



ÅFJORD
KOMMUNE

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Deres ref.

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Vår ref.

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Letter of Intent

InterKom: Resilient Public Meeting Places through inter-municipal innovation

I hereby confirm that Åfjord Kommune supports and intends to participate in the proposed project **InterKom: Resilient public meeting places through inter-municipal innovation**, if funded. This Collaborative and Knowledge-building Project will be coordinated by Ruralis and submitted in response to the Research Council of Norway call for **Research on innovation in the municipal sector**.

The project seeks to develop resilient and robust social meeting places by focusing on the areas of food and culture in Åfjord and Trondheim, and on interactions between the two sites. The project will develop and test novel collaborative programs for local food, culture, and sustainability, and develop useful knowledge for local municipalities.

Åfjord Kommune strongly supports this project. By 2050 we'll need to feed two billion more people on a global level. At the same time urbanization continue at an accelerated pace, and more than 70 percent of the world's population will be urban (55 % today). This trend also applies in Norway, and at the same time demographic projections show that the proportion of older people will increase towards 2030/2040.

Distriktsnæringsutvalget (NOU 2020-12) shows that the imbalances between city and countryside are increasing. The district municipalities have 90% of the area, 30% of the population and 25% of the value creation. For Åfjord Municipality, it is therefore important to participate in important collaborations to ensure and attract manpower and important competences for the municipality, and through this ensure a vibrant local community that become both greener, smarter and more innovative in the future. A rural-urban collaboration is decisive for future development, and this project will strengthen the urban rural approach between Trondheim and Åfjord, and the transfer value to other Municipalities are obvious.

Åfjord Municipality will contribute to the project in WP 2, WP 3, WP 4 and WP 5 as a partner. We focus on two areas, food and culture, each of which very important in the development of a sustainable and attractive place to live, work and visit, and in creation of important meeting places. Both areas has been adversely affected by the Covid 19 and each of which offer fertile ground for experimentation and rethinking of the roles and responsibilities of municipalities. The roots of our activity can be connected to a culture of curiosity, innovation and exploration. If we are to achieve our goals, we must develop innovative forms of co-operations, with an emphasis on cross-collaboration between sectors and industries. These collaborations are important to gain access to knowledge, solutions and funding needed to achieve and accomplish the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and at the same time respond to the citizens' expectations.

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