

Just a two-hour flight from Copenhagen will land you in an awesome natural environment that is refreshingly different, to experience what a distinctive, small and friendly conference destination has to offer—from the latest technology available to phenomenal fishing.

ONLY A COUPLE of hours by air from continental Europe, the UK and Iceland, the Faroe Islands is a natural destination choice for conferences and incentive travel. Off the beaten path with a refreshing uniqueness that will add value to any conference experience, this small archipelago is beginning to attract attention. World class scenery, an intimacy that is hard to come by in a large European capital, state of the art facilities that meet international standards, and a determination to make any conference experience positive and memorable are elements that should appeal to any travel organizer.

Vistas that take your breath away are a reality that often surprise first time visitors. The average elevation in the Faroe Islands is 300 m, which means that the 18 islands rise sometimes precipitously from the ever-changing sea below. The islands also lie close to each other, so the eye is treated to panoramas of the interplay between islands and sea nearly everywhere you turn.



The Nordic House in Tórshavn is a popular place for conferences and concerts alike (center); managing director Per Hansen, (bottom left); Faroese tour operators organize adventure packages for those who wish to experience, for instance, fishing at sea or just exploring the nature by boat (bottom right).

THIS IS CONFERENCE COUNTRY

The country's small size and friendly people lend an intimacy to the Faroe Islands that most visitors find refreshing, and visitors often remark upon the hospitality of the people. Welcoming guests is an integral part of the culture. "Thanks for the visit" is an expression that Faroese people use among themselves to express gratitude to guests as they leave. "People are friendly and easy to talk to," says Per Hansen, acting director of the Faroe Islands Tourist Board.

Through focused marketing to attract more business meetings, conferences and trade fairs, the Faroe Islands has

made determined efforts to invite more people to enjoy its uniqueness. "We have been pleased with our marketing results and the positive response from visitors," says Mr Hansen. "A recent marketing project first targeted Germany and subsequently the UK and Scandinavia. Our marketing efforts are systematically being followed up so it will of course be the turn of incoming tour operators and others in the business to meet the greater demand generated."

The marketing director of one of the Tórshavn hotels confirms: "Indeed, we are seeing steady growth in conference

travel each year. High summer is the peak of tourist travel, and we are working to attract more conferences especially before and after this."

According to Mr Hansen, 500 participants is a realistic upper limit for conference size, although the use of alternative solutions to supplement the number of hotel rooms available allows the Faroe Islands to host even larger events. However, for those who have smaller events to arrange, the Faroes may truly be ideal. There are a number of high-quality venues to choose from and a variety of destination manage-

ment groups, which are eager to ensure visitor satisfaction. Recent focus group participants commented that the Faroe Islands "would be perfect for small groups of 20-30 meeting delegates." "A truly unique destination!" "Just a short flight away..."

Such positive comments are also reflected in travel statistics: The first two months of 2006 show a 26-percent increase in the numbers of air travelers compared to the same time period in 2005.

One advantage to being small is that conference extras may be only minutes away from hotels and conference venues. And not to forget, fresh air and wildlife is always close at hand in the Faroe Islands—whether you'll go trekking over a nearby mountain, fishing at sea or angling trout in a lake, or you'll prefer exploring the islands up close from the water on a schooner to marvel at those spectacular grottoes and bird cliffs. In fact, you can reach surprisingly much during a brief stay because, again, the country is small and it's possible to arrange for most things in a very short time.

Venture out from the capital and dramatic land- and seascapes abound. Half-day trips or day long tours will introduce you other parts of the country. The Faroe Islands is home to multitudes of migratory seabirds that breed on sheer sea cliffs in the summer months. Why do the birds come here? Fish of course—the country is situated right in the heart of the rich fishing grounds of

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The Faroe Islands Tourist Board is an agency commissioned by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to develop incoming tourism in the Faroe Islands.

Official tourist portal:

http://www.visit-faroeislands.com

Meeting and incentives campaign website:

http://www.faroeislands-online.com

the North Atlantic. Accordingly, a sharp rise in angling tourism is expected this year as operators are launching fresh adventure packages for those who wish to experience fishing at sea.

The thing is, things are uncomplicated in the grand miniature world of the Faroe Islands. There is just everything—from the most stimulating natural experience to the most excellent conference facilities.

