



Master's degree thesis

IDR950 Sport Management

**Communication of a Major International Sporting Event
- A Case Study of the FIS Nordic Skiing World
Championships Trondheim 2025**

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Preface

This thesis marks the end of my time at Molde University College. I have enjoyed two educational and wonderful years. Together with my classmates, I had the opportunity to benefit a lot and next to the studies also explore and get to know this amazing country. I want to thank them, for the great times we spent together, their friendship, and their support throughout these two years.

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Fiona Zöbeli

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to examine the aspects that need to be considered from an organiser's point of view when planning the communication strategy of a major international sporting event. For this purpose, a case study was conducted on the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2025 in Trondheim, Norway. A qualitative multimethod approach was implemented using participant observation, from January to March 2023 and document analysis, including 71 newspaper articles, a questionnaire from the bidding documents, the website trondheim2025.no, and two population surveys. The introduced theoretical background and collected data were complemented by the results of two expert interviews.

The study shows the importance of local public support, which can be increased by communicating the expected benefits of hosting the event, as well as the sensitivity to sustainability issues and implementing a democratic planning process involving all stakeholders. The analysis in the specific case has shown, that whilst a democratic planning process is already used, the expected benefits and sensitivity towards sustainability should be promoted more clearly. Further, the local media can influence locals' support and opposition. Newspapers from all over the country have taken an interest in the event, with most of the coverage coming from the local papers. The media interest should therefore be actively used to promote the beforementioned issues. As a World Championship, the event also has to reach out to an international audience. The inclusion of bilingual communication, in this case, Norwegian and English, is thus crucial. The website should be available in both languages to give access to information about the city, accommodation, ticketing, becoming a volunteer, and more. Further, the social media channels can be maintained bilingually, using both languages in the captions of each post.

This study showed moreover how project management tools can be used for smaller projects leading up to the main event and help document the development and store information, which increases the efficiency of the ongoing planning processes.

Many different factors can influence the success of an event. Communication should be used as a tool to inform and educate about the event and to publicise the results of the work done in all other areas.

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Abbreviations

Austrian skiing federation	ÖSV
International Ski and Snowboard Federation	FIS
Local Organising Committee	LOC
Nordic World Ski Championships	NWSC
Ski-VM Trondheim 2025 AS	Trondheim2025
Sustainable Development Goal	SDG
Youth Olympic Games Lillehammer 2016	YOG 2016

1.0 Introduction

This introductory chapter provides background information about the thesis topic with a focus on the communication of a mega sports event. Subsequently, the problem discussion leads to the introduction of the research questions. The chapter ends with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background Information

The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships (hereafter NWSC) 2025 will take place in Trondheim, Norway. It includes the World Championships in Cross-Country Skiing, Ski Jumping, and Nordic Combination.

The organisation Ski-VM Trondheim 2025 AS (hereafter Trondheim2025) organises the event. The goal is to create a community event for the whole region. To achieve that and in order create a successful event, a positive perception and support from the local community are crucial. Trondheim2025 does not have a clear idea of the current perception of the event in the area. Since the allocation of the event in October 2020, there have been newspaper articles about the event, but no content analysis of those. Media coverage of an event can shape the public opinion of it (Haxton 1999 in Gursoy and Kendall 2006, 605). Since the allocation of the event to Trondheim, the bidding committee and after Local Organising Committee (hereafter LOC) have been communicating about it. Therefore, there is a lot of different content out there published by them. Besides the newspaper articles, this also includes bidding documents, the website, and social media accounts. In addition, two population surveys were conducted in Trondheim to determine the interest of the local population in the event.

The research aims to evaluate previous newspaper coverage of Trondheim2025 according to their main topics and mentioned keywords. Additionally, the further available documents are analysed to determine how the communication was planned and implemented so far.

1.2 Problem Discussion and Research Questions

Host cities of international sporting events usually have to bid years in advance for hosting the event. Cities that want to host FIS World Championships in 2028 and 2029 had to hand

in their application on the 1st of May 2023 (International Ski and Snowboard Federation n.d.). In this extensive period from the initial bid to carrying out the event, naturally, organisational structures change, and the team grows. Consequently, information can get lost. Building up a long-term communication strategy can be difficult. It is therefore important to know, what key factors must be taken into consideration. Furthermore, the support of the local community is needed. Often, a public vote is held on whether the city should host the event in connection with tax increases for supporting infrastructure and facilities. Moreover, active opposition can lead to delays or legal actions taken against the execution of the event (Gursoy and Kendall 2006, 604, 617). The local media can play a crucial role in fuelling opposition (Haxton 1999 in Gursoy and Kendall 2006, 605).

Organising a World Championship, the LOC does not only communicate to the local community but also to a worldwide international audience. Hence, communication should not only be targeting the local community and be implemented in the local language but bring information to everyone interested, also internationally. The challenge arises of how to implement communication that brings enthusiasm to the local community but also includes the international audience.

The provided circumstances lead to the following research question and sub-research questions standing at the core of this study:

What aspects need to be considered from an organiser's point of view when planning the communication strategy of a major international sporting event?

- *How can communication be used to secure local's support?*
- *What role does print media play in the local's perception of a major international sporting event?*
- *What is the strategic reach and role of bilingual communication for a major international sporting event?*

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis will first provide an overview of the examined case. After, theoretical background is provided including chapters about event management and communication and marketing. Subsequently, the case study research and the used methodology are explained. Afterwards, the results of the research are presented and later discussed whilst combining the knowledge provided in the theory part and gained during the research. The thesis ends with the conclusion, summarising the findings and their impact on practice and theory. Finally, an outlook of possible further research is given.

2.0 Case Description

This chapter aims to give an overview of the case by presenting the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Trondheim 2025. To better understand how this event is managed and organised, a short introduction of the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (hereafter FIS) itself is included.

2.1 The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships Trondheim 2025

The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships consist of Cross-Country Skiing, Ski Jumping, and Nordic Combined competitions. They take place every two years. The last one was held in Planica, Slovenia from the 22nd of February until the 5th of March 2023. In 2025, when the Championships will take place in Trondheim, Norway, the event will celebrate its 100-year anniversary. Trondheim is hosting the Championships for the second time, after a successful realisation in 1997. The city, like the whole country, has a great Nordic skiing tradition. It has more than 230,000 inhabitants and is home to the biggest university in Norway (Ski-VM Trondheim 2025 n.d.-e). In the questionnaire, a part of the required bidding documents by FIS, the bidding committee argues that there is a passion for skiing that dates back thousands of years as well as state-of-the-art technological skills related to snow and winter sports (Trondheim 2025 2019, 3). The Granåsen venue, which includes a Ski Jumping hill and skiing tracks, was already being upgraded and renovated when the application was submitted in 2019.

Skiing is deeply rooted in the city, the region, and the country. This can be impressively illustrated with the following examples: Trondheim was founded by King Olav Tryggvason (968-1000). His nickname was “the King of Sport”. Furthermore, the infant Prince Haakon had to be rescued in the year 1206 on skis and brought to Trondheim by Birkebeiner warriors. This rescue is still remembered by the yearly Birkebeinerrennet, a ski race commemorating this historic journey. Skis were an important tool for transport for hundreds of years. In 1884 the skiing club “Trondhjems Skiklub” was founded, which makes it one of the world's oldest skiing clubs. The world’s oldest skiing competition, for children and young people, Gråkallen Ski Festival in Trondheim, dates back to 1885. Moreover, the first Nordic Combined event for women was held in Trondheim at the Granåsen Venue in 2015. Granåsen also hosted the NWSC in 1997 as well as a wide range of World Cups and National Championships. How deeply rooted the sport of skiing is in Norway, is also shown by the

fact that around 400,000 pairs of Nordic skis are purchased every year. Additionally, more than 60% of the country's adult population partake in Cross-Country skiing. The Trøndelag region alone has 167 ski clubs with around 35,000 members while the Norwegian Ski Association includes 1,150 clubs and a total of 155,000 members (Trondheim 2025 2019, 3-4). Following the example of the NWSC in Oslo 2011, Trondheim2025 is owned partly by the Norwegian Ski Association and partly by the local sports clubs and organisations (Trondheim 2025 2019). The Norwegian Ski Association owns 60%, Sør-Trøndelag Skikrets (the local Ski Association) owns 30%, and Trondheim Municipality owns 10% (Snøfugl 2023a).

The goal for Trondheim2025 is to create a Folkefest (public festival) with an enthusiastic atmosphere all over the city, as was the case in 1997. This requires successful communication with the city's residents and the creation of local support. As a World Championship, the event will be broadcast to Nordic skiing fans all over the world, which must be taken into account in regard to the communication strategy.

2.2 International Ski and Snowboard Federation FIS

FIS is the official governing body for skiing and snowboarding and was formed during the first Winter Olympic Games in Chamonix, France, in 1924. Its headquarters are located in Oberhofen, Switzerland. FIS has 135 member nations and more than 7,000 competitions held in its name. The World Championships in the disciplines of Alpine, Nordic, Freestyle Skiing/Snowboarding, Telemark, Grass Skiing, and Speed Skiing are all held biannually (FIS 2022). The focus of this thesis will be on the Nordic World Ski Championships. Looking at the FIS' online presence, the official language seems to be English. The website of FIS (fis-ski.com) is written in English (FIS 2022). This is also the case for the FIS app and its social media accounts (<https://www.facebook.com/fisnordiccombined>; <https://www.instagram.com/fisalpine/>). On their website, FIS has a so-called "document library" where documents about general regulations, specific information for World Championships, communications, and marketing, as well as discipline-specific documents, can be found (FIS n.d.-b). Most of the documents are only available in English. However, some of them, for example, the FIS Media Service Guidelines, are additionally available in German and French (FIS n.d.-a). The documents provide no strict regulations about how the local organising committees (LOC) of the different events should communicate, neither for the language nor for the content, the used channels, or the timing.

3.0 Theoretical Background

This thesis is based on various theoretical foundations in the field of event management, communication, and marketing. First, general event management and connected theories are presented. This includes the introduction of the framework by Mykletun (2009), describing the seven capitals needed for a successful event. The event management chapter further discusses the importance of local support for the success of an event. These topics illustrate how an event is organised and connected to the local community. The next chapter introduces marketing and communication theories including a separate subchapter for social media marketing. The chapter is concluded with a short summary.

