

# Executive Summary

## Norway's Public Diplomacy: a Strategy

- In the global battle for political influence, investment, trade and tourism, national image plays a critical determining role. Public diplomacy and perceptions of Norway – her values, motivations, allegiances and skills – combine to create an enabling or disabling backdrop for each situation in the international political and economic realms.
- National images are managed through a combination of changes in the reality of a country and attempts to project it through marketing, as well as the development of symbolic projects and attempts to build deeper relationships. Many countries, such as Spain and Ireland, have done this successfully, showing the power of having a clear national story that can unite the different public sector stakeholders with the dynamism of the private sector. Norway, however, is held back by the lack of a clear strategy for building her reputation with broader publics.
- Norway is currently at an important stage in the development of its cultural and public diplomacy strategy - the anniversary of Norwegian independence in 2005 represents a good opportunity for a re-examination of Norway's international image and standing.

## The Norwegian Image

- For large countries like the United States, the United Kingdom or China, public diplomacy is mainly focused on changing images and “re-branding” – but Norway's central public diplomacy problem is that of invisibility. It is clear from polls

conducted over the last twenty years that Norway has consistently lacked a clear and widely recognised identity. Where they do exist, impressions of Norway are largely positive or neutral, even if typically very traditional.

- There are a number of factors that perpetuate Norway’s invisibility: it is small – in population, economy and presence; it is isolated – politically, geographically and culturally; it lacks linguistic attraction – many Norwegians speak English but not vice versa; it lacks brands or icons – there are no emissaries for the Norwegian identity; it is similar to Scandinavia – its shared culture does not help to distinguish it from the rest.
- This is a cause for concern, as the vital prerequisite of managing and promoting a country’s image is the existence of an image in the first place – a well defined image establishes credibility, increases favourability of reaction and acts a “door opener”: an initial insight into a country creates an appetite to learn more.

## The Norwegian Story

- In order to manage Norway’s reputation and the way it is perceived, it is important to think about identity in a systematic way. It is helpful to think of three layers. At the centre are the “stories”, or values, that make up a country’s identity; in the second ring the “positioning” or unique selling point of the country, and in the outer ring, the expressions of that identity – from flags and anthems to logos and advertising. The temptation is usually to start with the outer ring but no attempt to project messages about Norway abroad will work unless it is based on stories that are understood and internalised by Norwegian citizens, companies and politicians.
- In order to be successful, each story should do some of the following: link the past with the future; be aspirational; deal

with a weakness; capture the imagination and engage the emotions; be relevant internally and externally.

- From a broad range of interviews conducted in Norway, we distilled four primary stories that fulfilled these criteria and researched a series of facts to demonstrate the reality on which they draw. These stories are simply hypotheses which would need to be properly tested before being adopted.

## The Four Stories

- *Humanitarian superpower* – Norway might only be 115th in the world in terms of its size, but it is leading the world as a humanitarian power – outperforming all other countries in terms of its contributions to aid, its role in peace-keeping and peace processes and its commitment to developing new kinds of global governance. This commitment goes far beyond the activities of the Norwegian state – infusing every aspect of Norwegian society from NGOs and business to ordinary citizens.
- *Living with nature* – Norwegians share a unique relationship with nature – exploiting its potential whilst pioneering ways of protecting the environment with carbon taxes, recycling and anti-pollution technology. A land of striking beauty, with its coastal tracery of fjords and snow-capped mountains, Norway has itself remained largely untouched by pollution as it has evolved from a fishing and farming society into high-tech and white-collar business without an intervening phase of heavy industry that is comparable in scale and intensity to other Western industrialized nations.
- *Equality* – Norway is living proof that equality and economic dynamism can be combined. Whilst being the richest country in Europe it also has the lowest level of inequality, a comprehensive welfare system, and a uniquely high rate of employment. This concern with equality is deeply embedded in Norwegian culture –

so that even members of the Royal family and prime ministers are treated with informality and a refreshing lack of pomp.

- *Internationalist / Spirit of adventure* – Norway’s history is littered with famous adventurers whose endeavours are only partially known – from the Vikings and Kontiki to Amundsen and the modern BASE jumpers. Sport too has been an example of international adventure. It is rumoured that Norwegians invented the sport of skiing. The words ski and slalom are Norwegian and a Norwegian called Sondre Norheim did invent the “modern day” skis. To prove it Norway has won more Winter Olympic medals than any other nation.

## From Four Stories to One Positioning

- From these four stories it is necessary to develop a clear positioning which can draw the strongest elements out of all the stories in a synthetic message. The only two stories which score highly against all of the criteria are *Humanitarian Superpower* and *Living With Nature*. This means that these two stories should go in the forefront with the others taking on a supporting role, creating one positioning: “Peaceful Nature”.
- This creates value for all the key stakeholders in Norway. “Peace” is an essential door opener for political influence. “Nature” is one of the key messages for the Norwegian Tourist Board and the Seafood Export Council. The positioning can also be helpful to big Norwegian companies who trade on the fact that Norway is not a nation with an imperial past, and also appreciate its reputation for a high commitment to environmental standards, human rights and good governance.
- Another way to utilise the stories would be to explore the option of a meta-story about Norway as an “Über-Scandinavian”, which would allow Norway to take advantage of all the existing perceptions of Scandinavia while keeping her special strengths. A campaign can be imagined running something along the lines

of “Norway: 100% Scandinavian” or “Some countries are more Scandinavian than others”. This would be a political decision, requiring further discussion.

- Once there is an agreed positioning behind which all the stakeholders can unite, it is possible to create a strategy for managing Norway’s reputation abroad. This positioning needs to be used as the bedrock for all strategic communications – by everyone from the MFA and Tourist Board through to the Seafood Export Council and the 2005 Committee.

## Expressing Norway’s Identity

- At the moment, peace and nature feature prominently in the activities of many of the actors involved in projecting Norway to the world – but in a haphazard and random way. There are certain key problems with the image they project:
  - The expression of messages about peace and nature is often excessively *passive* – completely out of kilter with the stories of a spirit of adventure
  - Much of the material is *out-of-date* and *elitist* – signally failing to capture the Norwegian spirit of equality. All of the icons that feature in Norwegian public diplomacy are dead.
- Norway can use these traditional stories differently, drawing on the country’s recognized strengths, but articulating them in a modern and dynamic way. In both cases, it is important that the focus is on *showing* rather than simply *claiming* that Norway is a modern nation.

## Moving Beyond the Passive Expression of Norwegian Identity

- Peace and nature are both too often represented in a way that emphasizes static facts and images about Norway as a physical entity rather than placing the focus on the agency role of

Norwegians. This manifests itself in everything from the brochures about fjords and mountains to the overly self-effacing explanations of involvement in peace processes.

- In portraying peace and nature, Norway should focus on the dynamic – active people, hard-headedness and modernity.
- The first aspect is about Norwegians as *engaged* global citizens: peacemakers and peacekeepers – the blue helmet rather than the white dove; thinkers and practitioners at the forefront of debates about soft power with a sophisticated understanding of global security. In order to avoid both undermining its role in peace negotiations and provoking other partners, emphasis needs to be placed on the right aspects of the message – Norway as a partner, facilitator and good multilateralist – and attention should only be drawn to peace processes once they are firmly established.
- The second aspect is about the very particular Norwegian *relationship* with nature: explorers and adventurers braving and conquering nature; sportspersons' dramatic feats in nature; environmentalists and political leaders' pioneering ideas for conserving and living with nature alongside responsible economic development and resource use. In order not to come across as anti-modern or to attract criticism about oil production, Norway should be up front about both oil and environmentalism – the portrayal of an environmentally friendly explorer of oil shows Norway as modern and responsible, undermining the two potential negative charges.

## Widening Access to Norway

- 19th Century high-cultural products can no longer have the impact they once did – people need to be given pathways to Norway through figures and concepts that they already understand and like.

- The challenge is to devise a new set of icons to complement these traditional figures who can speak to a generation with different values and priorities. It would be up to strategists of Norwegian public diplomacy to align these new icons with the different stories but it is clear that some already have an enormous impact on the world stage and carry some of the most important messages. The music of Royksopp, Lene Marlin and even A-Ha massively outsells CDs and concerts of Grieg amongst Generation X. Clothing brands such as Helly Hansen and Napapijri have become cutting edge fashion amongst the hip-hop community and aficionados of extreme sports, and their advertising campaigns draw on the mystique of Norwegian polar adventures. Gro Harlem Brundtland is associated all over the world with the concept of sustainable development while Arne Næss and Frederic Hauge are admired for their deep thinking and effective actions on environmental issues. Jostein Gaarder introduced a new generation to philosophy whilst Erling Kagge has reminded us of the excitement of extreme polar exploration. Terje Rød Larsen showed how even the most intractable conflicts could be improved by mediation, and the televising of the Nobel Peace Prize, as well as the Nobel Peace Prize concert, has brought this most august and revered institution into the 21st century. One exciting project would be to organise an exhibition of Norwegian icons – old and new – mapping the ten most significant traditional icons on to their modern equivalents.

## **Reforming the Spectrum of Institutions**

- It will be impossible to realise any of the objectives that have been outlined in the last few chapters without reforming Norway's spectrum of public diplomacy institutions so that they can unite behind a shared message.

## Four Proposals for Addressing Norway's Public Diplomacy Challenges

- 1) **Creating a strategy** – The key to the success of this exercise will be to agree a central strategy which can be modulated to give it a local flavour in each of the priority countries. It is important to work out the complementarity between the institutions both in Norway and on the ground. At present, there are three fundamentally different strategic approaches being pursued by the public diplomacy institutions – product advantage, national branding and Scandinavian branding, which means Norwegian public diplomacy fails to maximise the impact it can have in any single area.

*Three components to creating a strategy:*

- *Establishing a lead from the centre.* A first priority must be the creation of a new central strategic group with high-level political leadership and substantial external participation from business, communications and civil society. This group, which could be called “The Norwegian Public Diplomacy Board” could launch a national debate about Norway’s role and image and formulate an initial strategic outline for Norway’s projection in the international sphere.
- *Formulating some macro-goals.* These would include agreeing a strategic message; deciding the priority countries and audiences, establishing what these audiences already think or know about Norway; agreeing priority themes and messages for public diplomacy; identifying delivery mechanisms for these activities and drawing up an action plan grid for the different public diplomacy institutions; encouraging and enabling the allocation of resources behind these priorities; and monitoring the success of initiatives through further surveys and feedback.
- *Creating micro-strategies at post level.* Country strategies should be framed within the context of key political, business

and cultural messages for each country. Macro-messages about peace and nature could be modulated to make them appropriate for the countries concerned. Micro-strategies would include identification of target audiences; determining perceptions of target audiences in the country concerned; analysis of key competition; competitive positioning – what relationship Norway wants with the country and the benefits it can bring; key themes and messages; and an action plan grid for managing projects.

- 2) **Ending fragmentation** – To end the institutional fragmentation that exists at present it will be essential to develop new ways of working between the Norwegian institutions and to create incentives for a more “joined-up” approach. The two key things that can be done to pursue this are creating an “executive sub-committee” of public sector institutions to operationalize the main public diplomacy board’s strategy, and creating shared budgets to fund joint projects.
- 3) **Clear training and guidelines for staff and criteria for evaluation** – The information department of the MFA in Norway should re-invent itself as an enabler, trainer, spreader of good practice and “content-designer” for all the Norwegian public diplomacy practitioners around the world. Each post’s activities should be governed by a set of principles fixed in Norway that ensure that, as well as strategic direction, specific tactics are well formulated.
  - Although it is undoubtedly difficult to evaluate public diplomacy activity, a combination of specific data and more qualitative assessment can act as a “proxy” that will provide a good picture, particularly for monitoring change over time from a well-defined baseline.
- 4) **Creating flagship events** – Norway has not won another opportunity to host an Olympics or built a new Guggenheim, but there is an event coming up which has the potential to leverage extra resources and create a new way of working for

Norway's public diplomacy actors. The Centenary in 2005 has already been identified as an opportunity for a step-change in activities, and Norway's government should learn from international experiences about how to make it a success.

## 2005 as a Focus for Norwegian Public Diplomacy

- In a public diplomacy context, milestone events can provide the political impetus and public attention that is vital to a successful attempt to re-assess and re-present a national image, both internally and externally. It is only by thinking big and organising very bold activities that countries can stand out in the crowd of nations and really make an impact.

## Lessons for 2005

- Lillehammer 1994 and Sydney 2000 showed the importance of *giving other countries a stake in your event*; the millennium in the UK showed the importance of *aligning internal and external expectations*; the Queen's Golden Jubilee in the UK showed the importance of *television and popular culture*.

## Dangers for 2005

- Potential lack of internal salience – There is no overwhelming consensus in Norway regarding the importance of 2005. In so far as it is not the major May 17th independence day celebration there is a risk that there will be a lack of engagement.
- Externally – no clear link to other countries – National independence is generally an occasion of little significance for

anyone other than the country that became independent and, somewhat less, the country that it became independent from.

- No link to popular culture. The challenge for the organisers will be to meld high-level policy and intellectual work on the 2005 themes with events that are able to break through to a mass audience. There is a danger with any milestone anniversary that the focus will be placed overwhelmingly on the past.

## Opportunities of 2005

- **Define an interest for external audiences** Finding a peg that makes Norwegian independence internationally relevant is the major challenge if 2005 is going to be a public diplomacy success. The Prime Minister should use the year to launch an eye-catching and inspiring global initiative, on the scale of the landmine ban and debt-relief initiatives, with interdependence and peace or nature as a major theme, using the power of example to leverage engagement from other international actors.
- **Think big and inspire** The key to make a real impact would be to get beyond the usual swirl of conferences and events and to use 2005 as an opportunity to create institutions that will outlast the centenary celebrations, which are capable of inspiring and surprising for generations to come.
- Norway could set up a Nobel Peace Centre in Brussels and a Brundtland Sustainable Development Centre in Washington.
- Peace and nature medals. Each embassy could make an annual award of two medals at high profile, well-resourced awards ceremonies
- **Reach out** The programme should incorporate popular culture and icons to involve as broad an audience as possible and present the modern face of Norway. The organisers must create some made-for-television events, such as pop concerts, sporting events, and design exhibitions which can get to wider audiences.

