



A stand up paddle universe for outdoor tourists

- **2024 ISA WORLD SUP & PADDLEBOARD CHAMPIONSHIP**
- **COPENHAGEN, 15-22 SEPTEMBER 2024**

AN EVENT FULL OF ACTION

In Copenhagen's clean waters, over 12,000 spectators watched the world's best stand up paddleboarders (SUP) compete in the world championship. The seven-day event was organised by **Surf & SUP Denmark** (the Olympic governing body in Denmark) with strong support from various stakeholders and partners.

Spectators and passers-by at the event were guided through four competitions (Technical Race, Team Relay, Long Distance, and Sprint) with live commentary and big screens. The event also featured various SUP-related activities, creating a buzzing atmosphere in Copenhagen:

- **Copenhagen Paddle Festival:** A full-week festival filled with water and SUP activities
- **School Program:** Three days with activities for school children
- **Volkswagen SUP City Tour:** A pre-tour around Denmark to introduce the sport to locals and tourists

STAND UP PADDLE AND OUTDOOR TOURISM

Before the championship, **Copenhagen Legacy Lab** wanted to investigate how

stand up paddle is linked to outdoor tourism. To do this, the lab joined forces with **Epinion** to conduct an analysis. The findings highlighted that national and international tourist segments are attracted by physical outdoor activities (e.g. SUP).

However, only 5% of tourists find SUP and surfing attractive during a vacation in Denmark (Epinion, 2023). To make SUP more appealing, Copenhagen Legacy Lab, **VisitDenmark**, **Surf & SUP Denmark**, and **Danske Destinationer** initiated a project to promote Denmark as a unique destination for SUP enthusiasts.

A UNIVERSE FOR TOURISTS

The involved partners agreed to co-develop **VisitDenmark's stand up paddle universe** to highlight Denmark's best SUP spots (e.g., charming lakes or calm fjords). The project group invited **the 19 Danish tourist boards (DMOs)** to select the best SUP spots in their regions and create regional SUP guides (e.g., local SUP communities, rental info, additional spots).

On June 19, VisitDenmark launched the universe on social media, coordinating with the DMOs to send a strong, shared message.



Photo: Wonderful Copenhagen



Photo: Wonderful Copenhagen

LOCAL WATER EVENTS

To increase the DMO's involvement, they were invited to take part in Surf & SUP Denmark's pre-tour around Denmark promoting the world championship (Volkswagen SUP City Tour). Early dialogue with the DMOs allowed the tour schedule to align with local water sports events, proving to be a clear win-win situation:

- **Local events:** Benefited from Surf & SUP Denmark's presence, promoting SUP at their destination.
- **Volkswagen SUP City Tour:** Helped the tour engage a broader audience in SUP activities.

"Hosting the Volkswagen SUP City Tour at SHORES Langeland was an incredible experience. It brought a vibrant energy to our community and helped showcase our stunning coastline to a wider audience."

"The event is perfectly aligned with our mission to promote outdoor activities and sustainable tourism on the island, and it was a joy to be a part of such a big event."

Thomas Røddik Konradsen, Project Manager at Langeland Municipality

"The collaboration with all the tourist boards made it possible to establish the Volkswagen SUP City Tour to promote the World Championship and make it possible for everybody to try stand up paddle."

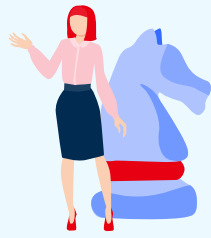
Michael Lindberg, CEO at Surf & SUP Denmark

In total, the pre-tour visited 14 Danish destinations throughout July and August.

WATER SAFETY AMONG TOURISTS

During the project, the chance to collaborate with **Søsportens Sikkerhedsråd** (focused on sea safety) and Surf & SUP Denmark to develop five safety rules for SUP in Denmark presented itself. To prevent future water accidents, these rules were included in the SUP universe and the DMOs' SUP guides.

LEGACY PROCESS



Strategic goals and societal needs

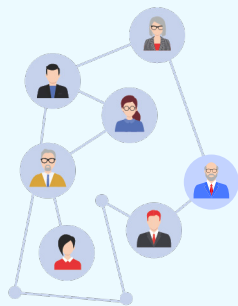
The project's overall ambition was to promote Copenhagen and Denmark as a great destination for outdoor tourism and water sports (primarily stand up paddleboarding). This ambition aligns with [Surf & SUP Denmark's strategy](#), [the national tourism strategy](#), and [the strategy of Wonderful Copenhagen](#).



Objective

The legacy project aimed to use the world championship to:

- Promote stand up paddleboarding among tourists in Copenhagen and Denmark.
- Elevate local water sports events across Denmark.
- Prevent future accidents when stand up paddleboarding in Denmark.



Stakeholder involvement

Copenhagen Legacy Lab: Coordinated the overall legacy process and facilitated the dialogue between the involved stakeholders.

VisitDenmark: Developed and launched the national stand up paddle universe together with the 19 Danish tourist boards (DMOs).

DMOs: Contributed to the universe by creating individual SUP guides (landing pages) with regional information (e.g., local SUP communities, rental information, and even more SUP spots).

Surf & SUP Denmark: Executed the Volkswagen SUP City Tour in coordination with the DMOs.