3.1 Event Management

3.1.1 Event Management

To understand an organisation and its communication concept, it is helpful to know the context and the structural background. Pielichaty et al. (2016, 2) define events in their book as “social occasions that are limited in time, involve an audience, and fulfil complex and varied objectives dependent on the stakeholders involved. Event management pulls together the practical tools, resources and expertise needed to bring an event to fruition.” They further introduce the project management cycle:



Figure 1: The project management cycle according to Pielichaty et. al (2016, 3)

This cycle is also evident in the case of the NWSC held in Trondheim in 2025. The LOC has already passed the first two phases of Idea/Brief and Finances and Feasibility. As a result

of the feasibility phase, the bidding documents for the championships have been submitted to FIS. Currently, they are in the planning process.

To create an event concept, objectives should be defined. They are connected to the vision and the mission of the event. The goal is to create SMART objectives. SMART is an acronym that stands for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-limited (Pielichaty et al. 2016, 8). Furthermore, to create a successful event, a situational analysis should be conducted. A common method used here is the SWOT analysis. It focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation, and the opportunities and threats, of the environment (Bowdin et al. 2011).

Shone and Parry (2013, 20-25, 212) have defined eight characteristics of special events: uniqueness, perishability, intangibility, ritual and ceremony, ambience and service, personal interaction, labour intensiveness, and fixed timescale.

Since the participants, the surroundings, the audience, the organising committee, or any number of other variables can change, each special event is *unique*, even if it is a recurring one like the NWSC. The organisation can build on existing knowledge and techniques but might include some changes. Since those events are not repeated in the same way, they are by definition *perishable*. It can be expensive to organise and produce everything only for this event. Events and connected activities are mostly *intangible*. Tangible mementoes of an event can make the experience more accessible and can be shown to friends and families. This can be created even with little effort; for example, a printed programme, a guest list, postcards, or small wrapped and named chocolates. *Ritual and ceremony* includes specific side-events that have traditional character and make the event special (Shone and Parry 2013, 20-23). This could be the opening or closing ceremony at the NWSC. “Of all the characteristics of events, ambience is one of the most important to the outcome” (Shone and Parry 2013, 23). The expectations for a good *ambience* are high for the NWSC in Trondheim in 2025. People still remember the so-called Folkefest, translated to “public festival”, of the NWSC in Trondheim in 1997. The ambience there was great, and the goal will be to recreate an atmosphere as festive as then. *Personal contact* and interaction are connected to the fact that the people attending the event are close to the organisers and to the process and in some cases, for example as spectators, part of the event themselves, creating the atmosphere. The organisers must therefore have an in-depth understanding of who is attending their event and

what their needs are since they are depending on the attendees' actions and reactions to create a successful event. The strengthening of local support and its importance is further elaborated in Chapter 3.1.3. *Labour-intensiveness* is an important topic connected to Trondheim2025. The first part of the operational local organising committee was put together in September 2021 (Ski-VM Trondheim 2025 2021). It has already changed and grown and will do so even more until the event will be held in 2025. Shone and Parry (2013, 20-25) state that this high level of communication and planning will take time and effort and might require extensive staffing. Personnel planning itself could prove difficult.

“An event manager will have to forecast staffing needs directly from the requirements of running the event, based on what the organizer specifies as the event’s objectives and needs, and on the experience and forecasts of departmental leaders.” (Shone and Parry 2013, 24)

The last characteristic is the *fixed timescale* (Shone and Parry 2013, 25). Programme planning and time management are crucial to the smooth transition between the different sporting disciplines, medal ceremonies and side events of the NWSC.

3.1.2 Seven Capital Framework

In his paper “Celebration of Extreme Playfulness: Ekstremsportveko at Voss” Mykletun (2009) aims to “explore the central success factors behind the growth and prosperity of festivals”. He builds on the framework of interrelated capitals first introduced by Bourdieu (1986). The framework has since been expanded and was used as a six-factor model to analyse marine ecotourism by Cater and Cater (2007). The six applied capitals are natural, human, social, physical, financial, and cultural (Mykletun 2009, 149-150). As an outcome of the research Mykletun (2009, 171) adds a seventh capital, the administrative capital. This framework is suitable for this case study as it is linked to a multi-day sporting event in Norway. Effective communication is important to create a successful event. However, this model shows different aspects that need to be fulfilled and properly used in order to build supportive communication around them.

To analyse the event, Mykletun chose a mixed method approach using data from the following sources: media (such as newspapers and internet resources), participant observation, personal interviews, and historical data from written sources. The data

collection was done between 2005 and 2009. The conducted interviews were face-to-face and lasted 60 – 90 minutes. The participant observation was done from 2006 to 2008. There was a manual search of the local newspaper Hordaland and a search of the electronic archives of the main national newspapers to find reports on the event. Only the local newspaper reported about it before 2004.

Natural capital

Natural capital includes, as the name states, natural resources (Mykletun 2009). NWSCs are dependent on good skiing tracks, and favourable snow and weather conditions.

Human capital

Human capital is about the “competencies, capabilities, health, motivation, courage, tenacity, and fortitude” that are needed to create such an event (Mykletun 2009, 149). This includes people in the LOC as well as everyone else that is working on the project, like for example, volunteers.

Social capital

“Social capital incorporates networks, groups sharing interests and financial and knowledge resources, access to nature and parks, motivation and trust-based relationships” (Mykletun 2009, 149).

Physical capital

Physical capital describes infrastructure including basic necessities such as “communication and transport. Arenas, venues and fields, accommodation, water and energy supplies” (Mykletun 2009, 149-150). This could, for example, be communication through street signs. For the 2020 Olympics, English street signs have been installed not only at the competition site but throughout the city of Tokyo (The Japan Times 2017). Getz (2005) further states that “festival activities may contribute to the improvement of the region’s physical capital”.

Financial capital

Mykletun (2009, 150) continues describing financial capital. This includes the budget for an event. Events are usually connected to a lot of uncertainty and are therefore dependent on trust and goodwill. Additionally, this capital includes further calculations about how much

money could be generated for the region through transport, accommodation, and food and beverage sales.

Cultural capital

The last capital that Mykletun (2009, 150) uses as the base of his research is cultural capital, which includes traditions, customs, acceptance, and heritage.

Administrative capital

The main result of the study is the implementation of a seventh capital, the administrative capital, representing “the regulation of public goods and welfare, the organization of civil servants and officers employed to enforce these rules, and the political bodies elected to be in charge of major decisions and developments” (Mykletun 2009, 171).

As this theory shows, the success of an event is dependent on many factors, one of them being communication. Communication is mentioned as part of the physical capital and is not further elaborated on by Mykletun (2009, 149-150). However, communication includes a lot more and is also important for the branding and popularity of an event as further discussed in Chapter 3.2.

3.1.3 Support of the local community

Gursoy and Kendall (2006) describe the key factors in residents’ perception of a mega event in their article “Hosting Mega Events; Modeling Local’s Support”. The model proposed by them is based on the perceived benefits and costs of the event. The research was conducted connected to the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City where they conducted personal interviews using the intercept approach. They intercepted 800 people of which 420 agreed to participate. The authors state the limitation of not having examined the temporal effects.

Local support is crucial for three main reasons:

“First, they are often asked to vote for tax increases to support infrastructure and facilities. Second, a friendly and hospitable local population is critical in transforming a mega event into an urban festival to provide a significant experience for residents and guests alike (Hiller 1990). Three, local support and involvement

are likely to increase the longevity of positive impacts on the local community.”
(Gursoy and Kendall 2006, 617)

They further state that “internal marketing techniques designed to inform locals of the benefits they are likely to receive may help win their support” (Gursoy and Kendall 2006, 618). Active support from the community can change a mega sporting event into an urban festival. However, active opposition can create delays, legal actions, or the abandonment of projects (Gursoy and Kendall 2006, 604). “Underestimating the power of public debate and support may result in time-consuming, often bitter battling over costs, which is likely to be fueled by media criticism, (...)” (Haxton 1999 in Gursoy and Kendall 2006, 605). This statement shows again the importance of public support but also stresses the influence the media can have on it.

“The pictures in people’s minds about the outside world are significantly influenced by the mass media, both what those pictures are about and what those pictures are” (McCombs 2002, 17). McCombs (2002, 2) states that what people know about the world is mostly based on what we read in the media. It can influence personal behaviours that reach from college applications to voting on election (McCombs 2002, 3, 17). The assumption is, that it can also affect the support of the local community for a mega event such as the NWSC.

Further, Gursoy and Kendall (2006, 605-609, 618) suggest that public support depends on the expected benefits and costs. These can be influenced by community concern, the emotional attachment to the community, and their degree of environmental sensitivity. Showing sensitivity to environmental issues can therefore be crucial to gain locals’ support (Gursoy and Kendall 2006, 618). It should thus be a priority to inform locals of potential benefits whilst showing sensitivity to environmental issues. Reducing negative and increasing positive impacts can also be done by implementing a democratic planning process (Gursoy and Kendall 2006, 605).

This chapter has shown how important the support of the local community is, especially when it comes to creating a good atmosphere. One of the goals for the World Championships in Trondheim 2025 is to create a so-called Folkefest and spread enthusiasm for the event all across the city and region. The assumption is that to be able to do so, the LOC has to be aware of the theory described and researched in Gursoy and Kendall’s paper.

3.2 Communication and Marketing

3.2.1 Communication and Marketing Concept

According to Zeiter (2003, 17-21), a communication concept consists of three main parts; first, the analysis part, then, the strategy part, and lastly, the measures and evaluation part.

Analysis

The analysis part includes the description of the initial situation as well as the situation analysis. Every situation analysis should end with conclusions to be used as the foundation for the actions taken in phases two and three.

Strategy

The strategy part includes the setting of goals to guide the company in the future. It further includes choosing dialogue groups to communicate with, internally and externally. Additionally, the communication content is defined in this phase. The goal is to actively steer communication and make sure that the dialogue groups receive the message the company wants to convey (Zeiter 2003, 18-19). Those dialogue groups should be aligned with the targeted marketing segments. To get a better grasp of the marketing segments, overviews like the market segmentation of Sport England can be used. They introduce 19 exemplary people to describe different marketing segments (Sport England 2010). Finally, this phase also includes the strategy itself. It shows how the content is to be communicated to the dialogue groups and also includes a time plan and a budget overview. Therefore, it is a preliminary stage to measures and can be seen as the core of a good concept (Zeiter 2003, 19).