- **2005 and beyond** It is important that 2005 is integrated within the broader public diplomacy strategy outlined above; a cardinal principle is that as much must be invested in follow-up as in the events themselves. Planning for this must be completely integrated with planning for 2005 if the occasion is going to be a success beyond this one-off year.

# 1. What is Public Diplomacy?

*Public Diplomacy / pʌblik dip'leɒməst / n. to understand, inform, influence and build relationships with foreign publics and civil society in order to create a positive environment for the fulfilment of Norwegian political and economic objectives.*

In his New Year's message to the nation, Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik spoke of the need to try to shape the global political environment: "Norway shall be a nation of peace ... At the same time we must, as far as a small nation can, build a culture of peace in a larger context, between nations. And we must build it on a foundation of human dignity and human rights."

His vision was of Norway transcending its modest size and geo-political weakness through its ability to master a universal language of human rights and dignity that could capture the attention and imaginations of citizens around the world. So far, Norway has achieved a voice and presence on the international stage that is out of proportion relative to its modest position and assets. Norway's ability to develop a reputation as a force for peace in the world has had an ameliorating effect on two negative images (its lack of influence in Europe through non-EU status and its attachment to whaling) – as well as allowing ministers to develop relationships with global powers that are useful on issues closer to the Norwegian national interest.

However, in spite of this relative success, Norway is still relatively unknown among many target audiences and less familiar than other countries of a similar size such as Ireland. This report argues that

Norway is held back by the lack of a clear strategy to build on its international reputation. It is important to grapple with this now as Norway's position seems to be less sustainable in a different political environment where power politics has returned to the world stage; where NATO and the United Nations (the two international organisations that are most central to Norwegian foreign policy) are under pressure; and where the European Union is growing both in size and in introspection.

We go on to detail four steps which will be critical to addressing these challenges –

- First, developing an overall public diplomacy strategy, which will involve agreeing on key messages and target audiences, and a tool kit for implementing it.
- Second, ending the fragmentation of institutions and budgets so that the whole can add up to more than the sum of its parts
- Third, providing clear training and guidelines for staff and criteria for evaluation.
- Fourth, creating flagship projects to symbolize Norway's approach to the world.

We examine both the question of “image-building” and the nuts and bolts of public diplomacy at a working level in the Norwegian Foreign Service. These two different but clearly linked and ongoing processes take place across the political and the administrative spheres. A successful public diplomacy strategy should be clearly integrated between the two levels.

The report draws on interviews with Norwegian opinion-makers – from Gro Harlem Brundtland to the design collective *Norway Says*; desk research by the Foreign Policy Centre and the Institute for Media and Communication at the University of Oslo (IMK) of existing qualitative and quantitative research about Norway; interviews with key public

and private-sector agencies responsible for promoting Norway; interviews with key international experts on public diplomacy, branding and milestone events; and a public diplomacy seminar with the IMK and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) held in March 2003. We have focused primarily on the role of government in the process, with much less attention given to the important role of business and civil society, a subject which would need further research. The claims in the report are only hypotheses, which require additional testing both with Norwegian and international audiences before they could be adopted.

## **Identity as a Premium for Politics, Trade and Tourist Promotion**

Just as location in a prime industrial district – such as the City of London for finance or Hollywood for film – confers all sorts of economic externalities, so national origin provides intangible externalities to economic and political actors. As products, investment environments and tourist destinations become more alike, it is becoming difficult to differentiate oneself in terms of quality alone. Tapping into a deeper sense of identity can help companies differentiate themselves from their competition. Opinion surveys show that three quarters of Fortune 500 companies see “national identity”, or place of origin, as one of the key factors that influence their decisions about buying goods and services. This means that Norway’s reputation for nature and cleanliness could help food and drink brands such as Snøfrisk or Norwegian Seafoods sell their products, and the advertising campaigns for such brands should in turn reinforce Norway’s reputation as an ecologically-friendly nation.

This is equally true in the political realm. The events of the last few months show that public perceptions can shape the international environment and influence the tactics of even superpowers, adding to the complexity of an international environment where the government-to-government diplomacy is influenced by domestic and global public

opinion. Sir Michael Butler, one of the most distinguished former diplomats in Britain, argues that perceptions of the country generally will shape the diplomatic environment: “We need to have a broad image which is favourably perceived in the key countries where we are based. If your government is perceived as self-interested, reactionary and unhelpful, it will seriously hamper your ability to get your way – as the US is finding at the moment”. Norway, on the other hand, has found it can create a virtuous circle – its reputation for international mediation helped persuade the different factions in Sri Lanka that they are an honest broker, which has in turn added to their reputation for peace.

A country’s reputation, like other assets, needs to be managed. Increasingly governments are developing sophisticated techniques to do this under the rubric of “public diplomacy” and “national branding”. Both of these labels have led to some confusion and scepticism about the management of a country’s reputation.

In the last few months, “public diplomacy” has been confused with the crude “Psy-Ops” deployed by the US Pentagon and State Department to “win hearts and minds” in the Middle East. But public diplomacy, when properly executed, is not about spreading propaganda or a one-way projection of messages. Like all types of diplomacy it is more about building relationships: understanding the needs of other countries, cultures and peoples; communicating our points of view; correcting misperceptions; looking for areas where we can find common cause. The major difference between public and traditional diplomacy is that public diplomacy involves a much broader group of people on both sides, and a broader set of interests that go beyond those of the government of the day. These activities build on a history of cultural promotion and are heavily invested in by many national governments.

With branding, the debate has been even more contentious, as many have feared that the wealth of a country’s identity will be debased by

resorting to the crude practices of the corporate market-place. It is obviously impossible to “sell” something as complex as a national identity in the same way as one might sell a soap powder. Clumsy attempts to market countries – even in specific sectors such as tourism – run the risk of reducing the excitement and diversity of a national culture to a homogenous, antiseptic commodity. The clearest example of this is the attempt to sell beach holidays: one image of a white beach and some blue sea is practically indistinguishable from another. When this happens, the net effect of branding is not to add value but to detract from it, as the key differentiator in this sort of commodified market will be price. But nevertheless, many countries have managed to avoid these dangers through intelligent and sensitive work on identity. They have shown the power of having a clear national story that can unite the different public sector stakeholders with the dynamism of the private sector.

## **Success of Other Countries**

The most famous example of a country that has successfully “rebranded” itself is probably Spain, where Miro’s España image acted as a unifying symbol for a massive promotional programme closely linked to national change and modernisation. There were many convergent aims: to shed the shadow of Franco, to move upmarket as a tourist destination, to provide a place for Spain’s constituent parts (e.g. Catalonia), and above all to redefine Spain as a modern industrial nation, a serious player in the European Union and a democracy. The España symbol, which became the national logo, symbolised a bright, optimistic, passionate Spain and dovetailed perfectly with the rebirth of Barcelona and Bilbao as vibrant European cities. Many different institutions – from the monarchy under Juan Carlos, to emerging multinationals like REPSOL, Telefonica and Union Fenosa – moved in the same direction to achieve a fundamental shift in perceptions, remaking Spain as a young and exciting country. This programme of activities,

a proportion of it carefully planned and co-ordinated, but based much around individual and corporate initiatives, was a tonic both for Spain's self-perception, and for its standing in the world.

Ireland offers a similar example. Like Spain, it suffered from being seen as rural, Catholic and reactionary. Over a period of twenty years its image was transformed to that of an exciting, innovative "Celtic tiger", with Dublin recast as one of Europe's liveliest cities. Its success can be attributed to many factors, from a good education system and generous lures to inward investors to EU grants, but it has been helped by the clever use of culture – in particular attracting filmmakers (one of the strongest shapers of national identities today) – as well as smart marketing.

During the 1980s the Australian Government undertook an equally ambitious programme to change its identity, using export promotion, inward investment campaigns and a series of projects around the Creative Nation project to rethink the place of Australia's aborigines and its relationship to its Asian neighbours. Work on image, to take Australia beyond koalas and kangaroos, has gone hand in hand with practical steps, like attracting more Asians to Australian universities and research projects, and embedding Japanese inward investment in ambitious science and technology projects.

Other examples include France, which has used "Grands Projets" to modernise its identity and which has a highly centralised machinery for managing identity; Chile, which cleverly built on campaigns to sell Chilean wine with campaigns claiming "Chile, it's not just a bunch of grapes"; and Italy which has worked to reinforce its image as a "capital of style". This shows that images are managed through a combination of changes in the reality of a country and attempts to project it through marketing, as well as the development of symbolic projects and attempts to build deeper relationships.

## The Centennial Anniversary of Norway as a Focus for Norwegian Public Diplomacy

Norway is at an important stage in the development of its cultural and public diplomacy strategy. The anniversary of Norwegian independence in 2005 represents a good opportunity for a re-examination of Norway's international image and standing. This process of establishing a clear role for Norway in the world, and research on the part that public diplomacy can play in projecting that image onto an international stage, was begun in the 2000 report, *Change and Renewal*. It was continued with the publication of the MFA White Paper on foreign cultural policy, and then with the publication of the first phase of the Norwegian–British project on the future of public diplomacy with the Foreign Policy Centre in 2002, *Public Diplomacy*. These reports provide the main context of the debate on Norwegian cultural and public diplomacy policy.

As the examples of other countries showed, the key to success in public diplomacy strategy is in revitalising the unused capital latent within national heritage. Norway in 2003 is a country of considerable economic, natural, social and political wealth. As the Sri Lankan peace talks struggle through difficult times, it is the persistent work of Norwegian ambassadors, statesmen and diplomats that keep the wheels of diplomacy going. Yet such efforts and achievements go largely unsung in all but the highest circles of international relations; so too does Norway's strident progress in the areas of environmental protection, overseas development, fundamental freedoms and economic growth. What is lacking are not the stories of Norwegian relevance but the means and the will to express it. If Norway is committed to adapting its external image for the global demands of the 21st Century then such messages need to start permeating through its foreign policy.

## 2. A Framework for Public Diplomacy

*“In today’s world, Foreign Ministries must aim at a wider audience than before. The media, international organisations and non-governmental players have become much more active in defining public opinion... such modes of communication require new strategies, methods and perhaps even a changed conception of what foreign policy is all about”*

*State Secretary Thorhild Widvey*

In order to capitalise on the latent power of Norwegian identity, the government needs to have a strategy for public diplomacy and an understanding of the tools available. The key is to marry a clear sense of Norway’s objectives with an understanding both of what target audiences want, and what Norway can offer them that is unique. This will allow Norway to set a proactive agenda – rather than simply reacting to events. In our research on public diplomacy, we have sought to set out a framework for understanding the public diplomacy environment. It can be conceptualised as a grid of three rows and three columns:

**Table 1. The Three Dimensions of Public Diplomacy**

	Reactive (hours and days)	Proactive (weeks and months)	Relationship building (years)
Political/Military			
Economic			
Society			

On one axis are the spheres on which public diplomacy is played out: political/military, economic and societal/cultural. These will carry different weight at different times, and in different contexts. For example in a potential target for investment, like Kazakhstan, economic messages will be important; in Israel/Palestine, political messages will matter more; in Sri Lanka, messages about the egalitarian nature of Norwegian society can give support to Norway's position as a neutral and fair mediator and thus generate public faith in the peace negotiations; while, with Nordic countries, all three spheres will be important. The prioritisation of these spheres for the different target countries may be susceptible to change, either through purposeful strategic decisions or in response to major events in the political world. Nevertheless, this axis provides a strong framework for differentiating the different facets of a nation's external relations.

Along the other axis, we can characterize three dimensions of public diplomacy activity by the timescale on which they take place:

## **News Management**

The first dimension is the management of communications on day-to-day issues, reflecting the growing need to align communications with traditional diplomacy.

This job is complicated by the fact that it is increasingly difficult to isolate different news stories for different audiences, foreign and domestic.

Such events as the start of the Norwegian whaling season or the release of the report on narcotic abuse by the Council of Europe's Pompidou Group have led to stories with titles such as "Scenic Norway, a Death Scene of Addiction". The domestic departments involved in these issues need to provide the Foreign Service with the notice and the information they need to contextualise such stories.

## Strategic Communications

Governments have traditionally been good at communicating their stances on particular issues, but less effective at managing perceptions of the country as a whole. One of the reasons for this is the fact that different institutions have been responsible for dealing with politics, trade, tourism, investment and cultural relations. But on many issues, it is the totality of messages which people get about a country which will determine how they relate to it. Strategic communication is a set of activities like a political campaign.

Chris Powell, the chairman of advertising company BMP DDB Needham argues that these messages must be simple: “People are exposed to thousands of messages every day... The task is to cut through this fog by imagination and repetition. A contrast between diplomacy and advertising is that in advertising an enormous amount of work goes into the preparation – boiling ideas down into very, very simple concepts, and then repeating that message over and over again until we are all thoroughly bored with it. When you are so bored with it that you feel like giving up, the listener may just have begun to register the message. So stick at it.”

## Relationship Building

The third dimension of public diplomacy is the most long-term: developing lasting relationships with key individuals through scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, conferences, building real and virtual networks, and giving people access to media channels. This differs from the usual diplomatic practice of nurturing contacts as it is about developing relationships between peers – politicians, special advisers, business people, cultural entrepreneurs or academics. This is aimed at creating a common analysis of issues and giving people a clearer idea of the motivations and factors affecting their actions so that by the time

they come to discussing individual issues a lot of the background work has been done already. It is important not just to develop relationships but to ensure that the experiences which people take away are positive and that there is follow-up afterwards. Building relationships is very different from selling messages because it involves a genuine exchange and means that people are given a “warts and all” picture of the country. The fact that more than 130 universities all over the world teach Nordic themes creates a large network of people, who are familiar with Norway, that can be tapped into. However, it is important not to place too much focus on preaching to the converted. The challenge is to create mechanisms to enable the development of relationships with wider groups of people who are of more obvious relevance to Norway’s strategic goals.

