

## Marie's Lykke

LEADER supports cyclist and horse riding tourism in Denmark.

### EAFRD-funded projects

**Location:** Ruds Vedby, Denmark

**Programming period:** 2014–2020

**Priority:** P6 – Social inclusion and local development

**Focus Area:** Local development

**Measures:** M19 – LEADER CLLD

**Funding:** Total budget ~107 200 (EUR)

RDP contribution ~ 53 600 (EUR)

Private/own ~ 53 600 (EUR)

**Timeframe:** 08/2020 – 01/2023

**Project promoter:** Marie's Lykke

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### Summary

LEADER support helped to convert farm buildings in Denmark into budget accommodation and stabling facilities for horse riding holidays. Located near Reerslev, the Marie's Lykke project was initiated to capitalise on the opportunity presented by a newly planned cycle route that passed by the farmhouse. This is coupled with the growing demand for affordable and accessible accommodation for outdoor enthusiasts, including horse riders and cyclists.

The project successfully established Marie's Lykke as a key destination for outdoor tourism in the Local Action Group area, attracting a diverse range of visitors and significantly boosting local tourism. Enhanced guest experience from tailored facilities for cyclists and horse riders supports overall competitiveness. Thanks in part to LEADER, Marie's Lykke has become a valued stop for tourists, contributing to the local economy and setting a model for similar rural tourism initiatives.

### Project results

- Two new full-time jobs are forecast by 2025 (demand dependent).
- 15% increase in tourist visits to the Reerslev area.



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- New farm accommodation facilities for 30 guests in 10 main bedrooms and four dormitory-style lodgings.
- Common space with panoramic enhanced guest experience, increasing satisfaction rate by 20% based on visitor feedback.
- LEADER's success has inspired additional anticipated services, such as guided horse riding tours and cycling packages.

### Key lessons and recommendations

- Thorough market research is vital to identifying and targeting specific tourist segments. Marie's Lykke successfully tapped into niche markets, which significantly contributed to the project's achievements.
- Involving local stakeholders and integrating the project into the wider community, such as through village walks, enriched the guest experience and strengthened ties with the local area.



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## Context

Marie's Lykke is a small, idyllic farmhouse in the Danish countryside near the village of Reerslev. The beneficiary of this LEADER grant, a private owner passionate about hospitality and rural tourism, recognised the growing demand for affordable and accessible accommodation options for tourists engaged in outdoor activities such as cycling, walking, driving, and horse riding. In 2019, a new cycle route was planned to pass near the farmhouse, sparking the idea to transform the location into a welcoming retreat for cyclists and other outdoor enthusiasts.

Given the increasing popularity of horse riding holidays in Denmark, the owner saw an opportunity to cater to this niche market by offering affordable accommodation and facilities to stable horses. This expansion was crucial in meeting the needs of a diverse group of tourists seeking unique and simple countryside experiences.

The project was further supported by the Local Action Group (LAG) Midt-Nordvestsjælland, which provided co-funding to develop a large open common room with a captivating view of the surrounding fields. This space serves as a communal area for guests, enhancing the overall experience and fostering a sense of community among visitors.

## Objectives

- Provide affordable and accessible accommodation for tourists, particularly cyclists, walkers and horse riders.
- Promote rural tourism in the Reerslev area and contribute to the local economy.

- Enhance the attractiveness of the area by offering unique and simple countryside experiences.
- Support sustainable tourism practices by encouraging outdoor activities and using local resources.

## Activities

**Initial planning and concept development (2018-2019):** The project began with the owner of Marie's Lykke recognising the potential to offer accommodation for tourists using the newly planned cycle route. This idea was inspired by the increasing number of cyclists passing by the farmhouse and Denmark's growing trend of outdoor tourism. During this phase, the owner formulated a plan to convert existing farm buildings into simple and affordable accommodation facilities, focusing on meeting the needs of cyclists and other tourists.

**Application for LAG Funding (2019):** The owner of Marie's Lykke applied for funding from the Midt-Nordvestsjælland LAG to support the development of the project. The application focused on securing funds to build a large open room that would serve as a communal space for guests. The project was awarded DKK 400 000 (approximately EUR 53 600) in funding from the LAG, which was instrumental in expanding the facilities.

**Building conversion and construction (2019-2020):** Existing farm buildings were renovated and converted into accommodation facilities, including private rooms and dormitory-style lodging to cater to different types of travellers. The construction of a large open common room was undertaken using the LAG funding. This room was designed to offer a panoramic view of the surrounding fields, providing a relaxing and scenic environment for guests to socialise, dine or rest.

**Collaboration with local tourism stakeholders (2020-2021):** The project involved collaboration with local tourism organisations, cycling groups and horse riding associations to promote Marie's Lykke as a destination for outdoor enthusiasts. The owner worked closely with these stakeholders to integrate Marie's Lykke into local tourism routes and itineraries, ensuring it became a recognised stop for interested tourists exploring the Reerslev area.

**Community engagement and village walks (2021):** To enhance the visitor experience, Marie's Lykke began offering guided walks around the nearby village of Reerslev. These walks, approximately 1.5 kilometres long, include visits to the local church and another LAG-supported project, Reerslev Forge. This activity was designed to engage guests with the local community and promote the cultural and historical heritage of the area.

## Main results

- The conversion of existing farm buildings into accommodation facilities resulted in 10 guest rooms and four dormitory-style lodgings, providing 30 beds for tourists.
- The large open common room, with its panoramic view of the fields, enhanced the overall guest experience, increasing the average guest satisfaction rate by an estimated 20%, based on visitor feedback.
- The project contributed to an increase in rural tourism, with an estimated 15% increase in visits to the Reerslev area.
- Marie's Lykke successfully positioned itself as a key accommodation option for outdoor enthusiasts, particularly cyclists and horse riders.
- The project significantly boosted tourism and contributed to the local economy by attracting more visitors to the area.
- The creation of a community space fostered greater interaction among guests, enhancing the communal experience and promoting longer stays.

Other expected results/developments:

- The project is expected to generate two new full-time job opportunities by 2025 as demand for the accommodation facilities grows.
- The success of the project has inspired the potential development of additional services, such as guided horse riding tours and cycling packages, which are anticipated to further increase visitor numbers and revenue in the coming years.

## Key lessons and recommendations

- For those considering a similar project, thorough market research is vital to identifying and targeting specific tourist segments.
- The creation of a communal space with scenic views added significant value to the guest experience, promoting longer stays and repeat visits.
- Integration of simple, affordable accommodation with a strong emphasis on nature and outdoor activities proved to be a unique selling point that attracted a diverse range of visitors.

- The importance of aligning accommodation offerings with local tourism trends. By focusing on the needs of cyclists and horse riders, Marie's Lykke successfully tapped into niche markets, which significantly contributed to the project's success.
- The value of community engagement. Involving local stakeholders and integrating the project into the wider community, such as through village walks, enriched the guest experience and strengthened ties with the local area. Engaging with the local community and tourism stakeholders from the outset can greatly enhance the project's relevance and appeal.
- Flexibility in project planning was crucial. As the project progressed, the ability to adapt and expand offerings, such as adding horse stabling facilities, was essential in meeting the evolving demands of visitors. Remaining adaptable and open to expanding services based on guest feedback can lead to sustained growth and success.

## Quote

*"Transforming our small farmhouse into a welcoming retreat for cyclists and horse riders has been a rewarding journey. We've seen how much joy it brings to visitors who seek simple, authentic countryside experiences".*

Marie's Lykke owners

## Additional information:

Website:

[www.lykkebjergferie.dk](http://www.lykkebjergferie.dk)



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