Measures and Evaluation

The third phase includes defining fitting measures to achieve the set goals. It further includes setting a clearer budget plan. In addition, in this part of the communication concept, it is specified how the measures could be implemented, who would be responsible for it and what the organisational feasibility looks like. Finally, this phase also includes already set measures on how to evaluate the success of the concept (Zeiter 2003, 20).

Jackson (2013) states that marketing is a triangular relationship of the communications mix, marketing mix, and consumer needs.

Communication mix

Communication is important for an event in three dimensions: providing information, encouraging attitude change, and persuading stakeholders to change behaviour (Jackson 2013, 16). It is directed at several stakeholders and audiences and often conducted through multiple channels and platforms (Jackson 2013, 44).

Marketing mix

The marketing mix is often described according to the 7 P's: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Participants, Physical Evidence, and Process. The focus of this thesis lies on the Promotion, including the communication and advertising of the event message to the relevant stakeholders (Booms and Bitner 1981; Pielichaty et al. 2016, 105). This can be via social media, websites, e-newsletters, blogs, apps, advertising, sales promotion, and personal selling (Booms and Bitner 1981, 50; Pielichaty et al. 2016, 107). Pielichaty et al. (2016, 119) state that "(...) communication is the crucial factor that holds each part of the marketing mix together."

Some companies have separate communications and marketing strategies. However, often a more integrated approach is followed, and the two get combined into a marketing-communication strategy (Pielichaty et al. 2016, 105).

Branding

Effective communication is important for successful branding. "More recently, events have been used to present a positive image of a nation or society" (Jackson 2013, 63). The event brand is connected to the reputation, recognition, and success of the event. The organisers and the hosts become associated with it (Pielichaty et al. 2016, 116). Nowadays, social media marketing is a popular tool to manage and promote event branding. It is further discussed in Chapter 3.2.2 of this thesis.

As stated, events can be used to improve the brand or image of a place or nation. Events, thus, play a dual role in promotion. They are used as a promotional tool, yet they use techniques for self-promotion (Jackson 2013). Promotion and advertising can be done

offline and online and should be consistent and clear. Offline advertising includes face-to-face, newspapers, radio, and television. Online advertising includes social media, e-newsletters, brochures, magazines, blogs, websites, and apps. An offline and online tool is Word of mouth (WOM). It describes the exchange of information between individuals, based on their own experience (Pielichaty et al. 2016, 118 based on Fulgon and Lipsman 2015). Social media is a fertile ground for word-of-mouth promotion, as it is shown later on in Chapter 3.2.2.

In addition to successful communication of the event itself, what the media writes about it can strongly influence how the event is perceived in the community as shown in Chapter 3.1.3.

3.2.2 Social media marketing

“Social Media are internet-based technologies that facilitate online conversations and encompass a wide range of online, word-of-mouth, forums including social networking websites, blogs, company sponsored discussion boards and chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer (C2C) e-mail, consumer product or service ratings websites and forums, internet discussion boards and forums, and sites containing digital audio, images, movies or photographs, to name a few.” (Hollensen 2020, 613-614)

This definition shows the diversity and versatility of social media. This leads to the assumption, that social media marketing can be complicated. To create more clarity, Hollensen (2020, 617-619) introduces the 6C model of social media marketing. They are company, content, control, community, customers, and conversation.

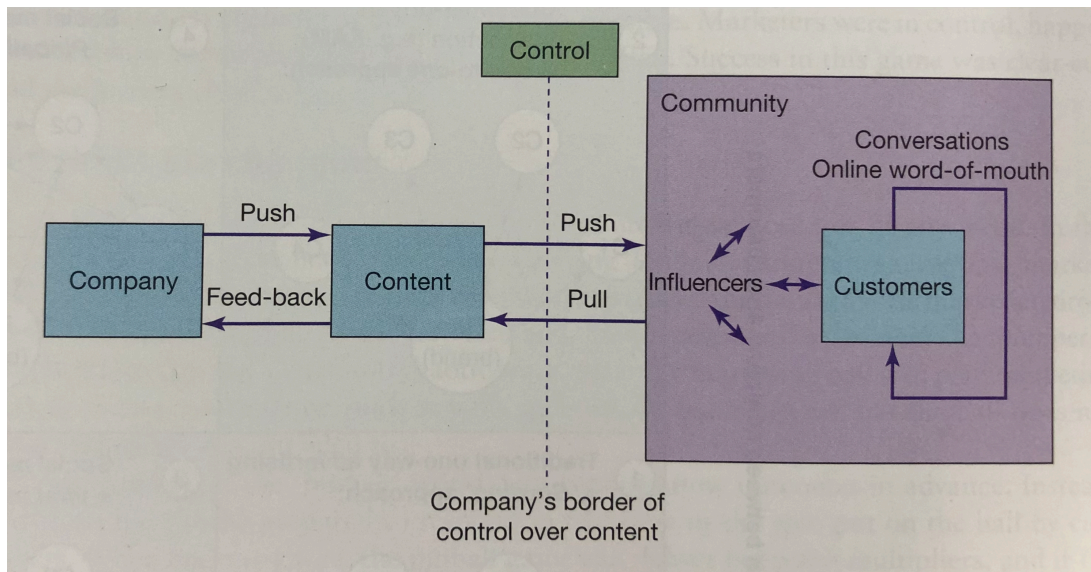


Figure 2: The 6C model, Hollensen (2020, 618) based on Parent et al. (2011)

Company and content are strongly connected. Organisations want to pull customers to their content and therefore their company. However, first, content must be pushed to generate attention. The dotted line from control marks the border of where the company itself controls what happens with its content. After publishing the content, it can be modified and further distributed. The company loses, therefore, control over what happens to its content. However, this can also be seen as a chance to reach more people. This is, where word-of-mouth is happening among the online community. At the heart of social media is interaction through likes, commenting and sharing. Online communities are built, and content gets shared and discussed within them. To bring their content into those groups, companies often use influencers as ambassadors of their brand. They have a platform they can use and are seen as trustworthy by their community (Hollensen 2020, 617-619). Influencers can get grouped in different ways. In this thesis, the division into Micro-influencers (50-25,000 followers), Macro-influencers (25,001-100,000 followers), Mega-influencers (100,001-500,000 followers), and Celebrity influencers (over 500,000 followers) is used (ANA 2018; Hollensen 2020, 619). Micro-influencers are seen as the most trustworthy by their followers. Even though the bigger influencers have more reach, typically, the smaller ones create more engagement on their channels (Parganas and Anagnostopoulos 2021).

The last C, customers and online conversation includes online conversations among the own digital community. “Moreover, social media initiatives provide marketers a glimpse into the world of customer-to-customer communication, (...)” (Hollensen 2020, 619). Further, the created buzz online aims to attract potential customers (Hollensen 2020, 619).

Hollensen (2020, 625-629 based on Parent, Planlegger, and Bal 2011) created a model of 6 steps for building a social media marketing plan:

Step 1 is to conduct a situation analysis. Questions like, what is the current social media use and who is following the pages should be answered. Here it should also be evaluated, which social media platforms are fitting for the business the company is conducting, including, what audience each of the platforms has and what their needs are.

Step 2 is creating objectives. Here, the company should define objectives that align with its broader marketing strategy. To do so, they should again choose SMART objectives, as already described in Chapter 3.1.1 Event Management.

Hollensen's (2020, 627-628) step 3 is to choose the most relevant social media platforms. Which platforms align best with the company's mission and vision must be considered. Each of the social networks has a specific unique audience and should therefore be used in different ways. The current biggest social media platforms for marketing are Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Youtube, Twitter, TikTok, and Snapchat (McCormick 2022).

Step 4 is to get an overview of the benchmark and use industry leaders to get inspiration to get content ideas (Hollensen 2020, 628).

Next up is creating a content and time plan as step 5. This should be defining strategies for content creation, what type of content will be shared, who will be creating it, how often posts will be published, what the target audience of each type of content is, and how the content will be promoted (Hollensen 2020, 628-629).

The last step, step 6, is the evaluation. This should happen constantly by analysing likes, comments, shares, and clicks. It could be extended by asking the followers about how the company is doing on social media and what kind of content is popular, should be pushed more or be reduced (Hollensen 2020, 629).

In a connected world, the global reach and therefore diversity of languages create communication challenges. Facebook for example tries to solve this problem by implementing the page in 111 different languages. Reuters has found additional 31

languages spoken on Facebook that are not supported (Fick and Paresh 2019). The diversity of languages can also cause difficulties when deciding on a social media marketing strategy. In the special case of an NWSC, the reach is worldwide, but there are limited resources and no local marketing offices built up in different countries. The question arises of how to solve this difficulty.

When looking internationally, there are examples of events and national federations that implement a bilingual social media strategy. One example is the Swiss Olympic Team on Instagram @swissolympicteam (<https://www.instagram.com/swissolympicteam/>). Switzerland has four official languages, with 62% of people speaking German and 22,8% French (BFS 2023). Another example is the Alpine Ski World Championships that was held in Courchevel Méribel 2023 on Instagram @courchevelmeribel2023. Their Instagram caption are also usually kept bilingual in French and English (<https://www.instagram.com/courchevelmeribel2023/>). Both, the Swiss Olympic Team and Courchevel Méribel 2023 also maintain bilingual websites (<https://www.swissolympic.ch/>; <https://www.courchevelmeribel2023.com/>).

3.3 Summary

This chapter gives an overview of event management and communication and marketing theory. The project management cycle can be applied to the NWSC and used for analysing the current processes in the organisation. In addition, the seven capital framework presents the capitals that should be considered and used in harmony with each other. Important for the success of the event is also the support of the local community. This is, among other things, influenced by how communication is conducted. Theories of building up and using a communication and marketing strategy were implemented and will be used to analyse the current implemented strategy and suggest improvements if needed.