These different spheres and dimensions need different institutions. Traditionally Ministries of Foreign Affairs have been good at news management with local correspondents and building relationships with governments but very bad at putting across messages and dealing with broader audiences in society. Today, there is a new and more complex environment that needs different skills – managing the news in a 24-hour global media cycle; developing and communicating strategic messages; and building relationships with wider groups. In Chapter 7 we examine the capacity of the spectrum of Norwegian institutions to deal with these new challenges. But before looking at the institutions, a public diplomacy strategy needs to take account of the existing perceptions of Norway, so that appropriate messages can be tailored to mitigate weaknesses and stress the positive aspects of Norway.

### 3. The Norwegian Image

*“To be is to be perceived”*

*Bishop Berkeley*

For large countries like the United States, the United Kingdom or China, public diplomacy is mainly about changing images: shedding the perception that America is engaged in a “crusade” against Muslims; challenging the idea of Britain as a nation in decline, trying to get beyond images of Tiananmen Square and infanticide.

Norway’s problem is different: that of invisibility. That is not to say it is anonymous or absent, but that people generally have little or nothing to associate with the name that identifies Norway as a distinct state, nation or people. This is a cause for concern as the vital prerequisite of managing and promoting a country’s image is the existence of an image in the first place. Similar fears were voiced in the *Change and Renewal* report: “For nation states, recognition is more than a matter of introductory diplomatic recognition that makes a state a legitimate participant in the international system and a subject under international law: recognition is an ongoing part of politics”.

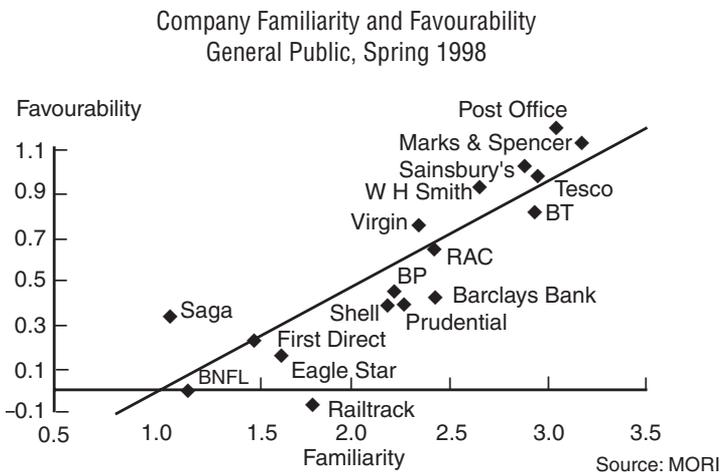
Some will argue that having a high profile is simply an exercise in vanity, and that there are risks associated with being too visible. One example is that a higher profile for Norway’s environmental policies might expose it to charges of hypocrisy on the perennial issues of whaling or seal culls. However, there are three important reasons for worrying about Norway’s image.

Firstly, there is the issue of credibility. The *Change and Renewal* report refers back to autumn 1999 and the breakdown of the Telenor-Telia

merger negotiations for an example of Norway's lack of credibility: "One reading ... [of the breakdown] ... might be that representatives of Sweden, through their actions, showed that they regard Norway as neither an equal player nor an IT nation'. The failure of Norway to project itself as "a player" in the IT world, argues the report, has a direct impact on the ability of Norwegian companies to talk with credibility on IT matters.

Secondly, students of public opinion have discovered a clear link between familiarity and favourability: in order to attract customers, companies, across a wide range of sectors, need to be visible and familiar to the public. The British opinion research firm MORI has produced a famous graph (see figure 1) to show the link between familiarity and favourability in companies.

Figure 1. **Company familiarity and favourability**



Their report explains how the graph works: “In company reputations, familiarity does not breed contempt. All other things being equal, the better known you are, the better disposed your target audience will be towards you. This applies to all audiences in all countries. A special word about familiarity: the question asks how well do you know each company? It is not factual knowledge – or at least not factual knowledge alone – that creates the sense of knowing a company. It is something more akin to ‘I know what makes them tick’, a sense of the organisation’s heartbeat. This may help to explain why companies which frequently change the style and tone of their advertising rarely reach the heights of familiarity and favourability!”. The MORI work focuses on the reputation of companies, but we believe that there are parallel lessons for countries. Opinion research by Eurobarometer in the European Union and by MORI and the Chicago Council for Foreign Relations in the United States, seems to reveal that European and American publics tend to feel most positive about countries with which they are familiar. Obviously the United States tends to be an out-riding because it is pursuing policies that are unpopular but this shows the importance of the qualifier “other things being equal”.

Thirdly, visibility is a “door opener”. There is reason to suspect that an initial insight into a country creates an appetite to learn more. In our work, we have argued that there is a hierarchy of impacts that it can achieve:

- Familiarising people with one’s country (making them think about it, updating their images, turning around unfavourable opinions).
- Increasing people’s appreciation of one’s country (creating positive perceptions, getting others to see issues of global importance from the same perspective).
- Engaging people with one’s country (strengthening ties – from education reform to scientific co-operation; encouraging people to see us as an attractive destination for tourism, study, distance learning; getting them to buy our products; getting people to understand and subscribe to our values).

- Influencing people (attracting investment from foreign companies; convincing publics to back our positions and politicians to turn to us as a favoured partner).

Visibility for Norway with key groups can move them higher up the hierarchy of engagement.

## Is Norway Disappearing From View?

It is clear from polls conducted over the last twenty years that Norway has consistently lacked a clear and widely recognised identity. The following excerpts demonstrate the inability of interviewees to articulate specific and distinct perceptions of Norway.

1986 – International Research Associates (INRA) – “A representative selection of people in six European countries (Belgium, West-Germany, France, UK, Italy, Norway and the US) were asked questions of what is ‘typical’ for each country. *Results:* Norway is viewed as a country without any particular strengths or weaknesses, without any particular profile. Few think about or know much about Norway”.

1989/90 – Burson-Marsteller on behalf of MFA – “A review was undertaken among highly qualified people in five European countries (UK, West-Germany, France, Spain and Italy) and a similar review was undertaken in the US. The target group was key-persons who were expected to have some knowledge about Norway. *Results:* Knowledge of Norway is surprisingly low. Norway is taken for Sweden. It is difficult to describe Norway and ‘Norwegianness’ compared to ‘Scandinavianness’ or ‘Germanness’.”

2000 – MarkUp Consulting’s review on behalf of the Norwegian Tourist Board on Norway’s reputation as tourist-destination – “2 out of 3 said they knew very little or nothing about the country. All countries surveyed have limited knowledge and many cannot keep Norway separate from Scandinavia.”

This last quote is perhaps the most significant as it shows that, despite the positive images people might have about Norway, many do not conceptualise these as specifically Norwegian. The similar point made in the Burson-Marsteller report shows this to be a persistent problem in the views of Norway generally held.

There are, of course, clear differences between the media coverage of Norway in each target country according to particular national interests. For example, Japan recognises Norway as “a partner pro-whaling nation” and thus the Japanese press mentions it frequently during every meeting of the International Whaling Commission; the Finnish media, seeing Norway as a regional neighbour and sporting rival, often report on the successes and failures of Norwegian sportsmen and women. However, except for these occasional areas of interest, the press reviews reveal a general failure in the world media to engage with Norway and Norwegian issues.

Importantly, the four countries above are all amongst the six nations upon which Norway concentrates much of its public diplomacy efforts and resources. Furthermore, the countries featured in the Burson-Marsteller review were predominantly from that same group of six. The latter review, performed in 1989/90, was focused on highly-qualified people, thus proving that Norway was failing to reach even the best-informed sections of Western society. Some might argue that a similar study conducted now would produce more favourable results since Norway has been heavily involved in international diplomacy over the last decade. But the press review suggest that Norway’s external image still often fails to reach its intended audiences.

Where other factors have made this low and indistinct profile less significant in the past, certain major events in the last fifteen years have increased Norway’s risk of “disappearance”. The collapse of the Soviet Union significantly erodes the significance of being on NATO’s “front-line” with Russia and Poland’s NATO membership means that Norway is no longer alone in this regard. And the recent splits in NATO have

put its very utility into question on both sides of the Atlantic. Equally, the Swedish decision to join the European Union has left Norway uniquely isolated among the Scandinavian countries in the structure of its relationships in Europe. The press review by the Embassy in Finland describes how Norwegian news gradually drifts out of the headlines as “more and more” editorial resources are directed towards the EU and Brussels. A striking visual manifestation of this “drift” is Norway’s absence from the map that appears on the Euro coin, which has the waves of the Atlantic washing directly onto Sweden. Such trends appear ominous for the future of Norway’s external image and thus for its standing within the world community.

## The Nature of Norway’s Invisibility

Despite this, Norwegian images, where they do exist, are largely positive or neutral, although they are typically very traditional. The graph from the press review shows this to be overwhelmingly the case for a sample of articles across five countries:

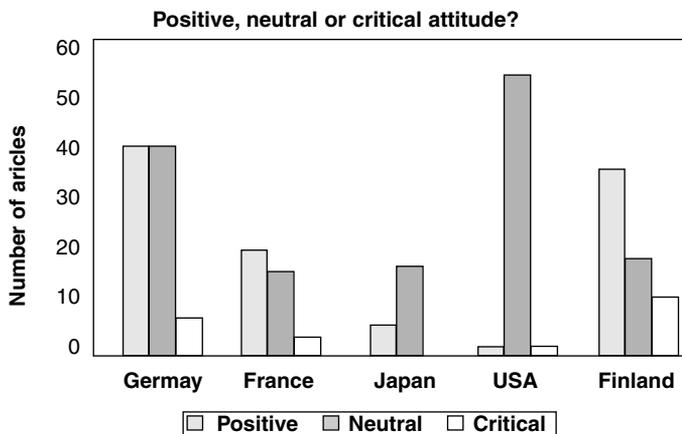


Figure 2. Attitudes to Norway

Polling also reveals a broadly positive picture among those who have perceptions of Norway. Of positive associations, people list the fjords (35%), the unspoilt nature (29%), the mountains (28%) and open-minded, friendly people (15%). While such associations do indeed present Norway in a positive light, they do not engender an impression of Norway and Norwegians as either dynamic or exciting. This image of passivity is reinforced by the negative associations held by people, 45%, 18% and 9% of whom respectively attributed Norway with cold weather, dullness and a lack of things to do.

The Norwegian Tourist Board, in a recent study found that while Norway is perceived as “beautiful, mighty, impressive and overwhelming”, 31% of Swedes, 41% of Danes and 60% of Brits believed Norway to be an uninteresting holiday destination. In explaining this phenomenon, they identify the failure to enrich, energise and harmonise the barren image of the Norwegian wilderness with a strong sense of a history, culture or people. This deficiency in its image means that tourists don’t expect to be able to “get in touch with local people and learn about different cultures”, “participate in local festivals and sample local traditional food” or “experience something surprising and unexpected”, all of which are increasingly regular demands made of holiday destinations.

Similarities emerge in the profile of the Norwegian economy as related in the press reviews. Articles in the French and US media show an awareness and a marginal interest in Norway as an oil-rich economy with a number of healthy cruise-liner businesses but, with the exception of the French daily, *Le Figaro*, there is little or no interest whatsoever in the development of Norwegian companies outside of these industries. Elsewhere, the Norwegian economy is barely more than a reference point for making neutral comparisons in the analyses and discussions of other economies in the region. Despite being reportedly the “richest country in Europe”, Norway still lacks economic presence and visibility.

Norway lacks a number of the traditional assets that countries have used to project themselves on the world stage: very few people speak Norwegian outside of Norway; being out of the European Union, it neither makes the regular appearances at European summits that other EU members enjoy nor does it get the opportunity to host the revolving presidency; its geographically-isolated position means that no one is likely to pass through the country; and Norway has no major famous brands or popular icons that can act as emissaries for Norwegian identity and thereby distinguish Norway from its Scandinavian neighbours in the way that the Swedish image is enhanced by Ikea, Saab, Ericsson, Absolut, Volvo etc.

These factors mean that Norway has to work even harder than most to get noticed, and to build in innovative ways on the assets it has already developed. That is how it can overcome what we will now call “the Norwegian dilemma”. To summarise, it has a number of issues that perpetuate its invisibility:

- It is small – in population, economy and presence.
- It is isolated – politically, geographically and culturally.
- It lacks linguistic attraction – many Norwegians speak English but not vice versa.
- It lacks brands or icons – there are no emissaries for the Norwegian identity.
- It is similar to Scandinavia – its shared culture does not help to distinguish it from the rest.

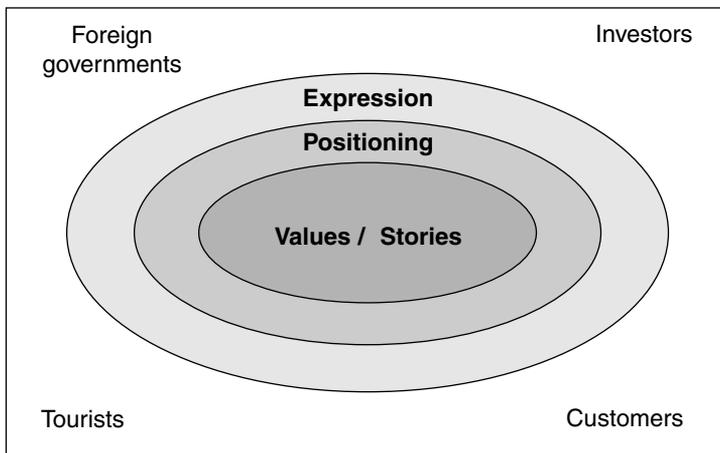
## 4. The Norwegian Story

*“In Norway, people are eager to be together telling stories...the storytelling tradition is deeply rooted” Bentein Baardsen, Director of Ceremonies, Lillehammer Olympics*

In order to manage Norway’s reputation and the way it is perceived, it is important to think about identity in a systematic way. It is helpful to think of three layers of identity. At the centre are the “stories” or values that make up a country’s identity; in the second ring the “positioning” or unique selling point of the country, and in the outer ring, the expressions of that identity – from flags and anthems to logos and advertising.