Søsportens Sikkerhedsråd: Produced video content explaining the five basic safety rules for stand up paddleboarding in Denmark.



Activity

The legacy process resulted in three different activities:

- **SUP Universe:** VisitDenmark's online universe highlights some of the best stand up paddleboarding spots across Denmark (e.g., charming lakes or calm fjords).
- **Pre-tour:** The Volkswagen SUP City Tour, featuring competitions and activities on land and at sea, took place at various destinations across Denmark throughout July and August. The tour aimed to introduce stand up paddleboarding to both locals and outdoor tourists while promoting the championship.
- **Safety rules:** The five basic safety rules for paddleboarding in Denmark were an integral part of the SUP universe and the regional SUP guides (landing pages).



Outputs (immediately after the activity – direct results) SUP Universe:

The universe was launched ahead of the world championship and gained additional promotion during the 7-day event.

- More than 40 posts on social media helped promote the universe.
- The launch of the universe led to a noticeable increase in traffic and interest on the landing page, which was further amplified during the world championship in September.

Pre-tour: In total the tour visited 14 cities, and around 1,175 locals and outdoor tourists participated in the activities.

Safety rules: They are included in VisitDenmark's stand up paddle universe and in 17 of the SUP guides (landing pages).

After the championship, **Copenhagen Legacy Lab** reached out to the 19 DMOs to gather feedback on their experience with the project. A total of 17 DMOs responded, expressing strong interest in future collaborations on similar projects, thanks to the great success of the SUP universe and the pre-tour.

LEGACY PROCESS



Outcomes (+6-12 months - changed behaviour)

SUP Universe: It is difficult to measure the extent to which the universe is attracting more SUP enthusiasts and outdoor tourists to Copenhagen and Denmark.

Pre-tour: Since the pre-tour, Surf & SUP Danmark has strengthened its collaboration with destinations and stakeholders across Denmark. It remains to be seen whether the local water events visited by the pre-tour will incorporate any learnings into future events.

Safety rules: It remains to be seen whether locals and tourists will adopt the safety rules when stand up paddleboarding in Denmark. Copenhagen Legacy Lab has recommended that the DMOs continue to include the safety rules when promoting water sports in their region.



Impact (+1 year – societal value)

SUP Universe: Boosting outdoor tourism can support year-round tourism and ensure a more even distribution across Denmark. Additionally, promoting Denmark as a top destination for SUP is expected to increase interest in other outdoor activities and highlight the country's beautiful coasts. On an individual level, engaging in outdoor activities can enhance both mental and physical health.

Pre-tour: The pre-tour has strengthened Surf & SUP Danmark's collaboration with local stakeholders across Denmark, which could have a positive impact on local communities.

Safety rules: It is difficult to measure whether the promotion of safety rules will reduce future water-related accidents.



Potential legacy (+1-3 years and beyond...)

The project has strengthened collaboration within the Danish tourism industry. A strong partnership is crucial for successfully promoting Denmark as a unified destination (e.g., positioning the country as a great destination for water sports and outdoor tourism).

With positive feedback from the DMOs, Copenhagen Legacy Lab and VisitDenmark will explore opportunities for similar initiatives related to upcoming events, making this case a valuable reference for future projects.

The screenshot shows the VisitDenmark website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'VisitDenmark' logo and links for 'Tourist', 'Travel Professionals', 'Business Events', 'Press', and 'Contact'. Below that, a secondary navigation bar includes 'Highlights', 'Destinations', 'Things to do', 'Accommodation', and 'Plan your trip'. The main content area features a large hero image of two people stand-up paddleboarding on a calm sea at sunset. Below the image is a title 'Explore Stand-Up Paddleboarding in Denmark' with a photo credit 'Photo: Mette Johnsen'. A short paragraph follows: 'What'SUP!? Denmark is a paradise for stand-up paddleboarding fans! With our beautiful coastline, calm fjords, and charming lakes, there's a perfect spot for every paddler. Find our recommendations and tips for your SUP adventure in Denmark below.' To the right of this text are 'Print' and 'Share' icons. Below the text is a section titled 'The best SUP spots in Denmark' with a toggle for 'List' and 'Map'. Three featured spots are shown: 1. 'The South Fyn Archipelago' with a photo of a coastline and a description: 'Fyn and the surrounding islands are the perfect destination for water sports. You can paddle practically everywhere - in harbours and marines, on lakes, in bays, on the sea, and on rivers. The perfect SUP tour in the UNESCO Global Geopark of the South Fyn Archipelago starts from Rudkøbing Harbour on the island of Langeland and ends on the small island of Stryng, welcoming you with charming island life and tasty local ice cream. You've earned it after your active trip!' with 'Info' and 'See on map' buttons. 2. 'Fanø in the Wadden Sea' with a photo of a sandy beach and a description: 'Take your paddle board to Fanø - a small island with a big heart. The island's 16 km long sandy beach is a great place for fun wind and speed games. On the board or off, you can explore the impressive Wadden Sea National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site connecting the area, or dive into the local island culture.' with 'Info' and 'See on map' buttons. 3. 'Juelsminde in Kystlandet' with a photo of a harbour and a description: 'The atmospheric harbour town of Juelsminde is located in an area of East Jutland that we call "coastal land". And for good reason! Juelsminde is surrounded by water.'