4.0 Methodology

This thesis is based on a case study with qualitative multimethod research including participant observation and document analysis. The results were enriched through expert interviews. This chapter presents the methods used and the underlying theory. It also describes how the methods were applied. First, the concept of a case study is described, before the participant observation method is introduced and shown how it was implemented in this case. Then the document analysis is presented, including a detailed description of how the examined newspaper articles were selected and coded. Later on, the other analysed documents, the bidding questionnaire, the website and the population surveys are presented. After, the expert interview method and the two experts interviewed are introduced. The chapter ends with an evaluation of the research ethics as well as the validity and reliability in the context of the conducted research.

4.1 Case study research

The case study research method is used to investigate a phenomenon in its real-world context while using multiple empirical methods (Yin 2003).

“Case study research can employ various data collection processes such as participant observation, document analysis, surveys, questionnaires, interviews, Delphi processes and others. The power of case study research is the ability to use all methodologies within the data-collection process and to compare within case and across case for research validity.” (Dooley 2002, 338)

Yin (1994) further notes, that case studies can be used for theory testing as well as theory building. Contrary to the assumption, that building theory from case studies is limited by the investigators' perception Eisenhardt (1989, 546, 547) argues that:

“This constant juxtaposition of conflicting realities tends to “unfreeze” thinking, and so the process has the potential to generate theory with less researcher bias than theory built from incremental studies or armchair, axiomatic deduction.”

The chosen case of the study is the FIS NWSC in Trondheim in 2025. It is examined using multiple methods. Chapter 2.0 of this thesis includes a detailed description while Chapters 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 give an overview of the chosen methods and their limitations.

4.2 Participant Observation

“Participant observation involves spending time being, living or working with people or communities in order to understand them. In other words, it is, as the name implies, a method based on participating and observing in which field-notes, sketches, photographs or video recordings are used as a method of data collection.”
(Laurier 2010, 1)

Dibben and Dolles (2013, 482-483) summarised six strengths of the participant observation method. The first one is that the researcher's attention is on the behaviour of the individuals. The researcher does not have to rely on comments made in an interview but can observe if the stated actions are actually being implemented. This creates a higher level of depth and intimacy that increases the reliability of the study (Kluckhohn 1940). Furthermore, participant observation tends to create a more holistic and integrated perspective on the case. Additionally, aspects that the respondents are unaware of or take for granted can be recognized by the observer. The fourth point states that the researcher has to change the perspective when implementing participant observation. The outsider's perspective gets exchanged with a more hermeneutic portrayal based on the common shared experiences between researcher and subject under investigation (Dolles 1997, 227). Participant observation can further facilitate the so-called “serendipity pattern of research” because it puts the researchers in the context of discovery (Dibben and Dolles 2013, 483 based on Bouchard 1976 and Merton 1949). The sixth strength is that the technique centres around the researcher as a participant in daily life and entering conversations. According to Kluckhohn (1940), it is further essential that the other members of the group regard the researcher as a participant to be regarded with sufficient legitimacy.

Participant observation is a fitting method for this thesis project. The organisation of the LOC is continuously developing and changing. The possibility to spend 10 weeks alongside the LOC led to a deeper understanding of the organisation and a clearer view of what processes are currently ongoing. This would have been difficult to achieve only through conducted interviews. As part of the team, the decision processes and dynamics of the current developments could easily be observed.

The participant observation was conducted as part of a 10-week internship from January until March 2023. The data was collected while working alongside the LOC and in

discussions with several LOC members. Notes were taken during meetings and about the processes in place. Further practical experience was gained while actively working on the project and learning about the organisation, the communication, the team, and the strategy. That specifically includes discussions during the build-up of a communication strategy as well as decision-making processes concerning the use of different languages. The active participation in the planning and execution of the content and communication plan for the two weeks during the NWSC in Planica 2023 led to more insights into how projects are implemented by the LOC. This included communication through the channels Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok, and the Website. In addition, good insight was gained into internal communication, including the main tools used, Slack and Notion, and the meetings held.

Challenges may occur when implementing a participant observation. One of them is a potential bias of the researcher. Self-awareness on the researcher's behalf is therefore important (Lopez-Dicastillo and Belintxon 2014, 524). Further, the effect of the researcher and their views on the social world have to be taken into account (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995).

To tackle and balance these difficulties, the concept of triangulation is used. Carter et al. (2014, 545) state that triangulation can be viewed “as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources”. The participant observation of this research is complemented by document analysis to create a holistic view of the case from the inside and the outside. Method triangulation is therefore implemented. Expert interviews were further used to support the knowledge found in the literature and help interpreting the collected data. Potential biases should be minimised or eliminated by combining the results of those methods.

4.3 Document Analysis

“Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material” (Bowen 2009, 27). Bowen (2009, 27-28) states that a lot of different forms of documents can be used for this systematic evaluation. This is including the following, that are used for this thesis: newspapers (clippings/articles), organisational or institutional reports, survey data, and

bidding forms. Those documents have been retrieved through a newspaper archive and organisational files.

The document analysis includes 71 newspaper articles published in print newspapers in Norway about the upcoming NWSC, the questionnaire included in the bidding documents, entries on the website trondheim2025.no, and two population surveys conducted in Trondheim in August 2021 and June 2022. The analysis of the newspaper articles stands at the core of this research and is supplemented by the findings of the analysis of the other documents.

Newspaper Articles

The newspaper articles were used to research what was written about the NWSC and if and how the newspaper reacted to certain events. They were retrieved through the database “Atekst” from “Retriever” (Retriever n.d.). This database collects and stores the articles of all Norwegian newspapers. 71 articles published by 31 newspapers have been retrieved and analysed. Adresseavisen, published 18 of the researched articles, more than any other newspaper. It is the most important newspaper in the region of Trøndelag. A detailed overview of the different newspapers is given in Chapter 5.2.1.

In order to create a better understanding of the newspaper articles studied, an overview is first given of how the keyword search string was developed. It then is explained how the analysis of these articles was carried out and which categories were used.

Keyword search string

The newspaper articles were chosen through the following search string:

intros:((Trondheim OR trondhjem) AND 2025 AND (ski-vm OR ((VM OR verdensmesterskap) AND ski)))*

It should only include articles that are actively discussing the FIS Nordic World Championship in Trondheim 2025 and not just mention it in an aside. Based on the assumption that articles specifically about the WSC in Trondheim in 2025 mention the event in the title or lead, the decision was taken to only look for the keywords in those parts and exclude articles that mention them only in the continuous text. Therefore, the search string starts with “intro:”.

In Norway, two written languages are used. The name of the city Trondheim is spelt differently in each of them. To live up to that, the terms “Trondheim” and “Trondhjem” were introduced as either one of them has had to be included. The next part of the search string is “2025”. This was introduced to make sure, that the article is talking about a skiing event in Trondheim in 2025 and not about another event, for example, the World Championships in Trondheim in 1997. Further, a term to define the topic of the Nordic skiing world championship had to be introduced. Again, several possibilities to spell and write about the championships were included. The most used term in Norwegian is “Ski-VM”, as the local organising committee is using this term itself. The possibility of having “VM”, or “verdensmesterskap*”, the Norwegian terms for World Championships, connected to “ski” was introduced. The * at the end of the word includes several versions of the word as for example verdensmesterskaper (plural) or verdensmesterskapen (use of specific article). The time span used was 03.10.2020 to 20.02.2023. The Championship was appointed to Trondheim on the 3rd of October 2020. The 20th of February 2023 was chosen as the closing date because it was the day before the start of the FIS Nordic World Ski Championship in Planica 2023. Due to the assumption, that during the World Championships in Planica, the media would write a lot about Nordic Skiing and might mention the upcoming World Championships in Trondheim in 2025 but focus on Planica. The search was limited to print media.

The process of finding the fitting search string was rather long. A dismissed example of a search string is the following:

intros:(((Trondheim OR trondhjem) NEAR/4 2025) AND (ski-vm OR ((VM OR verdensmesterskap) AND ski)))*

This search string is very close to the chosen one except for the term “NEAR/4”. This term sets the condition, that the words *Trondheim* or *trondhjem* had to be within four words with *2025*. The condition was skipped, because it would exclude a sentence as the this one: “Trondheim-ordfører Rita Ottervik lover et VM utenom den vanlige når Trondheim skal arrangere ski-VM i 2025” (Namsdalsavisa 2020). Translated it means: Trondheim Mayor Rita Ottervik promises an extraordinary World Championships when Trondheim hosts the Nordic Skiing World Championships in 2025. This is the lead of one of the now-included articles. It clearly focuses on the NWSC in Trondheim in 2025 but the terms “Trondheim” and “2025” are due to the chosen sentence structure further apart than four words. Since

leads are kept rather short, a condition to make sure that the words are close to each other was not necessary.

Another example of a dismissed search string is the following:

intros: ((Ski-VM OR (verdensmesterskap OR vm) AND ski) Trondheim AND 2025 AND ("Slik blir" OR arrang OR folkefest))*

The string includes one of the three terms *slik blir* “this will be”, *arrang** for everything connected to the word arrangement or *folkefest*, in English translated to public festival. *Folkefest* is often used to describe the NWSC in Trondheim 1997 which is still in very fond memory of many residents of the city. Again, since it is already focusing only on the title and the lead, the decision was taken that this addition of one of those terms is not necessary.

Analysis categories

After deciding for the search string *intros:((Trondheim OR trondhjem) AND 2025 AND (ski-vm OR ((VM OR verdensmesterskap*) AND ski)))* the articles were read through and analysed using the tool NVivo. The experience from the participant observation led to some expected categories that were inductively expanded while reading through the data. The analysis of the first batch of articles showed for example, that athletes and their goal to participate are prominent topics featured. Thus, the category *Athletes* was implemented. An example is the article “Trenere tror Molde-løper bli skistjerne” (The coach believes Molde - skier will become a skiing star) in the newspaper Romsdals Budstikke (Hustad 2021). The importance of sustainability and connected projects became obvious during the participant observation. This led to the creation of the category *Sustainability*, and the connected categories of the three pillars of sustainability as well as the social sustainability initiatives already implemented by the LOC. In total, eighteen categories, assigned to four groups, have been introduced. A table with an overview of all categories is attached as Appendix 1.