The temptation is usually to start with the outer ring – designing new logos, commissioning advertising campaigns or rebranding the flag – but this is liable to be rootless and superficial. Successful countries will begin with the ring at the centre in order to agree on a compelling story that is understood and shared by all stakeholders. In Germany there is a shared understanding of the country’s prowess in technology and engineering as well as its efficiency and high quality products. This is expressed by everyone you meet from tourists and government officials to large companies such as Audi whose “Vorsprung Durch Technik” campaign tapped into a theme that many people already associate with Germany. In Britain, when Tony Blair sought to challenge the image of the UK as a hyper-traditional, heavy-industry country that was in decline, “Cool Britannia” became a commonly-used shorthand for a creative revival in the mid-1990s that was understood from high-politics to low culture. Once the story is accepted, it will take shape in a positioning and can then be expressed in all the points of contact with

Figure 1. **The layers of identity**



the outside world – from tourist advertising campaigns and airport waiting rooms to the design of embassies and consumer products. Of course, the adoption of a particular positioning is not irreversible and it will be important for the country periodically to review the position so that it keeps it in step with the reality of Norwegian society.

## **Start with the Stories**

A country's external reputation is usually a reflection of the internal perceptions of its citizens – maybe lagging by a few years – so the starting point for any identity project must be a rational debate about the shared values and narrative that people can relate to. No attempt to project messages about Norway abroad will work unless they are based on stories that are understood and internalised by Norwegian citizens, companies and politicians (as the German example shows). This is particularly true as the activities of the MFA and the Tourist Board are tiny compared to

the contact Norwegian business and civil society has with the outer world. The advantage of stories is that they can excite and engage people's emotions more effectively than a collection of facts about a country. In order to be successful, each story should do some of the following:

- Link the past with the future.
- Be aspirational.
- Deal with a weakness.
- Capture the imagination and engage the emotions.
- Be relevant internally and externally.

As part of the research for this project we conducted interviews with many of Norway's "story-tellers" including politicians from the main political parties, journalists, academics, cultural figures, popular culture entrepreneurs, businessmen, NGO directors, and representatives from the main public sector organisations charged with promoting Norway abroad. From these interviews we distilled four primary stories that fulfil these criteria and researched a series of facts to demonstrate the reality on which they draw. These stories are simply hypotheses which we have inferred from our initial interviews and would need to be properly tested before being adopted.

## The Four Norwegian Stories

### *A. Humanitarian superpower*

Norway might only be 115th in the world in terms of its size, but it is leading the world as a humanitarian power – outperforming all other countries in terms of its contributions to aid, its role in peace-keeping and its commitment to developing new kinds of global governance. Norway was involved in setting up the League of Nations and the Red Cross, and provided the United Nations with its first Secretary General – but today it plays an even more important role contributing more funds to the UN (per capita) than any other country, as well as having sent over 50,000

troops on peacekeeping operations. Norway has developed a unique expertise in mediation and peace work – as well as the high-profile processes in the Middle East, Sri Lanka and Guatemala, there has been Norwegian involvement in Indonesia, Colombia, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Mali, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, among others. This commitment goes far beyond the activities of the Norwegian state – infusing every aspect of Norwegian society from NGOs and business to ordinary citizens. Corporate Social Responsibility is embraced by large corporations and SMEs alike and many are involved in the KOMpakt initiative which looks into the role of Norwegian business in promoting human rights overseas. This is all reinforced with a vibrant Norwegian civil society: there are 52 NGOs committed to international development, and huge contributions to aid appeals made by Norwegian citizens.

- In 1946 the Norwegian Trygve Lie was named the first Secretary General of the United Nations in recognition of Norway's mediation talents and humanitarian instincts. Norway has remained unwavering in its support for UN activities on the environment, economic development, refugees and military peacekeeping.
- Dating back to the Sinai operation in 1956, Norway has contributed more than 50,000 men and women to UN peace-keeping operations with 1 out of 40 Norwegian men having served in UN uniform. In the 1990s Norway sent troops under UN command to Angola, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Western Sahara, Cambodia, Central America, Somalia, and the former Yugoslavia. In the latter region Norwegians also served under NATO command.
- The state budget for development aid is approaching 1% of the country's gross domestic product, making Norway one of the world's No. 1 donors. And Norwegians are no less generous with private contributions. A one-day charity drive each year brings in more than \$20 million for such causes as the International Red Cross – nearly \$5 per Norwegian.
- Norway contributes \$150 per capita to the UN every year – said to be about 10 times more than the average for other wealthy nations

- Over 6% of Norway's 2000 annual budget for development assistance was channelled through NGOs and 13.4% of it was channelled through partnership programmes with developing countries and measures in developing areas. Norway has bilateral aid agreements with priority countries to which it gives the majority of its allocated development assistance funds
- An estimated 95% of all Norwegian SMEs with between 50-249 employees are involved in social activities, making Norwegian SMEs of this size the most socially responsible in Europe
- In 1997 the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry launched a human rights checklist, in co-operation with Amnesty International, for Norwegian businesses operating in the South. The checklist provides Norwegian companies with a guide to the rights that are guaranteed by the various international rights conventions to which Norway is committed

*“With a population of about 4.5 million, a cruelly tenacious winter and an awful lot of herring, Norway will never stand out as an economic powerhouse, a vacation paradise or the culinary envy of the world. But its claim to global fame is an arguably rarer one. Now more than ever, Norway seems to be the international capital of peace.” Frank Bruni, NYT, A Nation That Exports Oil, Herring and Peace, Dec 21 2002.*

### *B. Living with Nature*

A land of striking beauty, with its coastal tracery of fjords and snow-capped mountains, Norway has remained largely untouched by pollution as it has evolved from a fishing and farming society into high-tech and white-collar business without an intervening phase of heavy industry that is comparable in scale and intensity to other Western industrialized nations. Norwegians share a unique relationship with nature – exploiting its potential whilst pioneering ways of protecting the environment with carbon taxes, recycling and anti-pollution technology. Former Prime

Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland even earned the nickname “World Environmental Minister” while chairing the UN Commission on Environmental Development. Norway itself is one of the least polluted lands on earth with 99% of its electric needs met by pollution-free hydropower. Though a significant producer of the world’s oil supply, Norway is one of its own worst customers because of the high environmental taxes levied on oil purchases.

- Norway has one of the highest nature-to-citizen ratios in Europe with only 14 people per square kilometre. Nordic countries Sweden and Denmark, for example, have 20 and 124 respectively whilst countries such as the UK (244), Belgium (336) and the Netherlands (462) greatly exceed these levels of population density.
- Norway has a total of 1,441 nature reserves, 97 landscape protection areas and 18 national parks all of which contribute to an overall total of protected area in Norway reaching almost two and a half million hectares of land.
- To take advantage of the abundant natural splendour, almost every family has access to a weekend home in the mountains or on the sea.
- In 1996, Germany’s leading holiday magazine hailed Norway as the world’s best country in this respect. A jury of 250 executives from German travel agencies, tour operators, travel organisations and travel journalists agreed that Norway has achieved a successful balance between commercial tourism and protection of the environment.
- A scientific report on the environmental quality of life asked what was essential to the good life. The answer from 19 out of 20 Norwegians was ‘nature’ (cited by Børge Brende, Norwegian Minister of the Environment).
- Income per capita has been in the global top 10 since the 1970s. More holistic quality-of-life rankings often put Norway in the No. 1 position. When American researchers surveyed people around the world in 1995, they found that no one was happier about life than Norwegians.

- Depending on when the measurement is made, Norway is either the second or third largest oil exporter in the world and the most important source of oil and natural gas in Europe.
- Hydroelectric power was the fastest growing major energy commodity produced in Norway over the four years from 1997 to 2001, increasing twice as fast as gas production and 50 times as fast as oil production over the same period. Nevertheless, by 2000 hydropower development had only developed 63% of its estimated potential.
- Domestically, over a third of household waste in 2000 was recycled while, industrially, sulphur dioxide emissions have been cut down by 80% over the last twenty five years.
- Approximately 180,000 people in Norway, close to 5% of the population, are members of local environmental or local action groups.

*“By being one of the first industrialised countries to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, we signal the seriousness we attach to (the global climate change) problem and that we want to do our share to solve it”* Børge Brende, Minister of Environment.

### *C. Equality*

Norway is living proof that equality and economic dynamism can be combined. Whilst being the richest country in Europe it also has the lowest level of inequality, a comprehensive welfare system, and a uniquely high rate of employment. This concern with equality is deeply embedded in Norwegian culture – so that even members of the Royal family and prime ministers are treated with informality and a refreshing lack of pomp. One of the most prominent national myths is the Jante Law (Janteloven), “Thou shalt not presume that thou art anyone important”, formulated in Danish/Norwegian writer Aksel Sandemose’s 1933 classic novel, *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*. Though negatively depicting a smalltown Scandinavian culture of rigid and sometimes severe egalitarianism, the spirit of such commandments is widely accepted as

having greatly influenced the positive aspects of the Norwegian dedication to a classless society.

- Norway has the highest labour force participation in the world with 80.7% of its total population in the nation's work force in comparison to countries with far less of a welfare state such as USA and Japan which have 77.2% and 72.5% respectively. This is due to the fact that Norway has the highest female participation in the work force at 76.5%.
- During the petrol crisis in 1973, King Olav was an ordinary passenger on the tram, when he refused any special treatment. A press photo of the King paying for his ticket has become a symbol of an egalitarian society. King Harald regularly travels on ordinary trains. In 1928, King Haakon, after asking the then strongly Marxist Social Democrats to form a government, as the largest party, despite furious opposition, said: "You have to remember that I'm king of the communists too".
- Norway is No.1 in the UN's Gender-related development index (GDI) and Gender empowerment measure (GEM) rankings.
- Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland attracted international attention in 1986 when she formed a government in which nearly half the members were women. No government since has been formed with less than 40% female members.
- The majority of Norwegian political parties voluntarily apply a gender quota system in nominations to elections and in the composition of governing bodies at all levels.
- In March last year the government announced its intention to introduce a law for quotas on females in the boardrooms of Norwegian companies. Through the imposed measure the government aims to increase the current percentage of female board members from 7 to 40
- The public sector owns approximately half of all Norwegian business interests and 38% of the companies on the Oslo stock exchange, after having part-privatised Statoil and Telenor, the country's largest oil and telecommunications companies respectively.

- Statoil chief executive Olav Fjell is the only one of the company's 11,000 employees in Norway who will not be paid a bonus this year, even though the company delivered a handsome profit in 2002. Mr Fjell is not getting a pay rise either, in contrast to most of Statoil's other employees.
- Forty two per cent of people above 16 are members of a trade union, 600,000 are members of housing co-operatives and almost a quarter take part in local welfare societies.
- Only about 1% of children attend private schools. The curriculum and other major policies are centralized at the national level.
- The fertility rate in Norway is 1.8, and among the highest in Europe, only beaten by Iceland (2.0) and Catholic Ireland (1.9), which is thought to be because of the terms of child leave after a birth. Excepting the self-employed, all working mothers (or fathers, if they choose to) can choose between 12 months leave with 80% salary or 10 months leave with 100% salary. The paid leave can be stretched to 2 years if blended with part-time work. The father has to stay home with the baby for at least 4 weeks during this period, or else the money for these 4 weeks will be withdrawn. Parents who elect to stay home and care for children under the age of 7 earn credit toward their old-age pension just as if they were employed.

*“The Norwegian monarchy is not the fairy-tale kind, and Norwegians like it that way ... there are no pampered dukes and duchesses to throw tabloid tantrums. Each morning's changing of the guard is more a tin soldier affair than plumed-hat pageantry, and it takes place in public gardens before the unadorned brick and plaster royal palace while office workers hurry past, not noticing” Warren Hoge, “Norway's Thoroughly Modern Royal Pair” *The New York Times* March 5, 2001.*

#### *D. Internationalist/Spirit of adventure*

Once Norwegians had learnt to navigate the punishing coastlines of their own country, exploring the world was easy. The entire geographical

length of Norway is equivalent to the distance between Oslo and Rome with normal winter temperatures in its northernmost parts reaching  $-25$  to  $-30$  degrees Celsius and a rugged landscape that ascend to over 2000 metres in some parts. It is not, therefore, a country for the faint-hearted. Norway's history is littered with famous adventurers whose endeavours are only partially known – from the Vikings and Kontiki to Amundsen and the modern BASE jumpers. Leiv Eriksson, for example, is widely believed to have been the first to have reached America from European shores some five hundred years before history documents Columbus as having done so. Sport too has been an example of international adventure. It is rumoured that Norwegians invented the sport of skiing. Indeed the words ski and slalom are Norwegian and the modern-day ski was invented by a Norwegian called Sondre Norheim in order to allow skiers to jump and turn. To prove it Norway has won more Winter Olympic medals than any other nation in the World.

- 200,000 privately owned “hytter”, or primitive bungalows, dot the mountains, valleys and fjordsides of Norway providing families with bases for pursuing a wide range of nature-oriented activities including some of the nation's favourite sports such as skiing, skating, biathlon, trekking and white-water rafting.
- Norwegians have an affinity for sports that require individual achievement. Grete Waitz and Ingrid Christensen dominated the sport of women's long-distance running through the 1980s. An extreme example is the polar trek – an increasingly common endeavour still guaranteed to captivate Norwegians.
- The modern adrenalin “sport” of BASE jumping was first devised in 1980 by Norwegian Carl Boenish and has now spread across the globe with a fast-growing following of enthusiasts despite being illegal in many parts of the world and causing between 5 and 15 deaths each year.
- Norway's history boasts some of the greatest pioneers and achievements of polar exploration. Fridtjof Nansen, in 1888, became the first man to ski across Greenland and in 1893 led the famous

“Fram” expedition towards the North Pole going further than anyone had gone before. Otto Sverdrup, Nansen’s second in command on the first “Fram trip”, made substantial scientific advances through subsequent surveys of Greenland. Roald Amundsen went further, however, discovering the Northwest Passage along the northern coastline of Canada in 1905, reaching the South Pole five weeks before the Englishman Robert Scott in 1911 and flying an airship to the North Pole in 1926 to become the first man to visit both North and South Pole.

