Development Centre of South Iceland
- 2) Developing local markets and sale points – Þórður F Sigurðsson
- 3) Quality control and safety – Óli Þór Hilmarsson

Day three:

- 1) Experience, local production – success of a lobster soup production - Jón Sölvi Ólafsson
- 2) Food design – image, representation - Ingunn Jónsdóttir
- 3) Marketing opportunities for the area, gourmet tours, gastronomy tourism, food souvenirs  
– Davíð Samúelsson.

Moreover every day had open workshop where participants could bring out questions and talk about their plans and make an appointment with all of the experts.

One day had introduction of other seminars available.

### **Activity 2:**

#### **Upgrading the infrastructure and facilities for 25 selected geo-sites**

15 geo-sites have been selected, designed and prepared for construction. The planning process takes time and the ownership issues can be rather complicated for some of the areas.

In the end of March 15 sites are ready for construction, finance has been secured, landowners are in agreement and the weather is getting ideal for groundwork.

The aim is to use the funds as best we can and maximise our possibilities by involving local and national authorities as much as possible. A merger of different projects for maximal effects can be said to be the general aim of the project.

A whole lot of work has taken place with local authorities, planning and permission department as well as working with landowners, business owners and other stakeholders.

Although the whole process takes longer than anticipated, activity 2 is on track.

### **Activity 3:**

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

Educational expert started work on the 1. February 2013. She is located in Kirkjubæjarklaustur. Her job so far has been to create educational and promotional material for information panels and for the website. She has made short text for each of the 81 geo-sites that has been sent for translation.

A promotional material was made for promoting adventure tourism in the area for a promotional tourism fair in Stockholm on the 7-10 March 2013.

This was made in cooperation with all the businesses in the area who offer any kind of outdoors activities and tours.

The website is still not quite redesigned but is well on way. There were technical problems within the design and the representation of the information, but the problem is now slowly but surely being solved.

**Activity 4:  
Developing a marketing strategy, marketing plan and management plan**

In August 2012 Katla Geopark got a tour operator license in order to be able to book and sell services for stakeholders in the area in the visitor centres. This is a step towards strengthening the tourism industry within the area as well as creating new opportunities of innovation for stakeholders. This is a first step in developing a travel agency in collaboration with stakeholders in the area.

This idea has been introduced to local businesses in the area and first steps towards working on an ownership and management plan for the future have been taken during this quarter. Not everyone in the area agrees upon the idea of an independent travel agency and may have other ideas. While working on a marketing and management plan – all ideas of local businesses will be looked at and plan will be made in accordance with different management strategies. At the end of next summer the plan is to have a plan for different ways for financial management of the Geopark to be introduced to stakeholders.

The proposed study visit to Europe next year is being prepared. The careful selection of the right area is important as we would like the participants to gain as much as possible from the visit and learn from a best practice. The study visit will take place in the middle of October.

**Activity 5:  
Dissemination of best practices**

Reykjanes peninsula applied for a membership to the EGN (European Geoparks Network) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2012. Katla Geopark has been somewhat involved in the process from the start and has offered guidance on several occasions.

As a part of the program, a forum of Geoparks and acquiring Geoparks will be established during the next few months which Katla Geopark will lead.

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

The total amount of funds spent during the third quarter of the project is about 51.000 Euros.

### **3. Partners and other Co-operation**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 4. Visibility

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

The website and the video that was produced has the EU logo and is being introduced widely.

Signs are being designed and will be printed and put up before the summer season with the EU logo.

Name of the contact person for the Action: **Sigurður Sigursveinsson**

Signature: .....

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Date report sent: April 8, 2013