NWSCs in Norway

Category	Description	Example Quote	Translation of Example
Trondheim is getting WSC	Mentions about the appointment of the WSC to Trondheim	"Etter seks års innsats ble Trondheim tildelt ski-VM 2025 (...)" (Namdalsavisa 2020, 20)	After six years of effort, Trondheim was awarded the 2025 Ski World Championship
NWSC in Norway	Previous NWSCs in Norway are mentioned, 1997 in Trondheim or 2011 in Oslo	"Trondheim arrangerte også ski-VM i 1997. Sist gang mesterskapet var arrangert i Norge var i 2011 med Oslo som arrangør." (Arbeidets Rett 2020, 31)	Trondheim also hosted the World Ski Championships in 1997. The last time the championship was held in Norway was in 2011 with Oslo as the organiser.
Folkefest	Use of the term folkefest	"I 1997 var det folkefest i Granåsen da ski-VM ble arrangert." (Ringstad 2020a, 26)	In 1997, Granåsen was a popular venue for the World Ski Championships.

Table 1: Group 1, NWSCs in Norway

The first group includes the three categories about the celebration of the NWSC in Norway. *Trondheim is getting WSC (TrWSC)* includes the articles written about the allocation of the event in October 2020. *NWSC in Norway (Nor)* includes articles mentioning the previous NWSCs in Norway, either in Trondheim in 1997 or in Oslo in 2011. The NWSC 1997 is often referred to as *Folkefest (Ff)*, public festival, and brings back fond memories for spectators from that time. This category helps to measure how many articles use this term.

Sustainability

Category	Description	Example Quote	Translation of Example
Sustainability	General statements about sustainability	" (...) ønsker å gjennomføre et VM med fokus på bærekraft, teknologiutvikling, idrettsglede og folkefest." (Arbeidets Rett 2020, 31)	(...) want to organise a World Championship with a focus on sustainability, technological development, sporting enjoyment and public celebration
Social Sustainability	Statements connected to social sustainability	"Skoler og barnehager skal også engasjeres, (...)" (Bratberg, 2022, 9)	Schools and kindergartens will also be involved, (...)
Logo Competition	Statements connected to the Logo competition	"Ski-VM i Trondheim 2025 ønsker hjelp og inspirasjon fra barna i arbeidet med VM-logoen." (Evensen 2022, 18)	The Ski World Championship in Trondheim 2025 is looking for help and inspiration from children to create the World Championship logo.
Barnas Mini-VM	Statements connected to Barnas Mini-VM	"Allerede i år arrangeres 16 skirenn i lokale idrettslag for å bygge opp til VM i Trondheim i 2025." (Nyaas 2022, 17)	This year, 16 ski races are being organised by local sports clubs to build up to the World Championships in Trondheim in 2025.
AktiVM	Statements connected to AktiVM	No result	
Financial Sustainability	Statements connected to financial sustainability	No result	
Environmental Sustainability	Statements connected to environmental sustainability	"Nå får vi begge deler, og vi skal samarbeide videre med idretten for å skape et folkelig, miljøvennlig og fantastisk VM i Granåsen." (Fremover 2020, 28)	Now we will have both, and we will continue to work with the sport to create a popular, environmentally friendly and fantastic World Championship in Granåsen.

Table 2: Group 2, Sustainability

Group 2 is all about sustainability. It includes a general *sustainability (Su)* category. More detailed statements, however, were allocated to the more specific categories of *social sustainability (SuSo)*, *environmental sustainability (SuEn)*, or *financial sustainability (SuFi)*. Since there are already three established initiatives connected to social sustainability,

Barnas Mini-VM (SuSoBa), the *logo competition (SuSoLo)*, and *AktiVM (SuSoA)* each form their own category.

Organisational Structure

Category	Description	Example Quote	Translation of Example
Organisation	Statements about scheduling and how the LOC is built up	"Nå går VM-prosessen inn en ny fase, der selskapet SkiVM Trondheim 2025 AS blir etablert." (Ringstad 2020b, 19)	The World Championship process is now entering a new phase, with the company SkiVM Trondheim 2025 AS being established.
Board of Directors	Changes and additions in the Board of Directors	"Med seg i styret får hun Kjell Bjarne Helland (56) som nestleder, mens Eldar Rønning (40) og Knut-Eirik Dybdal (47) er nye styremedlemmer." (Bugge 2023, 15)	In addition to Mr Havnelid, Kjell Bjarne Helland (56) has been nominated as deputy chairman, while Eldar Rønning (40) and Knut-Eirik Dybdal (47) are expected to be new board members.
New CEO	Change of the CEO	"Berit Svendsen blir sjef for ski-VM i Trondheim i 2025" (Aftenposten 2021, 42)	Berit Svendsen to become CEO of the World Ski Championships in Trondheim in 2025
Municipality	Statements about the Municipality and actions taken	"For kommunen har det vært like viktig å få til et godt hverdagsanlegg som folk kan bruke i tiår fremover." (Arbeidets Rett 2020, 31)	For the municipality, it has been equally important to create a good everyday facility that people can use for decades to come

Table 3: Group 3, Organisational Structure

The categories of group three help to measure the content published about the organisational structures of Trondheim2025. *Organisation (Org)* includes statements about the build-up and scheduling of the event and the LOC. Specific mentions about the *Board of Directors (OrgSty)* or the *CEO (OrgCEO)* are coded in their own categories. As a part owner and active part in the planning of the event, the Municipality took initiative or gave statements and explanations about Trondheim2025. They were coded in the category *Municipality (Mu)*.

Athletes and Media

Category	Description	Example Quote	Translation of Example
Negative Mentions	Mentions criticising the event or the organisation as well as the reactions to it	"VM-ledelsen får kritikk: - Tåpelig argumentasjon" (Strand 2021b, 20)	World Championship management is criticised: - Foolish argument
Media release	Statements made based on a media release	"Ansettelsen av Skinstad kommer fram i en pressemelding fra VM-ledelsen." (Fædrelandsvennen 2022, 36)	The appointment of Skinstad was announced in a press release from the World Championship management.
Russian Athletes	Mention about the right of Russian athletes to compete in the NWSC	"Ingen plass i ski-VM i Trondheim 2025 for de russerne som fortsatt hyller Putins krig." (Sæther 2022, 24)	No place in the 2025 World Ski Championships in Trondheim for those Russians who still honour Putin's war.
Norwegian Athletes	Portraits of Norwegian athletes and their path leading to the NWSC 2025	"Håkon Skaanes (21) fra Trondheim og Astrid Stav (22) fra Meråker har vært to av de mest suksessfulle juniorløperne de senere åra." (Strand 2021a, 22)	Håkon Skaanes (21) from Trondheim and Astrid Stav (22) from Meråker have been two of the most successful junior runners in recent years.

Table 4: Group 4, Athletes and Media

Group 4 includes the *negative mentions*, the criticism about the event and the subsequent reactions, as well as articles that picked up *media releases (MR)* sent out by Trondheim2025

or one of the owners. Further, articles portraying *Norwegian athletes (Ath)* and their path to the NSWSC are included. Finally, this group includes articles that address the controversy over the eligibility of *Russian athletes (Ru)* to compete at the NWSC in Trondheim 2025.

The articles were retrieved from Norwegian newspapers and were therefore written in Norwegian. The author of this thesis understands and speaks the language. However, it is not their native language. Whenever doubts arose, the translation tool was used. When this was not successful, a native Norwegian speaker was asked for help.

Bidding Document

When handing in their application, the bidding committee had to include a questionnaire provided by FIS. This questionnaire of the bidding document for the NWSC 2025 in Trondheim was read through and analysed with a focus on the communication chapter. The planned communication strategy and initiatives got compared with the insights gained through the participant observation and the further analysed documents.

Website

The website trondheim2025.no was analysed concentrating on the use of several languages. It focuses in particular on how the website is structured in different languages and what information is shared. Content uploaded to the website by 5 May was taken into account.

Population Surveys

In August 2021 the Norwegian skiing federation, the municipality of Trondheim, and the county municipality of Trøndelag initiated a population survey about the popularity of the NWSC in Trondheim in 2025 and the already existing awareness about the event. It further includes other upcoming sporting events in Trondheim as the handball European championship. The results of the survey get compared with the communication strategy and media exposure so far as well as with the experience of the participant observation to see if conclusions and actions were taken by the LOC (Sentio Research Norge AS 2021).

A follow-up survey was conducted in June 2022 by Ødegård Analyse. Further follow-up surveys are planned for May 2023 and May 2024.

Expert Interviews

The collected data was extended by expert interviews, which helped to better understand what was being studied. Expert interviews are used to get specific knowledge about an issue, development, or event by consulting someone who has that knowledge in the researched field (Von Soest 2023, 278). Von Soest (2023, 278-279) states that there are four main applications for expert interviews. They are assessment, aggregation, anticipation, and affirmation. Assessment means that the experts share their opinion and judgement on political and social processes. Aggregation relates to the expertise they have, to reduce real-world complexity to get a better understanding. Further, they are suited to anticipate predictions of events, actors' behaviours and/or long-term developments. Affirmation describes the confirmation or disproving of prior search results. Expert interviews are generally conducted as semi-structured interviews (Tansey 2007 in Von Soest 2023, 280). The method is often used in combination with others (Von Soest 2023, 282) as it was also done in this study.

The partners for the expert interviews were chosen according to their expertise in the field of communication and PR connected to their experience working with international winter sports events. The first expert interview was conducted in English on the 21st of April 2023 online via MS Teams with Magne Vikøren. The interview lasted one hour. Magne Vikøren was approached for an expert interview based on his experience as Head of Communication of the Youth Olympic Games 2016 in Lillehammer (hereafter YOG 2016). His experience can be valuable for the Trondheim2025 since the YOG 2016 were held in Norway and included several sports and disciplines. The Games attracted 212,604 spectators, involved 3,278 volunteers, and included athletes from all around the world (International Olympic Committee 2023; Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee). The event is therefore comparable with the NWSC 2025 in Trondheim as it is expected to be. The experiences and lessons learned from the YOG 2016 could be used to create a communication plan and strategy for Trondheim2025.

The second expert interview was conducted with Sophie Schimpl, the media advisor of the cross-country skiers from the Austrian Skiing Federation (hereafter ÖSV) during the NWSC in Seefeld 2019. This interview was conducted in German on the 25th of April 2023 online via MS Teams and lasted 20 minutes.