- Such achievements have been emulated by modern Norwegian adventurers such as Erling Kagge, Børge Ousland and Liv Arnesen. The first two of these became the first to ski unsupported to the South and North Pole respectively in the early nineties, while the third, in 1994, became the first woman to travel solo to the South Pole.
- Thor Heyerdahl’s 1947 Kon-Tiki expedition on a balsa raft proved that early South Americans could have sailed to Polynesia; his 1969 Ra expedition showing that reed rafts could traverse the Atlantic Ocean; and his 1979 Tigris expedition illustrating that ancient Sumerians could have circled the Arabian Peninsula on reed rafts.
- Shipping was, and remains, Norway’s ticket to the world. As of the beginning of this year, Norwegian ship owners controlled more than 1,600 cargo, tanker and cruise ships, roughly estimated as more than 10% of the world’s fleet.
- In 2000, 19,418 Norwegian students went abroad to study. This amounts to a quarter of the total number of students that studied within Norwegian educational institutions in the same year (81,561). This trend has been supported by the government which, in 2001/2002, provided a total of 15,759 Norwegian students with financial support for pursuing studies abroad.
- In a mid-1990s survey that ranked young people in Europe in terms of an “Americanisation index”, Norway was on top, followed by Switzerland and Sweden, and far above Italy and France.
- There is a considerable Norwegian history of *American adventure* with over 4 million existing US citizens claiming Norwegian ancestry.

### **Case Study: Could Norway be *Über*-Scandinavian?**

“It’s Scandinavian” SAS slogan

Together these four stories capture the essence of many Norwegians’ self-perceptions. They provide a link between Norway’s past and her aspirations for the future – and they also provide a link with the rest of the world’s attraction and interest in the whole Nordic region. One way to take advantage of this would be to explore the option of a meta-story – about Norway as an “*Über*-Scandinavian”, which would allow Norway to take advantage of all the existing perceptions of Scandinavia while keeping her special strengths. One could imagine a campaign running something along the lines of “Norway: 100% Scandinavian” or “Some Countries are more Scandinavian than others”. The text could draw on peoples’ associations with the region to appreciate Norway in the following way: “Think of everything that you know about Scandinavia and double it – and you will have found Norway. Whether it is equality, peace, nature, or self-sufficiency, Norway embodies all the things that people look for from Scandinavia. The relaxed style, the honesty, the winter sun, the snow, the friendly people, the blondes ...”. This would echo the strategy adopted by the Malaysian tourist board, which sought to counter a low level of awareness of Malaysia by tuning into a rich seam of mental and emotional associations with Asian exoticism by deploying the slogan “Malaysia. Truly Asia”. There could be clear advantages to this for Norway. Scandinavia is a more familiar concept to most people in the world than Norway, and, as research conducted by SAS shows, it is overwhelmingly associated with positive things. It would also allow Norway to “free-ride” off the Swedish reputation in areas where Norway has traditionally not excelled such as technology or design. There are also potential dangers in this approach. First, adopting a Scandinavian brand which did not have a strong Norwegian element might simply result in increasing opportunities for Sweden which might crowd Norway out of the picture. Secondly, adopting an aggressively Scandinavian approach might fuel resentment among Norway’s neighbours. The idea would require much further elaboration and testing, but does provide a viable and potentially successful central story.

## Developing a Positioning

From these four stories it is necessary to develop a clear positioning which can draw the strongest elements out of all the stories in a synthetic message. In order to decide which stories to headline, it is important to revisit the criteria we set out at the beginning of the report that draw on our experience of public diplomacy across different countries. The table below assesses each of the stories against them.

The table shows that the only two stories which score highly against all of the criteria are the *Humanitarian Superpower* and *Living With Nature*. This means that these two stories should go in the forefront with the others taking on a supporting role, allowing the Four Stories to be turned into one positioning: “Peaceful Nature”.

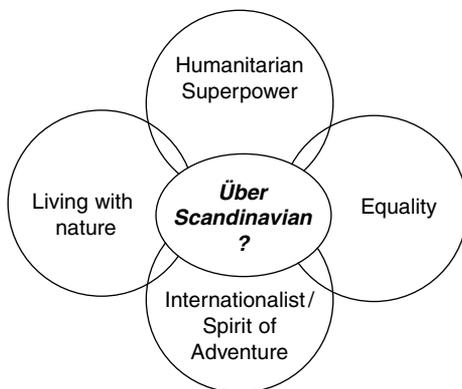
This positioning both captures a distinctive Norwegian story and it serves the purposes of all of the key stakeholders in Norway – in the political and economic spheres.

Peace is an essential door opener for political influence. State Secretary Vidar Helgesen expresses this very forcefully: Norway’s peace work

Table 1. **The Norwegian stories**

	Humanitarian superpower	Living with Nature	Equality	Spirit of adventure
True/credible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Distinctive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Relevant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Internally				
Relevant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Externally				
Tackles	Yes	Yes	No	No
Weakness				

Figure 2. **The Self Perception of Norwegian: Four compelling stories and possible meta-story**



“provides opportunities – access to key people in Washington, London and Brussels... a Norwegian deputy foreign minister would never otherwise be in a position to meet the number two at the US State Department five times in one year”.

Nature is one of the key messages for the Norwegian Tourist Board and the Seafood Export Council. The Tourist Board’s marketing is based on the idea of Norway as a heaven of peace, tranquillity and beautiful nature (slogan “any good doctor would prescribe Norway”). The Seafood Export Council also trades on pictures of rugged nature and sells its products with the slogan “treasures of the sea”.

Finally, this positioning can be helpful to big Norwegian companies who trade on the fact that Norway is not a nation with an imperial past, and also appreciate its reputation for a high commitment to environmental standards, human rights and good governance. Willy H. Olsen, Head of the CEO’s Office at Statoil captured this when he said: “One

can piggy-back on that reputation. It is easy to find people in Congress and the Administration who know of Norway as a peace nation”.

Once there is an agreed positioning behind which all the stakeholders can unite, it is possible to create a strategy for managing Norway’s reputation abroad. This positioning needs to be used as the bedrock for all strategic communications – by everyone from the MFA and Tourist Board through to the Seafood Export Council and the 2005 Committee.

## 5. Expressing Norway's Identity

*“The environmental profile is part of the balancing of things: that we are not going to be a polluting oil country but a modern, forward-looking, environmentally friendly explorer of oil”*

*Gro Harlem Brundtland*

Once you have a positioning, you can look at the expression. At the moment, peace and nature feature prominently in the activities of many of the actors involved in projecting Norway to the world – but in a haphazard and random way. There is a lack of strategy behind all elements of the expression. There are two key problems:

First, the expression of messages about peace and nature is often excessively *passive* – completely out of kilter with the stories of a spirit of adventure set out in the previous chapter.

Second, much of the material is out-of-date and elitist – signally failing to capture the Norwegian spirit of equality. All of the icons that feature in Norwegian public diplomacy are dead – Ibsen, Grieg, Nansen, Bjørnson and Munch. These are all important international figures that command recognition among elements of the elite in many countries, but they neither give the impression of a country that is overflowing with contemporary talent, nor relate to a modern version of the stories. The equivalent would be for the United Kingdom to rely on Dickens, Constable, Britten, and Scott of the Antarctic in its public diplomacy work – and eschew any modern material. Furthermore, there is a danger that upcoming milestone events will only accentuate this focus on the past.

In this chapter we will set out an analysis and concrete recommendations for how Norway can use these traditional stories differently, drawing on the country's recognized strengths, but articulating them in a modern and dynamic way. In both cases, it is important that this should be *done* in a modern way, *showing* rather than simply *claiming* that Norway is a modern nation.

## Moving Beyond the Passive Expression of Norwegian Identity

Peace and nature are both too often represented in a way that emphasizes static facts and images about Norway as a physical entity rather than placing the focus on the agency role of Norwegians. This manifests itself in everything from the brochures about fjords and mountains to the overly self-effacing explanations of involvement in peace processes.

The presentation is essentially orientated around the passive – Norway as a pacific country that is too small to threaten others, peaceful itself and geographically “far away” enough not to have any strategic interests in the countries in which it operates. This approach runs the risk of both sounding like a naive form of pacifism (particularly in the current global environment), whilst also failing to point to the expertise that Norway has built up through deep involvement in numerous peace-processes. Moreover, the other message is of a country blessed with large oil and gas reserves and beautiful, empty landscapes – advantages that are “just there” without any meaningful human involvement.

In portraying peace and nature, Norway should abjure the static landscape, the romanticized anti-modern images of spaces empty but for the occasional troll, and the depictions of an innocuous faraway place. The expression should focus on the dynamic – active people, hard-headedness and modernity.

## Active Peace

The first aspect is about Norwegians as *engaged* global citizens: peace-makers and peacekeepers – the blue helmet rather than the white dove; thinkers and practitioners at the forefront of debates about soft power

### **Active Peace**

- Norway has a strong track record – Norwegians have played a critical role in delivering significant results in some of the world's longest running and most intractable conflicts.
- Norway has made very good use of a range of different channels, often, in the initial stages, through her flourishing NGO sector.
- Norway has frequently established prior relationships of trust with the parties to the processes and hands-on knowledge of the situation through her extensive programmes of development assistance.
- Norway has a dynamic, non-bureaucratic political culture – Norwegians are prepared to make quick decisions, be flexible and creative, take risks and commit resources.
- Norwegian involvement in peace processes has always been characterized by its discretion and conspicuous lack of glory seeking.
- Norway is always prepared to be multilateral rather than itching to take sole credit and ownership.
- Norway pursues consistent policies over time, with support across the political spectrum – making long-term commitments and never looking for quick results.
- Norway is an engaged intellectual partner, with international research cooperation in a range of spheres, from development to human rights and international law, such as the FAFO surveys of living conditions in the Middle East.

with a sophisticated understanding of global security. The table below shows some of the ways of expressing the message.

The advantages of communicating the message with a degree of hard-headedness are also clear – whilst being neither naïve nor cynical, Norway can operate on the basis of an expansive sense of self-interest, inextricably bound up with the common good, leaves Norway’s story looking less like a progress towards canonisation and more like that of a modern and sophisticated global citizen. As well as the benefits of international diplomacy – gaining access to important negotiating tables – the international security benefits of building peace in troubled regions of the world are manifest. As Erik Solheim argues, only an “old-fashioned” view fails to see that “the Middle East is closer than Lithuania” – “every threat to my kids is international, not from nearby” – a case only highlighted by Norway’s recent appearance on an Al-Qaeda target list. Equally, Norway’s NATO membership and proportionately high levels of troop provision give a hard edge to the message. Rather than a glassy-eyed, rich, pacific country sitting in isolation at the top of the world spreading beatific messages of peace while the rest of the world degenerates into violent conflict, the fact that over 1% of the population have been in UN uniform, that Norway has had troops everywhere from Afghanistan to the Balkans, along with the high-profile peace process work credibly structure any portrayal of Norway as an engaged, realistic actor, unafraid to put her own people on the front line. The active peace message also has a mutually supportive relationship with the corporate social responsibility agenda of Norway’s leading businesses – the portrayal of Norwegians as capable, trustworthy, ethical partners is strongly consonant across both realms.

There are, nevertheless, various potential risks involved in accentuating Norway’s reputation for peace that are worthy of attention.

The most prominent risk is that Norway’s very character as a peace agent could be undermined by the act of drawing attention to it. The Norwegian

willingness to assume a low profile and to take little of the glory for successes are widely seen as enabling conditions for peace work, which it would clearly be unwise to jeopardise. But discretion and modesty need not mean invisibility. A well-structured programme targeted at audiences unfamiliar with Norway's work in this area need not cause problems as long as it places emphasis on the right aspects of the peace message – Norway as a partner, facilitator and good multilateralist. A second set of problems may be seen to emerge from the changed climate in Washington after 9/11. Firstly, the 'engaging with terrorists is appeasement' case has gained much prominence. With talk of 'dealing terrorism a deadly blow in the 21st century, just as slavery was overcome in the 19th', a more hard-line approach may shift attitudes towards current and past peace processes. Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz lists the Nobel Prize Committee, *inter alia*, as 'leading the list of appeasers' in his best-selling book "Why terrorism works". If these sentiments gain a firm foothold, Norway's peace work, which has required engagement with proscribed terrorist organisations, risks being seen in a more negative light, at least with certain important audiences in one of Norway's target countries.

A related problem is that in a context of ongoing wars and threats of war, a strong message of peace can be seen as an act of nose thumbing directed at their prosecutors. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Jimmy Carter, accompanied by Gunnar Berge's statement that "It's a kick in the leg to all that follow the same line as the United States", is perhaps paradigmatic. The positioning risks taking on an oppositional character during times when the anti-war movement is the loudest bearer of the peace message. Jeff Jacoby, a Boston Globe columnist, wrote of "a smug little group of Norwegian politicians" who "chose Carter for the Nobel Peace Prize in order to take a slap at a superpower willing to go to war, if necessary, to depose a vicious tyrant" and urged him not to accept the prize, which may be seen as symptomatic. The distinguished British academic, Tony Judt, puts this case powerfully when he says: "In influential circles around President George W. Bush peace is becoming ... a term of near abuse".

A fourth risk is that of irritating the other aspirant humanitarian superpowers. Gro Harlem Brundtland has spoken of the Swedish foreign minister being “very jealous” after Oslo; Norway’s too-fulsome embrace of the “peace nation” mantle could raise hackles with those who wish to see themselves in the same light. Once again, the tenor of the message is important – if it takes the wrong form, there is a danger that there may be attempts to unpick and undermine it.

Finally, a strong association with peace processes could be seen to leave hostages to fortune. Although escaping opprobrium so far, there is a danger that, in such unpredictable and sensitive work, Norway could end up being blamed by one of the parties or by external observers for her role in the failure of a process. This problem appears all the more vexatious for the fact that the situations are significantly outside Norway’s control, and the failures would be magnified considerably in the world’s eyes if they are seen to be central to the country’s self-portrayal. Norway’s experience with the Oslo accords, in the highest profile peace process of all, would seem to suggest that such fears may be exaggerated, but they also attest to the importance of taking great care with claiming and profiling “success”.

### Active Nature

The second aspect is about the very particular Norwegian *relationship* with nature: explorers and adventurers braving and conquering nature; sportspersons’ dramatic feats in nature; environmentalists and political leaders’ pioneering ideas for conserving and living with nature alongside responsible economic development and resource use. We set this out in the table below.

This approach is also not without its dangers. First, a “Nature” positioning tinged with environmentalism can often be seen as characterised by a degree of luddism – Norway risks appearing anti-modern, anti-urban, anti-business and defined by naïve pre-lapsarian aspirations.

### **Active Nature**

- Norwegians have a unique relationship with nature – trying to conquer a hostile environment; exploit and preserve natural resources; make a living of the land and sea whilst preserving them intact for future generations.
- Norwegians are actively engaged in nature. From skiing to pioneering extreme sports like BASE-Jumping, from polar explorations to the Kontiki expedition and the country’s long and powerful shipping tradition, the Norwegian love affair with nature is marked by a strong spirit of adventure.
- Norwegians have been behind the most profound thinking about the future of the planet – from Gro Harlem Brundtland’s pioneering use of the concept of “sustainable development” to Arne Naess’s development of the “deep ecology” movement, which feeds into Norway’s strong commitment to an active environmental policy and extends to her programme of international environmental research cooperation in areas such as Russia and Central Europe.
- Norwegians are constantly pushing the boundaries of the possible by developing new environmental technologies – in fields ranging from deep-sea drilling to hydro-power Norwegian scientists are at the cutting edge of modern thinking, while contemporary Norwegian architecture often combines natural materials with the best in post-modern design such as the new international airport complex at Gardermoen, which includes the largest laminated wooden structure in the world.

Second, if it goes unmentioned, oil will clearly be the “elephant in the room” of any campaign. There is a clear danger in claiming environmental virtuosity while relying on the world’s arch-pollutant for one’s economic success – charges of hypocrisy are liable to follow.

Though these dangers are not insignificant, in combining them Norway has a dynamic contrast, encapsulated by the Brundtland quote at the beginning of the chapter – in being up front about both the environmentalism and the oil, the portrayal shows Norway as modern and responsible, undermining each negative charge. Of course one cannot simply make these dangers disappear with a little Hegelian sleight-of-hand, but placing emphasis on Norway as a model for how one manages resources for the good of the society and the world beyond is a well-founded and legitimate part of any depiction of the country's situation and approach. As with "peace" then, the nature story is about hard-headedness; practical expertise – from the explorer to the skier to the engineer; intellectual leadership – from sustainable development to deep ecology; and preparedness to take risks – from Pole to Pole to deep-sea drilling.

Norway's claims, in the fields of both peace and nature, are not simply of merit and interest, but of great distinctiveness. The very term "The Norwegian Model" has currency in both spheres and draws on long standing traditions as well as aspects that are modern, dynamic and pioneering. Furthermore, a number of the narratives set out in the last chapter – of equality, of the spirit of adventure and of internationalism – can be interwoven with this central positioning to tell a story that draws on a broad span of Norwegian images.

It is striking that, despite a "model" characterised by close interaction between government and civil society, the mutually beneficial relationships that could exist between Norway's NGOs, development work, environmental work, peace work and socially responsible business are conspicuously lacking in the promotional sphere. While businesses, for instance, speak of "respecting Norway's traditions", and act within them, they generally abjure Norwegian branding rather than attempting to piggyback on a reputation for ethical conduct and trustworthiness. Much of this is, once more, a function of Norway's "invisibility" – there is no advantage to associating oneself with a broadly unfamiliar brand, no matter what its content and potential. But joining the dots

would do much of the critical work. Norway's reputation among decision-makers on these issues is strong, which provides solid foundations for a credible profile among a more expansive group.

## Widening Access to Norway

It is understandable that public diplomacy is still focused on the high-cultural figures that were so central to the project of building a Norwegian nation at the beginning of the twentieth century. At that time, having a national playwright, painter and poet was central to the idea of a national identity and all major countries invested in projecting their cultural achievements to the world as part of a "civilising mission" and an expression of national pride. Few can deny the extraordinary talent and transcendental quality of Norwegian high culture – it is clear that Ibsen's reflections on the modern condition can speak as eloquently to today's generation of problems as they did to his contemporaries in the nineteenth century. Munch can still capture anguish in the most evocative way imaginable and Grieg certainly still continues to entertain and inspire new generations of music lovers.

However, it is also clear that the tastes and interests of today's generation have evolved to such an extent that these high-cultural products can no longer have the impact they once did – or even hope to interest the whole of the authority generation, let alone wider groups in society. There is a danger that public diplomacy strategies which are based around these traditional icons could suffer from two fates – first, they will exclude a large percentage of the target audience that Norway needs to communicate with to achieve its strategic objectives and secondly they give the impression that while the world has moved on, Norway remains stuck in the early twentieth century, continually replaying and revering the same cultural figures that did so much to define it in the early years after independence, rather than renewing and reviving its cultural life with new generations of creative artists, musicians and entrepreneurs. The instinct which places these traditional

icons at the heart of public diplomacy is the right one – that people need to be given pathways to Norway through figures and concepts that they already understand and like. The challenge therefore is to devise a new set of icons to complement these traditional figures who can speak to a generation with different values and priorities. These icons should also represent the best of Norway – they can be living manifestations of the Norwegian story.

It would be up to strategists of Norwegian public diplomacy to align these new icons with the different stories but it is clear that some already have an enormous impact on the world stage and carry some of the most important messages. The music of Royksopp, Lene Marlin and even A-Ha massively outsells CDs and concerts of Grieg amongst Generation X. Clothing brands such as Helly Hansen and Napapijri (even though the latter is owned by an Italian company) have become fashionable amongst the hip-hop community and aficionados of extreme sports, and their advertising campaigns draw on the mystique of Norwegian polar adventures. Gro Harlem Brundtland is associated all over the world with the concept of sustainable development while Arne Næss and Frederic Hauge are admired for their deep thinking and effective actions on environmental issues. Jostein Gaarder introduced a new generation to philosophy whilst Erling Kagge has reminded us of the excitement of extreme polar exploration. Terje Rød Larsen showed how even the most intractable conflicts could be improved by mediation and the televising of the Nobel Peace Prize, as well as the Nobel Peace Prize concert, has brought this most august and revered institution into the 21st century. One exciting project would be to organise an exhibition of Norwegian icons – old and new – mapping the ten most significant traditional icons on to their modern equivalents. This could be done in multiple formats – exhibitions and concerts, and they could also add interesting content to Norwegian web portals, both in Norway and particular embassies. Culture can play an important part in expressing ‘active’ peace and nature, but there is a need to be rigorous in determining the public diplomacy benefit of these activities.

## 6. Reforming the spectrum of institutions

*“We may be good at pulling together when needed... but one reason we have a hard time putting together a strategy for communication and branding is that we do not accept the authority of anyone to take the lead. This is a paradox. We prefer to be divided in harmony – rather than united in strife”*

*Jonas Gahr Støre, Chairman, ECON*

It will be impossible to realise any of the objectives that have been outlined in the last few chapters without reforming Norway’s spectrum of public diplomacy institutions so that they can unite behind a shared message. As we detailed in a previous report, Norway’s public diplomacy institutions have been highly successful in a broad number of respects, but collectively, they suffer from four key weaknesses which must be addressed if Norway is to meet its potential. In this chapter, we will outline these weaknesses as well as suggesting a series of solutions grouped under the same four headings.

### Four Problems with the Spectrum of Institutions

We deal with the following four issues in turn:

- **Lack of overarching strategy** – which means Norwegian public diplomacy fails to maximise the impact it can have in any single area.
- **Fragmented institutions and budgets** – which means that the whole of public diplomacy is often less than the sum of its parts.

- **No clear guidelines for staff or criteria for success and evaluation** – which means that public diplomacy is often treated as an art that is based on acts of inspiration.
- **No flagship projects** which can create a major international impact or engage people's emotions.

### Lack of overarching strategy

It does not take long to realise that there is no clear message in most public diplomacy work. A glance at the material produced by the MFA reveals dozens of leaflets – on everything from Bunads to Norwegian cuisine – without reference to any strategic messages. This diversity is echoed in the events programmes and cultural activities organised from Norway and in many individual embassies. This situation is compounded by the fact that those engaged in expressing Norwegian identity, in both the public and private sector, often have fundamentally different strategic approaches to dealing with Norway's public diplomacy dilemmas. We have detected three distinct approaches:

- *Product advantage.* Institutions such as the Norwegian Trade Council focus their promotional efforts primarily on products, without emphasis on their Norwegian provenance, an approach that can sidestep Norway's lack of profile.
- *National branding.* A number of public diplomacy actors, such as the MFA and the Norwegian Tourist Board, are attempting to promote Norway and are using Norwegian branding to attempt to create a premium for all Norwegian activities.
- *Scandinavian branding.* Various private sector organisations align themselves with the more recognizable Scandinavian brand – an approach which enables Norwegian companies to free-ride on Swedish strengths in fields such as design.

Whilst understandable on a case-by-case basis, this overall schema means that as well as missing out on the advantages of a cohesive

approach, different promotional strategies can end up completely at odds with each other, which makes it commensurately more difficult for a clear message about Norway to be conveyed.

## Fragmented institutions and budgets

In the sphere of national promotion Norway has many more institutions than countries many times the size, making for a large number of small pots of money and difficulties in coordination. The table below shows that there are major gaps in the spectrum of Norwegian institutions which will need to be filled if Norway is to make a real impact on the world stage.

Figure 1. **How do Norwegian institutions cope with Public Diplomacy?**

Purpose	Reactive	Proactive	Relationship building
Pol / Mil	<b>GOOD</b> MFA is good at fielding enquiries about Norwegian positions at post level.	<b>GAP</b> on promotion of strategic messages.	<b>MIXED</b> MFA succeeds to develop relationships with authority generation. <b>GAP</b> with successor generation and wider groups.
Economic	<b>GOOD</b> MFA is good at fielding enquiries about Norwegian positions at post level.	<b>GAP</b> <b>Trade Council</b> works with specific companies but does very little general promotion of norway.	<b>GOOD</b> MFA and <b>Trade Council</b> good at working together in key countries such as Russia at building relationships.

(Continued)

Figure 1. (Continued)

Purpose	Reactive	Proactive	Relationship building
Society / Culture	<b>GOOD</b> MFA is good at fending off questions about Whaling and other issues at post level.	<b>MIXED</b> NORLA, etc do a lot of work on “high” arts and literature. <b>GAP</b> on popular culture.	<b>MIXED</b> MFA supports cultural activities. NORLA, etc do a lot of work with professional groups. on “high” arts and literature. <b>GAP</b> on wider audiences

It will be essential to examine systematically the extent of civil society networks and how civil society can be engaged in covering these different dimensions, for which we would recommend further study.

The institutional structure of the planning for the 2005 celebrations is symptomatic of this fragmentation, with at least six groups involved in different aspects of coordinating the events: a ‘contact group’ of senior civil servants, which meets at the Prime Minister’s Office, a group of civil servants in the Department for Press, Culture and Information at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, a group of civil servants based at the Ministry of Culture, a group of State Secretaries from different departments, a group organizing events with Sweden (Voksenåsen), and Norway 2005, an independent organisation accountable to the Ministry of Culture. Moreover, in addition to this multiplicity, the organisation with the largest budget, Norway 2005, is only indirectly represented at the meeting with the greatest degree of political authority, the group at the Prime Minister’s Office.

No clear or shared criteria for success and evaluation

As well as the lack of strategic direction for Norway’s public diplomacy work, there is no agreement on what successful public diplomacy

is and how it is measured. Hence, some embassies attempt to maximize contact with precise target groups while others attempt to gain maximum media exposure, with no centralised framework for arbitrating between these approaches. Although surveys have been conducted on specific occasions by particular public diplomacy actors, there is no systematic picture of perceptions of Norway over time that can be used as a scientific basis for assessing major trends, events, campaigns and activities.

There are no Flagship Projects that can create a major international impact

As long as Norwegian public diplomacy consists of a scattered collection of well-meaning but small-scale projects, it will fail to make a major impact on the world stage. The examples of France and Spain show that it is only by creating something of global significance such as the Guggenheim at Bilbao that one can really create an impact at a global level.

## **Four Solutions to Norwegian Public Diplomacy**

### Creating a strategy

The key to the success of this exercise will be to agree a central strategy which can be modulated to give it a local flavour in each of the key countries. It is important to work out the complementarity between the institutions both in Norway and on the ground. There are three components to creating a strategy: establishing a lead from the centre, formulating some macro-goals and creating micro-strategies at post level.