The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews. There was a guideline set up for both interviews with the space to react spontaneously to the answers given. The guidelines are attached to this thesis in the appendix. The guidelines included the experience of Magne Vikøren and Sophie Schimpl, to find out more about the event, the communication at the events and the strategies they worked with. The guidelines further included a second part about their expert opinion on how communication should be conducted for Trondheim2025.

The interviews were transcribed by the researcher and analysed based on the theoretical background introduced in Chapter 3.0 of this thesis. As the experts have working experience in the researched field, it was analysed if the described theoretical approaches are used in practice and if so, how they are implemented. Namely, how communication and marketing strategies are implemented in event management. In Chapter 6.0 Discussion, the results get connected to those of the participant observation and document analysis to draw conclusions for the further development of the communication and marketing strategy of the LOC.

4.4 Reflections on Research Methods

Research Ethics

The LOC of the FIS NWSC Trondheim 2025 was informed about my double role as an intern and active observer from the beginning. They were motivated to cooperate, provide documents and information, and include me in the process.

An NSD approval was not needed for this study. The interviewed experts were questioned in a professional setting about their work experience. Their personal lives were of no interest to the researcher and were not discussed. The expert interviews are further used to enhance the theoretical background of this thesis and help to interpret the collected data. They are not used as a source of primary data contributing to this study and are not object of the research. Further, the experts' names are mentioned, to establish their expert role. They both gave consent to be referred to by name in this study (Sikt n.d.).

Validity and Reliability

Validity

Validity can be defined as the checking for accuracy by the researcher (Creswell 2009, 190). It is recommended to use multiple strategies to increase the accuracy of the findings. This can be done through several strategies, one being Triangulation. As stated in Chapter 4.2, this study was conducted using triangulation. Further, the researchers should reflect on how personal background could influence the findings (Creswell 2009, 192).

Reliability

Qualitative reliability indicates if the “researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects” (Creswell 2009, 190). To create reliability, it is suggested to document as many steps as possible and use procedures such as checking transcripts, writing definitions of codes, and constantly comparing the data with the definition of those (Skinner, Edwards, and Corbett 2014, 81 based on Creswell 2009 and Yin 2009). This was implemented as previously described in this Chapter.

Intercoder reliability “is a numerical measure of the agreement between different coders regarding how the same data should be coded” (O’Connor and Joffe 2020, 2). O’Connor and Joffe (2020, 2) further state that intercoder reliability increases consistency and transparency and can thus help to “provide confidence that specific efforts were made to ensure the final analytic framework represents a credible account of data.” To achieve intercoder reliability in this study, a fellow student read and coded 10% of the sample, that is, eight randomly selected articles. 90% of the coding was according to the coding conducted by the author. The 10% error rate, caused by two faulty codes, could be cleared up by a more detailed definition of the category Municipality. The detailed description of the coding process in Chapter 4.3 and the definitions of the codes shown in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 are intended to create transparency and increase reliability.

However, the author has to acknowledge that the background and personal bias brought in might have had a negative impact on the reliability and validity of this study. As part of the participant observation, the researcher was a member of the team and actively worked on the development and implementation of the communication and marketing strategy. The contribution was influenced by the working experience in the field of communication and

growing up in Switzerland, a country with four official languages where the use of multilingual communication is accepted and widespread.

5.0 Results

This chapter shows the data gathered during the research process. First, the participant observation is described. The results of the data analyses are then presented, starting with the newspaper article analysis, through the bidding documents and the website to the population surveys. The chapter concludes with the results of the two expert interviews.

5.1 Participant Observation

Kick-off of the participant observation

The participant observation was conducted between January 9th and March 22, 2023. The first few days were very calm. The team members were often working from outside the office. There was good time to settle in. On the 3rd day I got a presentation about the organisation and information about the current events going on as well as about the internal communication channel Slack. I learned that the ambition is to become “Tidenes mest bærekraftige Ski-VM”, the most sustainable NWSC ever. The vision is defined as follows: “Ski-VM skal bruke sin posisjon til å vise retning, påvirke og sette høye krav for å fremme bærekraftig samfunnsutvikling”, meaning: The Ski World Championships will use its position to provide direction, influence and set high standards to promote sustainable societal development. A mission statement has not yet been defined. It is desired to create a clear mission statement and further develop the vision. A SWOT analysis was conducted earlier on in the process. Additionally, I was informed about the initiatives the LOC is taking and supporting to reach out to children in the area and get them excited about skiing and the upcoming NWSC. Namely, the Barnas-MiniVM initiative and the Logo-competition were mentioned. Barnas Mini-VM started out in Trøndelag in the winter of 2021/2022 and was taken all over Norway during the winter of 2022/2023. It aims to facilitate children to get familiar with skiing and create enthusiasm for the sport. There is the possibility to borrow skis on site. During the winter of 2022/2023, there were 24 events organised in cooperation with the local skiing and sports clubs all over Norway (Ski-VM Trondheim 2025 n.d.-b). To create their logo the LOC of the NWSC in Trondheim in 2025 worked with local schools and asked children to draw their suggestions. Thousands of drawings were handed in (Snøfugl 2022).

On Friday of the first week, I joined my first weekly communication and marketing meeting, where the communication and social media plan for the next week was set up. The content

plan is created on Notion. There, also the due date and the responsibility can be defined in the shared document.

On Saturday, the 14th of January, I attended the kick-off of the public health initiative AktiVM. It is initiated by Bedriftsidretten in cooperation with the LOC. Its goal is to engage the residents of the whole region leading up to the NWSC in Trondheim in 2025. It includes physical and social activities and tries to include the entire population. The initiative includes activities such as for example Early Birds, where runners meet up the first Friday of the month at 6.30 in the morning to go for a run for 30 minutes. There are 18 cities in Trøndelag that participate. To be able to include everyone, the group runs 15 minutes in one direction and runs back the next 15 minutes. The group, therefore, starts and ends the run together at the same spot and ends the event with a cup of coffee (Ski-VM Trondheim 2025 n.d.-a).

On the 24th of January, I attended the first sustainability workshop held by the LOC. 40 to 50 people from different businesses, mostly located in Trondheim, attended the workshop. This included representatives of the tourism and hotel sector, the public transport sector, and the sports sector. They discussed, how athletes, the media, partners, spectators and volunteers should experience sustainability at the NWSC. The goal was to become familiar with the objectives and expectations of these stakeholders. The workshop was also used to introduce the project SPOR. The LOC wants to facilitate creating a community among local businesses to join forces and make a difference in the region establishing a meeting place and arena built around the NWSC.

On January 27, Trondheim2025 launched a design challenge for the countdown clock amongst the industrial design students at NTNU, the university in Trondheim. This is another example of the active implementation of social sustainability and including the public in creating the event and getting the younger generation involved in the project.

The results of the first sustainability workshop were taken and interpreted to prepare a follow-up workshop with a main focus on sustainability. This included defining and presenting several possible so-called lighthouse projects. According to their ambition, sustainability, lies at the core of every decision the LOC takes. They will focus on six of the Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter SDGs). The SDGs are 17 goals, that United Cities defined as areas that call for urgent action when having a sustainable development of our

planet and the people on it in mind. The six ones chosen by Trondheim2025 stand for Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), Climate Action (SDG 13), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17) (Ski-VM Trondheim 2025 n.d.-c; United Nations n.d.). A brainstorming among the LOC led to the description of around 30 possible lighthouse projects distributed among those six SDGs. I was involved in creating posters to describe each of these projects. On the 1st of February, the second sustainability workshop took place. Among other things, these projects were presented, and the stakeholders were asked to choose their favourite projects. Examples of proposed projects in SDG 10, reduced inequalities are implementing an additional women's competition in Nordic Combined and the inclusion of a para-event into the NWSC. Women are still not allowed to compete at the Olympic Games in Nordic Combined and have fewer disciplines included in the World Championships. The Para World Championships are organised independently and get less attention than the NWSC.

Those two projects got a lot of support at the workshop and were in the meantime already confirmed. In cooperation with FIS and the Norwegian Skiing Federation, the LOC achieved adding a Team event in the Women's Nordic combined included, which leaves them with only one discipline less than the men. Further, a sprint para-event should be included in the programme of the NWSC in 2025 (Snøfugl 2023b, c).

On the evening of the 1st of February, the renovated Ski Jump hill at the NWSC venue site Granåsen was opened. Eirin Kvandal and Johann André Forfang, two local ski jumpers, were chosen in a draw to become the first jumpers on the new big resp. the small hills. This event was covered by media and television and was also important for the social media channels of Trondheim2025 itself. The Reel of the first Jump is so far the most clicked and liked Reel on the Instagram page @trondheim2025 with currently over 12,800 views and more than 1,000 likes.

Content planning and communication strategy

The approaching NWSC in Planica was seen as a trial run to test the social media strategy. On the 7th of February, a meeting was set up with the whole marketing and communication team including the head of marketing, the head of communication, two students working part-time, my fellow intern and me. A brainstorming was conducted about which channels

should be focused on, how the design of the posts should be, what languages should be used, and what type of content should be produced. This included an audit of where the social media channels are standing at this moment as well as looking at the benchmark and what type of content seems to draw engagement at the moment. We did not reach a conclusion on all the points and decided to continue the meeting three days later.

During the following week of working, I learned, that there has not been a clear crisis communication strategy developed yet. This was also due to some organisational reconstruction and internal reallocation of positions. However, it was planned to create such a strategy later in the process. Furthermore, I learned that the organisation has recently been reorganised and that the currently small team will grow a lot during the upcoming few months.

On the 10th of February, I joined the scheduled 2nd part of the content planning meeting for the time during Planica. We decided to try and implement English content on Instagram to reach out to the international audience. Facebook and LinkedIn were kept in Norwegian. Instagram and Facebook were the channels that we put the most focus on. However, there was also content planned for LinkedIn, blog posts on the website, and TikTok. It was further discussed, who will be working what days. Lastly, specific goals about how many followers we wanted be gained were set.