#### *Leading from the centre*

- A number of these problems have a common source – there is no central body with overall responsibility for management of national

identity. Following the successful model in Britain (see box below) a first priority must be the creation of a new central strategic group with high-level political leadership and substantial external participation from business, communications and civil society. This group, which could be called “The Norwegian Public Diplomacy Board” could launch a national debate about Norway’s role and image and formulate an initial strategic outline for Norway’s projection in the international sphere. An “executive sub-committee”, bringing together all from the administration, should then take over the task of making this strategy operational. Top-level political involvement from the Prime Minister would have a huge impact on mobilising people behind a new strategy and getting the governmental institutions fully behind it. The “rebranding Britain” debate in the 1990s and subsequent work on reshaping Britain’s image abroad was only possible because of Tony Blair’s personal support for the project. Svein-Erik Ovesen, of the Norwegian Tourist Board, argues that “it is of vital importance for success that the establishment of a possible ‘Public Diplomacy Board’ must be based on necessary authority (power), sufficient funding (resources) and competent leadership (courage and speed)”

The UK model – Political momentum and administrative clout]

*Panel 2000*

“Panel 2000 is remarkable in two respects. It brings together a remarkable collection of people: people at the cutting edge of industry, design, the media and the government itself. It is a group of people whose creativity and energy show what modern Britain is about. Panel 2000 is also remarkable because of what it is setting out to do: it is tasked with improving the way we project ourselves overseas. That is a big job.” Rt. Hon Robin Cook MP, 1998

Panel 2000 was established in 1998 with the task of projecting Britain to the world. The panel had 17 members drawn from the private sector, including business, the media and NGOs, and a further 16 from the Foreign Office and other Whitehall departments. Launched by the Foreign Secretary, the Panel's most important role was to stimulate a major public debate about the image Britain should project to the world and to provide the political direction for the project to get off the ground, engaging civil society, the media and business as actively involved partners.

Its goals were to:

- Produce an overall strategy for projecting a positive, modern image of Britain abroad
- Focus on the key messages to send out and the key audiences to target
- Pull together all the strands of Britain's public diplomacy from both the public and private sectors; a genuine partnership between business and government
- Ensure that all available tools are being used to promote Britain most effectively
- Help monitor and project Britain's strengths to enhance the attractiveness of her business and tourist potential. Establish a baseline of perceptions in the key countries and measure progress against how those perceptions are raised
- Work with the Foreign Office as Britain projects an open and modern image both at home and abroad

#### *The Public Diplomacy Strategy Board*

The long-term successor to Panel 2000 in the UK is the Public Diplomacy Strategy Board, an advisory committee established in 2002 'to improve the cohesion, effectiveness and impact of government efforts to promote the UK overseas'. The Board meets four times a year and is 'responsible for formulating a national public diplomacy strategy to support the UK's key overseas interests and objectives' as well as the development of a programme of specific

campaigns. It is chaired by the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, Sir Michael Jay, and includes the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister with responsibility for public diplomacy and senior officials from other Departments and organisations concerned with public diplomacy, together with external non-civil servant members. The Board, while retaining significant political and private-sector engagement has the administrative weight to make operational and develop more precisely the public diplomacy principles that emerged out of the Panel 2000 debates.

### *Setting the macro-goals*

Once the Norwegian public diplomacy board is set up, it can start work setting some macro-goals for Norway. These could include:

- Agreeing a strategic message.
- Deciding the priority countries and audiences.
- Establishing what these audiences already think or know about Norway.
- Agreeing priority themes and messages for public diplomacy over the coming period based on the output of these surveys and on Norway's key foreign policy objectives.
- Agreeing priorities for public diplomacy activities over the immediate planning period.
- Identifying delivery mechanisms for these activities and drawing up an action plan grid for the different public diplomacy institutions
- Encouraging and enabling the allocation of resources behind these priorities.
- Monitoring the success of initiatives through further surveys and feedback.

### *Creating micro-strategies*

Country strategies should then be framed within the context of key political, business and cultural messages for each country. Macro-messages

about peace and nature could be modulated to make them appropriate for the countries concerned – e.g. “Norway as a partner for peace” may fit target audiences in Washington DC, where ‘Norway as a partner for responsible natural resource extraction’ is preferable in Luanda, Angola. The micro-strategies should be based on:

- Modulation of strategic messages.
- Identification of target audiences.
- Perceptions of target audiences in the country concerned.
- Analysis of key competition.
- Competitive positioning – what relationship Norway wants with the country and the benefits it can bring.
- Key themes and messages.
- Priorities for the period.
- Action plan grid for managing projects.

<i>Targeting</i>	
Target audiences should be segmented, with specific targets set for the quantity and quality of contact with each group and a different methodology for reaching each one. Following the example of the British Council, one could correlate the level of intended contact to the hierarchy of impact set out in chapter 3.	
Decision-makers – influence	Face-to-face meetings; seminars
Opinion-formers – engagement	Seminars, participation in broader events (parties, awards ceremonies etc.)
Successor generation – appreciation	Participation in broader events, press coverage
Intelligent public – awareness	Press coverage and advertising

### Ending fragmentation

In order to end the institutional fragmentation it will be essential to develop new ways of working between the Norwegian institutions and

to create incentives for a more “joined-up” approach. There are two key things that can be done to pursue this. First, creating an “executive sub-committee” of public sector institutions to operationalize the main public diplomacy board’s strategy, and secondly creating shared budgets to fund joint projects.

#### *Set up an executive sub-committee*

- An executive sub-committee should contain representatives from all the institutions tasked with implementing the strategy.
- A national public diplomacy strategy should be formulated on an “opt-in” basis, which offers the spectrum of organisations the chance to identify and claim the areas of work to which they are most suited, and can be adapted to each institution and individual country.
- A set of guidelines and a toolkit should be created for posts on the ground. Each post should prepare localised versions of the macro plan that starts from Norway’s central strategic positioning.
- A central information source in Norway should be responsible for the dissemination of briefing material, best practice, case studies, and thematic material over the intranet, into which individual posts can also feed material.

#### *A strategic approach to funding*

It is obviously impossible to change the funding arrangements overnight, but it might be possible to create a stream of funding which could begin to change the culture of Norway’s public diplomacy institutions and to encourage the development of a new more “joined-up” way of working. One idea would be for each organisation to contribute 5% of its budget to a challenge fund which would be jointly administered, and to which all agencies can apply for as long as organisations put in joint bids and the proposals are focused around the key peace and nature themes. This ensures that the positioning in the strategy has a structured basis, achieves buy-in from the different organisations and encourages “joined-up” public diplomacy work across the institutions.

Clear training and guidelines for staff and criteria for evaluation

The Department for Press, Culture and Information of the MFA in Norway should re-invent itself as an enabler, trainer, spreader of good practice and “content-designer” for all the Norwegian public diplomacy practitioners around the world. Each post’s activities should be governed by a set of principles fixed in Norway that ensure that, as well as strategic direction, specific tactics are well formulated.

*Guidelines and toolkit*

**Five Key Principles for Posts:**

**Magnification principle**

As a rule of thumb, every krone spent on an event should be matched by a krone spent disseminating newsworthy material from that event to the media.

**Mutuality principle**

In order to refute any charge that Norway’s behaviour is meddling or patronising, there should be a self-conscious focus on issues of interest to the host country as well as Norway and a systematic creation of partnerships between Norwegian individuals and institutions and those in the host country.

**Third-party validation principle**

Careful attention should be paid to the best message bearers – using “stealth diplomacy” and hijacking other country’s icons where appropriate rather than official sources.

**Emotional principle**

Every event and piece of material should be conceived with a view to hearts as well as minds, rather than just winning arguments and supplying information.

**“Active” principle**

In accordance with the “active peace” and “active nature” positioning, all portrayals of Norway should ensure that they showcase dynamic facets of Norwegian identity.

A Peace and Nature toolkit should be developed in Norway for use by posts that includes:

- Methodology for the peace and nature prizes;
- Speakers, icons and images.
- Stories and story development.
- Intranet with peace and nature tools.

Embassies should collect further material, by way of stories and images, that can be added to this. Successful use of the intranet also creates further scope to:

- Stop producing generic publications and make them more targeted
  - create a template that can be localised and from which high-quality material can be put together to respond to events at short notice, such as a breakthrough in a peace process.
- Include top-grade cultural products. High-quality flagship events can be put together in Norway and offered for “tours” – this gets buy-in from embassies to the central strategy, saves money by reducing duplication, and makes for improved material.
- Gather information on best practice from individual embassies. The tactics behind media splashes in Berlin and successes such as the London embassy’s “fact-finding” visits and “study trips” to Norway from British journalists, festival directors, curators, producers, civil servants and politicians, can be distilled and made widely available.

### *Evaluating public diplomacy*

It is undoubtedly difficult to evaluate public diplomacy activity – while it is possible to measure changes in public opinion over time, there is no way of being certain which factor or combination of factors may have influenced this. A focus on the measurable aspects also risks taking attention away from more significant aspects of impact that are difficult to observe. Nevertheless, a combination of specific data and more qualitative assessment can act as a “proxy” that will provide a good picture, particularly for monitoring change over time from a well-defined baseline. There has been a major debate about how to evaluate public diplomacy and, in what follows, we present some of the most promising approaches which have been gleaned from the US State Department, the British Council, the BBC and the Foreign Office. Following from the BBC World Service’s methodology, “output” and “outcomes” may usefully be analysed on the basis of “reach” (quantitative) and “impact” (qualitative).

### *Output monitoring*

Although outcomes are the ultimate target, it is important to track outputs, particularly as some of the outcomes will only materialise over the long-term. The US State Department has developed a set of output indicators which are regularly monitored, which can provide a useful starting point:

- Use of contact-management systems to track the amount of contact with each of the target groups (including face-to-face meetings, participation in seminars, attendance at film or cultural presentations, and use of the library, as well as follow-up contact). Data gathered on the thematic breakdown of activities, formats, venues, and the range of partner organisations.
- On-going media evaluation with criteria set for assessing the quantity and quality of coverage.
- On-going review of competitor activity in Oslo and at each post, which would have benefits for the spread of best practice as well as keeping Norway “ahead of the game”.

- Monitor growth in the active membership of networks, virtual professional communities and alumni groups.

### *Outcome monitoring*

This should enable both ongoing assessment of Norway's image over the long term and evaluation of the effectiveness of specific events and campaigns. It would be best to begin with the collation of relevant research undertaken by other government departments, agencies, and research companies, in order to establish well-formulated baseline measurements.

### *Tracking research*

- The optimal way of assessing over time whether objectives in changing the perception of Norway are being met is to undertake a long term multi-country tracking study. This would involve deciding a set of core countries in which Norway has an on-going interest and conducting a series of annual studies in which a central group of questions are repeated, covering major issues regarding familiarity and favourability.
- It is important to design the study in such a way that it is repeatable and to commit to this repetition at the outset, since the value of such a study is much greater once the data stretches over a number of years.
- A set of country-specific questions and questions to address current issues can also be included each time the study is conducted.

### *Measuring the impact of individual events or campaigns*

- In-depth pre and post campaign opinion research conducted among key target audiences.
- Visitor evaluation conducted at events held, through exit-interviews or questionnaires.
- Short-notice fast-turnaround polling in response to specific events.
- Oslo to provide template materials for posts to evaluate individual events and campaigns, ensuring that the evaluation materials use

some standardised questions or scales, enabling more meaningful comparisons between countries.

#### *Supplementary qualitative analysis*

- The British Council uses a “Storyboard” element in their “Balanced Scorecard”, which provides a useful systematic way of handling the qualitative evidence. Within a specified framework it reports anecdotes and quotes, observations and media mentions, and also asks posts to identify their successes and their “learning points”. Part of this involves substantial interviews with key stakeholders.

#### Creating Flagship events

Norway has not won another opportunity to host an Olympics or built a new Guggenheim, but there is an event coming up which has the potential to leverage extra resources and create a new way of working for Norway’s public diplomacy actors. The Centenary in 2005 has already been identified as an opportunity for a step-change in activities, and Norway’s government should learn from the best international experiences about how to make it a success. This is the subject of our final chapter.

## 7. 2005 as a focus for Norwegian public diplomacy

*“The flags at Lillehammer were waved as much  
for the other competitors as Norwegians”*

*Gro Harlem Brundtland*

In a public diplomacy context, milestone events can provide the political impetus and public attention that is vital to a successful attempt to re-assess and re-present a national image, both internally and externally. It is only by thinking big and organising very bold activities that countries can stand out in the crowd of nations and really make an impact. The challenge for Norway is to make 2005 into one of these opportunities. It is important to be able to distinguish between a significant global occasion on the scale of the opening of the Guggenheim in Bilbao and a festival such as “Visions of Norway” – a peg to get different organisations to co-operate, which is of relatively limited interest to others. It is clear that 2005 can deliver the latter – a good in itself – but can it deliver the former?

There are significant dangers as well as opportunities involved in such events, which are as often public diplomacy disasters as successes; in this chapter we will draw on cases of best practice in Norway and internationally to set out some broad principles for 2005 that take them into account. We will also outline ways to ensure that the achievements of the year are not lost to a *skippertak* mentality but rather built on and systematised, making 2005 the basis and genesis for further successes.

**General lessons from other milestone events:**

While there are obvious common traits to the successes and failures of major milestone events in terms of preparation and organisation, a few recent case studies illustrate lessons to bear in mind that are of particular relevance to the Centennial Anniversary of Norway.

**Lillehammer 1994 and Sydney 2000***The importance of giving other countries a stake in your event*

There are clear structural reasons for Olympic games to work as successful milestone events, if well executed – the participation of so many countries coupled with enormous levels of global interest mean that they are by their nature events in which almost everyone has a stake. With an entrée to such a large number of people, there is then a space which, if it is filled with a national story that interests and excites, can engage audiences very directly with the country. Sydney and Lillehammer combined high quality organisation, strong levels of popular involvement and compelling and engaging national stories, from the spectacular and innovative 1994 opening ceremony to the flame-lighting and subsequent athletic success of Aborigine sprinter Cathy Freeman in 2000.