The next day, I was creating a Notion board, to organise the discussed content plan. This included a detailed plan for every day. Figure 3 shows an example day:

Aa Name	Status	Kanal	Category	Content type	Responsible
Daily Meeting	Done		Information		
Post 1	Done	Instagram Facebook	Content	Post	
Post 2	In progress	Trondheim2025.no Linked	Content	Blog	
Post 3	Not implemented	Instagram Facebook	Content	Story	
12.00 Competition 1	Done		Programme Planica		
Post 4	Not started	Instagram Facebook	Content	Reel	
Post 5	Done	Instagram Facebook	Content	Story	
15.00 Competition 2	Done		Programme Planica		
Post 6	In progress	TikTok	Content	Post	
Post 7	Not started	Instagram Facebook	Content	Story	
Medal Ceremony	Not started		Programme Planica		
Evaluation/Learning of the day	Not started		Evaluation		

Figure 3: Example Day, Notion Board (Organisational Document)

It includes the title of the post of an event ongoing, the status of the post (Not started, In progress, Done, Not implemented), the channel it is supposed to be published, the content type (post, story, blog, reel), and the responsibility. There was further an evaluation part added every day, to collect all the thoughts and learnings taken from the implemented content. This plan was important because, during the events time, most LOC members of Trondheim2025 were visiting the NWSC in Planica to experience the event and learn. Since part of the communication and marketing team was travelling there and part was staying in Trondheim, having a detailed and planned schedule was crucial.

To be ready for posting all the posts and stories during Planica, one of the students working part-time, set up design templates for the whole team to use. They were saved in Figma. On the 15th of February, I got a little crash course about how to use Figma.

The next day I helped to work on two blog posts to publish them in English as well. One of them is the introduction of us two interns and our interests in the work. The second one, was a blog post with the announcement, that Åsne Havnelid is becoming the new chair of the board.

Parallel to preparing for Planica, one of the students working part-time was starting to brainstorm and work on an ambassador programme. I joined her on the 17th of February to talk about the options.

Trial run – Planica 2023

The NSWC in Planica took place from February 21, until March 5, 2023. I was taking part in a daily morning meeting to coordinate with the head of communication and the person responsible for Instagram that day. This person was brought up to date, about what happened the previous day and if there were any changes. After, we quickly discussed the plan for the day. I was responsible for the Instagram account in cooperation with the second intern on five of those days. We created all the posts and stories published during those days. On Monday of the second week of the NWSC, we had a team meeting with everyone involved to shortly evaluate how the first week went, what worked and what maybe worked less. The schedule for the next few days was slightly adapted. The number of posts published a day was reduced a little.

Completion of the participant observation

On the 17th of March, the communications and marketing team had an overall evaluation meeting about the content published and work done during Planica 2023. After visiting the event in Planica, the LOC thought more about how the speaker should be speaking English and Norwegian in Trondheim in 2025. However, it is not clear yet, how this division will be done and how much focus will be put on each of the languages. Additionally, they discussed, what the signs should look like. The signs should be in English with a smaller Norwegian translation on it. This is to make sure, that for example for bins, everyone understands, how the garbage is sorted and what belongs in which bin. With the end of my internship on the 22nd of March, my participant observation ended.

5.2 Document Analysis

5.2.1 Newspaper Articles

Newspaper	Number of articles
Adresseavisen	18
Trønder-Avisa	7
Arbeidets Rett	5
Varden	3
Avisa Sør-Trøndelag	3
Nåmdalsvisa	2
Fædrelandsvennen	2
Bladet	2
Aftenposten	2
Driva	2
Steinkjer-Avisa	2
Fjell-Lom	2
Stavanger Aftenbald	2
Folkebladet	2
Fremover	1
Haugesunds Avis	1
Nordlys	1
Oppland Arbeiderblad	1
VG	1
Snåsnningen	1
Gudbrandsdolen Dagningen	1
Fredriksstad Blad	1
Romsdals Budstikke	1
Lofotposten	1
Agderposten	1
Rana Blad	1
Dagbladet	1
Meråkerposten	1
Bergens Tidende	1
Budstikka	1
Sarpsborg Arbeiderblad	1
Total	71

Table 5: Number of Articles per Newspaper

Table 5 shows the investigated number of articles per newspaper. Newspapers from all over Norway write about the event. From Bergens Tidende from Bergen in the south to Lofotposten situated on Lofoten in the north of Norway. However, it is also visible, that the interest is highest in the region of Trøndelag. Adresseavisen is the most important newspaper in the region. Trønder-Avisa and Arbeidets Rett are both also situated in Trøndelag with their headquarters in Steinkjer resp. Røros (Arbeidets Rett 2023; Trønder-Avisa 2023). The newspapers from outside of Trøndelag picked up on some key events happening in connection with the NWSC in Trondheim, such as the allocation of the event or the change in CEO. The articles covering more background information were written by the local newspapers.

An overall table of the categories and the results is attached as Appendix 1. Following is a more detailed description of the results according to the four introduced groups.

NWSCs in Norway

Abbreviation	Articles	Description	Example Quote	Translation of Example
TrWSC	10	Mentions about the appointment of the WSC to Trondheim	"Etter seks års innsats ble Trondheim tildelt ski-VM 2025 (...)" (Namdalsavisa 2020, 20)	After six years of effort, Trondheim was awarded the 2025 Ski World Championship
Nor	31	Previous NWSCs in Norway are mentioned, 1997 in Trondheim or 2011 in Oslo	"Trondheim arrangerte også ski-VM i 1997. Sist gang mesterskapet var arrangert i Norge var i 2011 med Oslo som arrangør." (Arbeidets Rett 2020, 31)	Trondheim also hosted the World Ski Championships in 1997. The last time the championship was held in Norway was in 2011 with Oslo as the organiser.
Ff	22	Use of the term folkefest	"I 1997 var det folkefest i Granåsen da ski-VM ble arrangert." (Ringstad 2020a, 26)	In 1997, Granåsen was a popular venue for the World Ski Championships.

Table 6: Results Group 1, NWSCs in Norway

10 articles were written between the 5th and the 7th of October 2020 announcing, that Trondheim has been allocated the NWSC 2025. In a total of 31 out of 71 examined articles, there was a referral to one of the previously held *NWSCs in Norway*. 22 of the articles namely mentioned the term Folkefest to remind people of the NWSC in Trondheim 1997 or to talk about how they are envisioning the 2025 NWSC.

Sustainability

Abbreviation	Articles	Description	Example Quote	Translation of Example
Su	6	General statements about sustainability	" (...) ønsker å gjennomføre et VM med fokus på bærekraft, teknologiutvikling, idrettsglede og folkefest." (Arbeidets Rett 2020, 31)	(...) want to organise a World Championship with a focus on sustainability, technological development, sporting enjoyment and public celebration
SuSo	20	Statements connected to social sustainability	"Skoler og barnehager skal også engasjeres, (...)" (Bratberg, 2022, 9)	Schools and kindergartens will also be involved, (...)
SuSoLo	8	Statements connected to the Logo competition	"Ski-VM i Trondheim 2025 ønsker hjelp og inspirasjon fra barna i arbeidet med VM-logoen." (Evensen 2022, 18)	The Ski World Championship in Trondheim 2025 is looking for help and inspiration from children to create the World Championship logo.
SuSsoBa	3	Statements connected to Barnas Mini-VM	"Allerede i år arrangeres 16 skirenn i lokale idrettslag for å bygge opp til VM i Trondheim i 2025." (Nyaas 2022, 17)	This year, 16 ski races are being organised by local sports clubs to build up to the World Championships in Trondheim in 2025.
SuSoA	0	Statements connected to AktiVM	No result	
SuFi	0	Statements connected to financial sustainability	No result	
SuEn	8	Statements connected to environmental sustainability	"Nå får vi begge deler, og vi skal samarbeide videre med idretten for å skape et folkelig, miljøvennlig og fantastisk VM i Granåsen." (Fremover 2020, 28)	Now we will have both, and we will continue to work with the sport to create a popular, environmentally friendly and fantastic World Championship in Granåsen.

Table 7: Results Group 2, Sustainability

As stated, *sustainability* is at the core of the organisation Trondheim2025. Six articles included general sustainability statements. However, mainly statements connected to *social sustainability* were found during the examination of the articles. In 20 articles, rather broad

social-sustainability statements were found. Furthermore, the already started or carried out initiatives, *Barnas Mini-VM* and the *logo competition* were mentioned in three respectively eight articles. *AktiVM* was never mentioned. This could be due to the fact, that it is a joint project with Bedriftsidretten and even has its own Instagram page. Articles about AktiVM might not necessarily be included in the chosen search string. Environmental sustainability was specifically mentioned in eight articles. There was no statement found specifically about financial sustainability.

Organisational Structure

Abbreviation	Articles	Description	Example Quote	Translation of Example
Org	19	Statements about scheduling and how the LOC is built up	"Nå går VM-prosessen inn en ny fase, der selskapet SkiVM Trondheim 2025 AS blir etablert." (Ringstad 2020b, 19)	The World Championship process is now entering a new phase, with the company SkiVM Trondheim 2025 AS being established.
OrgSty	15	Changes and additions in the Board of Directors	"Med seg i styret får hun Kjell Bjarne Helland (56) som nestleder, mens Eldar Rønning (40) og Knut-Eirik Dybdal (47) er nye styremedlemmer." (Bugge 2023, 15)	In addition to Mr Havnelid, Kjell Bjarne Helland (56) has been nominated as deputy chairman, while Eldar Rønning (40) and Knut-Eirik Dybdal (47) are expected to be new board members.
OrgCEO	14	Change of the CEO	"Berit Svendsen blir sjef for ski-VM i Trondheim i 2025" (Aftenposten 2021, 42)	Berit Svendsen to become CEO of the World Ski Championships in Trondheim in 2025
Mu	8	Statements about the Municipality and actions taken	"For kommunen har det vært like viktig å få til et godt hverdagsanlegg som folk kan bruke i tiår fremover." (Arbeidets Rett 2020, 31)	For the municipality, it has been equally important to create a good everyday facility that people can use for decades to come

Table 8: Results Group 3, Organisational Structure

The *organisational* structure seems to be of big interest. 19 articles were found that included statements about the scheduling and the build-up of the LOC. Specifically talking about the *Board of Directors* and its members were 15 articles, whilst 14 articles mentioned the search for a *CEO* as well as the change of CEO. The municipality of Trondheim, a part owner of Trondheim2025, and its statements and actions taken towards the event were referred to in eight articles.