**The millennium in the UK***The importance of aligning internal and external expectations*

The millennium was seen by successive governments in the United Kingdom as offering an important opportunity for changing perceptions of the UK around the world – the gift of the Greenwich Meridian Line means that time officially starts in London and it was hoped that the world's eyes would look at the hi-tech celebrations organised in Richard Rogers' stunning dome. However, in spite of a major public investment of £750,000 of lottery money and involvement from the highest levels of government these events were widely portrayed in the media as a failure. The hostile response of the British media, whose expectations had been inflated, fed through into international media coverage of the event and had a correspondingly negative impact on its international reception.

### **The Queen's Golden Jubilee in the UK**

#### *The importance of television and popular culture*

The Jubilee embodied the case of a successful 'made for media' event which, even though strongly focused on British history and tradition, used popular culture to communicate with the broadest possible audience. A pop concert involved bands spanning a number of generations, from '60s veterans and heavy metal hero Ozzy Osbourne to contemporary teenage "boy bands", and ran a competition for concert tickets run in a targeted group of countries, which further expanded the reach. The BBC were involved from the very beginning in the conception of the events, as well as the distribution and marketing of the TV rights and the CD of the concert, which sold extremely well. A password protected website for journalists, heavily directed at the foreign media, was, as the Queen's Communications Director explained, 'designed so that you could sit in a bar the whole time and file copy from the website', including free-to-use photographs and well-crafted and interesting stories about the royal family that the press were likely to utilise.

## **What Makes Milestone Events Work?**

Our research into other countries' experiences of milestone events indicates that there are three key criteria that seem to turn the events into successes: link to other countries, use of popular culture and the media, and ensuring that the event is seen as a success domestically (see box). The organisers of the 2005 events should bear these conditions in mind and seek to tackle each of these three challenges:

### Potential lack of internal salience

There is no overwhelming consensus in Norway regarding the importance of 2005. In so far as it is not the major May 17th independence day celebration there is a risk that there will be a lack of engagement unless the events can be made widely relevant.

Externally – no clear link to other countries

National independence is generally an occasion of little significance for anyone other than the country that became independent and, somewhat less, the country that it became independent from. Although it may be possible to contrive international linkages through such means as involving the countries that accorded Norway diplomatic recognition in 1905, the acts of recognition were not events of any real import for the countries in question. It will be critical to think more deeply about determining genuine ways of engaging and involving other countries in Norway's independence story, since there is no ready "in" to people such as that provided by events such as the Olympics. Indeed, there is even the risk that it will act to highlight Norway's "annerledeslandet" status – the odd-one-out in not being a member of the EU.

No link to popular culture

On the surface, the four themes of the 2005 committee look like they are better suited to the academic seminar room than mass public involvement. This is, however, not necessarily the case – particularly if we look at the millions who took to the streets to demonstrate for peace over the last few months. The challenge for the organisers will be to meld high-level policy and intellectual work on these issues with events that are able to break through to a mass audience. There is a danger with any milestone anniversary that the focus will be placed overwhelmingly on the past, and it will be critical to work against this.

## **The Opportunities of 2005 – Learning the Lessons**

2005 can be successful if it is used as a peg for key strategic messages about Norway that are repeated in the years ahead, and if it creates the impetus for public diplomacy partners to work together in future.

## Define an interest for external audiences

We have looked at defining a national story for Norway, but finding a peg that makes Norwegian independence internationally relevant is the major challenge if 2005 is going to be a public diplomacy success.

- An easy but unhelpful link is to other nationalist movements from Scotland to the Basque Country for whom the message of peaceful secession is clearly pertinent, but this is evidently a limited and potentially divisive sort of appeal.
- One possibility is to link Norway's independence with that of other countries, such as by inviting the heads of all states that have attained their independence in the last hundred years to a major event in Oslo – a potentially resonant anti-imperialist / post-colonial theme which could be further developed.
- Another option is to segue Norway's independence into an interdependence theme, which would provide a clear hook for the peace and nature/environmentalist positioning and a basis for specific cooperative ventures with other countries. It could include throwing Norway's weight behind existing projects such as Benjamin Barber's "Declaration", which could be taken up by the Prime Minister declaring Norway interdependent in 2005. Another good path would be to use the year to launch an eye-catching global initiative, with interdependence and peace or nature as a major theme, where Norway can use the power of example to leverage engagement from other international actors – models for global campaigns include the ban on landmines and the debt-relief initiative. Norway could start discussions with development and environmental NGOs now with a view to coming up with something suitable for 2005.

## Think big and inspire

The key to making a real impact would be to get beyond the usual swirl of conferences and events and to use 2005 as an opportunity to create

institutions that will outlast the centenary celebrations, which are capable of inspiring and surprising for generations to come.

- *Peace and nature medals.* Each embassy could make an annual award of two medals at high profile, well-resourced awards ceremonies: for the person or institution that has made the greatest contribution to peace in the year, which would optimally be a ‘Nobel’ peace medal, Norway’s strongest “peace brand”; for the person or institution that has made the greatest contribution to sustainable development in the year, which could be a ‘Brundtland’ nature medal.
- *Set up a Nobel Peace Centre in Brussels and a Brundtland Sustainable Development Centre in Washington.* A sister institution to the Nobel Peace Institute in Oslo could be established in Brussels, which would make for direct Norwegian involvement at the heart of the European foreign policy debate and work against views of Norway as disengaged, while creating a research centre that would play a major role in international peace research. A Nature Centre in Washington could develop cutting edge thinking on governing global commons, and work out practical ways of getting the world’s biggest emitter of carbon gases to lessen its environmental footprint.

## Reach out

- The programme should incorporate popular culture and icons to involve as broad an audience as possible and present the modern face of Norway. As well as seminars and conferences the organisers must create some made-for-television events, such as pop concerts, sporting events, and design exhibitions which can get to wider audiences.
- One very bold way of getting to new audiences would be to commission a Norwegian technology company such as Funcom to commission a virtual Norway, which could form the basis of a massive multiplayer online role-playing game. People who go to this game

could meet Norwegian icons old and new, use cutting-edge Norwegian oil to mine oil, save the planet and engage in various peace processes. The success of these games can be seen from the fact that they managed to engage uniquely high numbers of women and create total immersion from the millions of people who play them – the average person spends hundreds of hours playing these games, which constitute an alternative reality with tens of thousands of characters, environments and challenges.

- Rather than relying on their own networks, Norway’s public diplomacy institutions must work with NGOs and businesses to reach new audiences. Holding joint activities with SAS would open up the opportunity of reaching the 500,000 members of its loyalty card scheme. Equally, working with Norwegian NGOs such as the Red Cross could potentially create access to the tens of millions of members of affiliate organisations around the world.
- In presenting Norway abroad in 2005, there will also be involvement on the part of diaspora groups, such as *Sons of Norway* in the US, which has 65,000 members. This will create a challenge in managing and meeting expectations. The embassy and other public diplomacy partners must ensure that materials are produced for these events which show the whole of Norway rather than simply the most traditional elements such as national costumes and folk music.

## 2005 and beyond

“If the ‘public diplomacy’ concept had been part of the Norwegian Government’s thinking, this event (2005) would be just one – though one of a certain importance – out of many in a string of events over many years, all of them based on the values and the images that we want people in target countries to associate with Norway” **Svein-Erik Ovesen, Director-General, The Norwegian Tourist Board.**

It is important that the Centenary is integrated within the broader public diplomacy strategy outlined in the previous chapter; a cardinal

principle is that as much investment should be made in follow-up as in the events themselves. Planning for this must be completely integrated with planning for 2005 if the occasion is going to succeed beyond this one-off year:

- Plan major follow-up events for the years after 2005 that are designed to reinforce the highlighted themes, particularly for other forthcoming milestones such as the Ibsen Centenary in 2006.
- Use joint budgets to force different public diplomacy organisations to work together, creating working relationships that must then be maintained once the 2005 events are over.
- Create a database of everyone involved in 2005 and follow-up accordingly – making direct further contact with top priority target groups and keeping in touch with others.
- Take advantage of some of the larger budgets available for 2005 to set up a robust public diplomacy evaluation framework such as that outlined in the previous chapter; good benchmarks and structures set in place can provide the basis for a long-term tracking study.

## Conclusion – Putting Norway on the Map

*“We should make the slogan of the students of Paris in 1968 ours: ‘Be a realist – demand the impossible!’”*

*Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Red Cross*

Norway has always punched above its weight in the world but in this growing era of interdependence where so much of Norway’s economy depends on engagement with other countries and so many decisions about Norwegian security and quality of life are taken at an international level it is more vital than ever for Norway to play a full role internationally. As a small country Norway cannot rely on force or strategic significance to make its voice heard. Its ability to win arguments will depend on the quality of its messages and its ability to be trusted, respected and noticed. This report has set out some ways of drawing on Norway’s traditional strengths to turn Norwegian identity into a premium for politicians, diplomats, businesses and civil society in their dealings with the rest of the world.

This means confronting the central planks of the “Norwegian Dilemma” – overcoming Norway’s size and limited resources by ruthlessly targeting messages, audiences and countries; overcoming Norway’s political and geographical isolation by constantly stressing internationalism; and overcoming the lack of linguistic bridges by using non-linguistic channels and new icons. The four steps we set out – developing an overall public diplomacy strategy, ending the fragmentation of institutions and budgets, providing clear training and guidelines for staff and criteria for evaluation, and creating flagship projects – will be critical to achieving this.

This report examines how thinking systematically about public diplomacy has allowed many other countries to advance their national interests and suggests how these techniques could be used to shape Norway's identity in the future. These ideas are not meant to be a definitive description of Norwegian national identity or to create a blueprint for a Norwegian branding campaign, but we do hope that they can create a focus for a renewed debate among Norwegians about the contribution that Norway can make to the world and help people in positions of power to think through some of the dilemmas that they face and hopefully develop new ways of working together in the future. As Norway celebrates its first centenary and has a collective discussion about what to take into the next century and what to leave behind, it is the perfect time to take stock of how Norway is perceived in the world, and how a focus on managing its reputation can allow it to play an even more significant role in shaping the world in which it lives in its second century than it did in its first.

## Acknowledgements

The report exists thanks to the support of The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo and the Norwegian Embassy in London, especially through the support of the Ambassador Tarald Brautaset – an exemplary practitioner of public diplomacy – who first developed the partnership between the MFA and the Foreign Policy Centre.

We have particularly enjoyed working with the Department for Press, Culture and Information at the MFA, under the dynamic leadership of State Secretary Thorhild Widvey and Director General Ann Ollestad.

We would also like to thank other State Secretaries, past and present, who have played an important role, including Vidar Helgesen, Espen Barth Eide and Elsbeth Tronstad, and in the Prime Minister's Office we were particularly grateful to Odd Jostein Sæter for his shrewd advice.

We would like to thank Erik Rudeng and Mette Lending – this report builds on their *Change and Renewal* report, whose support and advice throughout has been extremely valuable.

At the MFA, we would also particularly like to thank Rolf Willy Hansen and a number of others, including Erik Solheim, Eirik Bergesen, Espen Rikter-Svendsen, Kåre Stormark, Arne Gjermundsen and Jon Mørland, as well as the embassies in Washington, Helsinki, Paris, Tokyo, Moscow and Berlin for sending in the data for the press review. In the London embassy, Øyvind Stokke and Nils Gunneng provided us with a wonderful introduction to Norwegian diplomacy and valuable feedback at every step of the project.

We would like to thank all those whose kind offerings of time, information and ideas we only just managed to absorb during our visits to

Oslo and during our other interviews. These include Gro Harlem Brundtland; Janne Haaland Matlary, University of Oslo; Jonas Gahr Støre and Leiv Lunde, ECON; Petter Normann Waage, Dagbladet; Simen Revold, SAS; Rolf Lunheim, Norsk Hydro; Øystein Dale, Norwegian Mountain Touring Association; Bjørn Jacobsen, Socialist Left Party; Morten Høglund, the Progress Party; Kristin Mile from the Gender Equality Ombud; Arild Blixrud, Norwegian Trade Council; Bentein Baardsen and Martine Rød, Lillehammer Olympics Ceremonies Committee; Jan Egeland, Norwegian Red Cross; Dag Melgård, Telenor; Torbjørn Anderssen, Norway Says; Nicholas Ind, Future Brand; Pauline Nærholm, Fjord Magazine; Stephanie Dumont, Carl's Cars; Per Eirik Johansen, Virgin Records; Willy Olsen, Statoil; Anders Jølstad, Norge 2005; Thomas Hylland Eriksen, University of Oslo; Hans Fredrik Dahl, IMK; Aslam Ahsan; Gaute Godager, Fun.Com; Asle Sveen, The Norwegian Nobel Institute; Nils Butenschøn, Center for Human Rights; Herborg Bryn, Norwegian Red Cross; Nils Morten Udgaard, Aftenposten.

The report also benefited from the advice of overseas experts, including Jamie Shea, NATO; Simon Walker, Reuters; and Mats Berdal, King's College.

We would also like to thank our partner organisation, the Institute for Media and Communication at the University of Oslo, for organising a public diplomacy seminar that was enormously useful and for doing a lot of background research, which enabled us to flesh out the stories. We would particularly like to thank Helge Rønning, whose input, ideas and comments have been extremely valuable throughout, and his team, Tore Slaatta, Arnt Maasøe, Faltin Karlsen, Hilde Bachmann and Line Marcussen.

For the *Stories* chapter of the report we depended on a number of publications for information. These included *New Norway* (The Trade Council), *This is the Red Cross* (The Norwegian Red Cross), *Invitation*

*to a dialogue – Corporate Social Responsibility* (Norsk Hydro 2000), *Destination Norway '99* (Ministry of Commerce & Culture), *Equality and Empowerment – Women in Politics* (The Norwegian Centre for Gender Equality), *Minifacts about Norway 2002* (MFA) and *A Cultural Odyssey* (Gunmar Jerman).

We would finally like to thank two people who have worked incredibly hard to make this possible. At the FPC, Zane Kanderian has worked tirelessly on sourcing facts and helping draft some of the key chapters in the report. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lajla Jakhelln managed the project with a unique combination of wisdom, professionalism and good humour.

**Mark Leonard and Andrew Small, June 2003**