Athletes and Media

Abbreviation	Articles	Description	Example Quote	Translation of Example
NeMe	6	Mentions criticising the event or the organisation as well as the reactions to it	"VM-ledelsen får kritikk: - Tåpelig argumentasjon" (Strand 2021b, 20)	World Championship management is criticised: - Foolish argument
MR	10	Statements made based on a media release	"Ansettelsen av Skinstad kommer fram i en pressemelding fra VM-ledelsen." (Fædrelandsvennen 2022, 36)	The appointment of Skinstad was announced in a press release from the World Championship management.
Ru	3	Mention about the right of Russian athletes to compete in the NWSC	"Ingen plass i ski-VM i Trondheim 2025 for de russerne som fortsatt hyller Putins krig." (Sæther 2022, 24)	No place in the 2025 World Ski Championships in Trondheim for those Russians who still honour Putin's war.
Ath	9	Portraits of Norwegian athletes and their path leading to the NWSC 2025	"Håkon Skaanes (21) fra Trondheim og Astrid Stav (22) fra Meråker har vært to av de mest suksessfulle juniorløperne de senere åra." (Strand 2021a, 22)	Håkon Skaanes (21) from Trondheim and Astrid Stav (22) from Meråker have been two of the most successful junior runners in recent years.

Table 9: Results Group 4, Athletes and Media

The category *negative mentions* includes six articles. As described in Chapter 4.3, this category includes the critique but also the connected reaction. There were three topics that were criticised and reacted to. The articles were all published by Adresseavisen, the regional newspaper of Trøndelag.

Two articles mention an incident, about how in the contract with FIS there is an agreement, that the LOC will host a Gala dinner. In a Norwegian version of that document, the talk is of a dinner. Excluding the word, Gala. Critics say, they think this is to play down the fact, that this dinner will be paid by tax money. The defending side states, that the Norwegian document is not an exact translation, but a document used for clarification. Further, the term Gala-Dinner is often used in connection with FIS events and does not have the same meaning as the direct translation does in Norwegian (Dahl 2020a). They also state that this dinner will not be paid for by tax money:

“Det er ikke skattepenger som skal finansiere VM, og skattepengene går ikke til VM-middag. VM-selskapet, eid av Norges Skiforbund, Sør-Trøndelag skikrets og Trondheim kommune, vil ha sine inntekter fra FIS, billettinntekter, lokale samarbeidsavtaler og eventuelt offentlig støtte.” (Dahl 2020b)

Meaning: It is not tax money that will finance the World Championships, and the tax money does not go to the World Championships dinner. The World Championships company, owned by the Norwegian Ski Association, the Sør-Trøndelag Skikrets and Trondheim municipality, will have its income from FIS, ticket revenues, local cooperation agreements and possibly public support.

Three articles revolved around the topic of changing the CEO of Trondheim2025. One of them is asking, if the choice of the first CEO was a mistake, whilst the other two criticise the hiring process of the successor. The organisation decided to not publicly communicate about candidates. This was criticised by saying, that it was of public interest to know, who would become the new CEO. The chairman argued that they have talked to candidates who said they would not apply if it would be a public process, and that a public list of applicants has an influence on who is applying (Strand 2021b).

Lastly, there was one article criticising the former CEO Berit Svendsen:

“Fjørtoft forklarer videre at ski-VM er en arena som bør brukes til å skape endring i internasjonal idrett, og at Svendsen i front må tørre å stille krav til det internasjonale skiforbundet (FIS).” (Murvold and Strand 2022)

This quote translates to: Fjørtoft further explains that the World Ski Championships is an arena that should be used to create change in international sport and that Svendsen must dare to make demands on the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS). The article quotes Svendsen stating, that she thanks for being challenged and promises to raise those issues with FIS (Murvold and Strand 2022).

Further, 10 articles did pick up on a *media release* of Trondheim2025 or one of the owners. Six of those articles were about the allocation of the event to Trondheim, three about Åge Skinstad becoming the new CEO and one about Berit Svendsen leaving Trondheim2025.

Nine articles portray *Norwegian athletes* and their path and motivation towards the 2025 NWSC in Trondheim, whilst three articles picked up the eligibility issue of *Russian athletes*.

5.2.2 Bidding Document

The bidding form from August 2019 includes a chapter “communication and promotional activities”. A broad strategy is already set up there. The chapter is divided into four parts: Communication plan and activities, number and target groups of spectators, ticketing strategy, and international Youth Camp and Bring Children to the Snow. Most of the information about a communication and marketing plan is included in the first part.

The bidding committee states that they want to use active communication and promotion to engage the local and regional inhabitants in order to gain their support. This includes the initiative Early Birds, which is now part of the AktiVM. Early Birds was already established in 2017 as part of the bid for the NWSC in 2021.

The bidding committee further states that the LOC will be creating campaigns nationally and internationally in cooperation with the Norwegian Ski Association and Visit Trondheim. Those campaigns are divided into local, regional, national, and international activities.

They want to “organise competitions, challenge local clubs, and encourage local schools to take their winter holiday break during the Championships.” Further, it is planned to motivate schools to create “mini-Championships” (Trondheim 2025 2019, 62).

Following the examples of Trondheim 1997, Oslo 2011 and the Olympics at Lillehammer 1994, the event should be made easily accessible by train and bus. This is to create possibilities for people from outside of Trondheim to visit the event. Accommodation should further be offered as a low-budget possibility to fan clubs or sports clubs.

The goal is to create a public festival including the whole country in cooperation with broadcaster hosts. There are no specific measures about how this is going to happen defined in the questionnaire.

Nine qualities that should be embodied when communicating internationally are set: unique, historical, unpredictable, predictable, have star quality, involve the public, tell a story, be media friendly, and be identifiable. Moreover, a speaker team of international standards consisting of experts and entertaining speakers should be set up.

The promotion should first be local, and regional and then grow more national and international over time.

Three ambassadors have already been appointed. Each one represents one of the sports included in the Championships. Marit Bjørgen – Cross-Country, Anders Bardal – Ski Jump, and Magnus Moan – Nordic Combined. The plan to further develop and extend the ambassador programme is set.

Further information, that might influence the communication strategy is, that most of the tickets are expected to be sold locally in Norway and Sweden. Further, there are direct flights to Trondheim from 18 different countries. The ticketing strategy is supposed to be built on the learnings and experiences taken from Oslo 2011, Falun 2015, and Åre 2019 (alpine).

To educate people about the event, “continuous and creative promotional and marketing activities” are intended with a focus on social media. Additionally, the creation of a smartphone application is planned, giving users constant access to ticket sales, booking, marketing, sport activities, cultural activities and more.

Moreover, the document includes a chapter about legacy. The bidding committee states that the “Goals for developing Trondheim as a city and community form the basis for holding the Championships in Trondheim” (Trondheim 2025 2019, 31). Nordic Skiing should be developed on local, national, and international levels through the championships. The Championships are supposed to create a long-term positive influence in the following areas: Environment and Technology, Event- and arena technology, elite sport and public health, international sharing knowledge, volunteers, and Granåsen sport venue.

5.2.3 Website

The home website trondheim2025.no is in Norwegian.

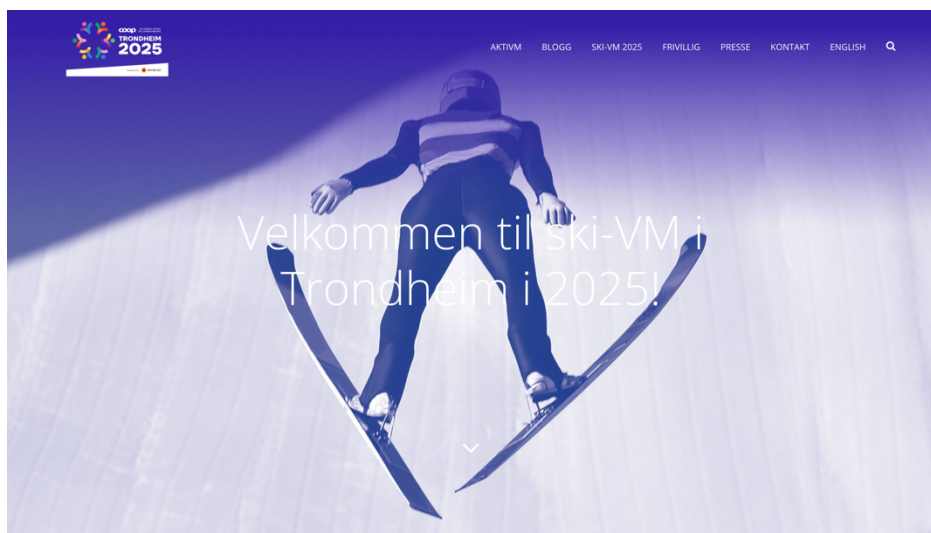


Figure 4: Screenshot Home-Website Trondheim2025, trondheim2025.no (Ski-VM Trondheim 2025, n.d.-d)

When scrolling down, a selection, that is also visible in Figure 4 on the right top, and a subscription box for the newsletter and the blog appear. The blog includes Norwegian posts. They are about specific events or news and are published irregularly. The tabs are AktiVM,

Blogg (blog), Ski-VM 2025 (WSC2025), Frivillig (volunteers), Presse (press), Kontakt (contact), and English. The tab AktiVM on the top right leads to a different website. Blogg is leading the viewer to the blog posts. The tab Ski-VM 2025 has a drop-down menu including billetter (tickets), overnatting (accommodation), Barnas Mini-VM, VM nettverket Spor (Spor Network), VM challenge nedtellingsur (countdown-clock design challenge), bærekraft (sustainability), arena, and byen (city) (Ski-VM Trondheim 2025 n.d.-d).

When clicking on English, it is not the whole website that translates, but one specific English page appears. It includes information about the City of Trondheim and the venue Granåsen, and the three only blog posts that are available in English. The latter are about the logo competition, about changes in the board of directors, and about two international interns (Ski-VM Trondheim 2025 n.d.-e). The English section is a lot smaller than the Norwegian section. Further, there is no menu to choose from to get to different sub-sites.

5.2.4 Population Surveys

August 2021

The population survey, conducted by Sentio Research Norge, included 1,038 residents of Trøndelag older than 18 years. The survey was filled in online between the 2nd and 10th of August 2021. 39% answered that they will surely or most probably visit at least one of the competitions at the NWSC in 2025. (Sentio Research Norge AS 2021).

Following is a short summary of the most important findings. 39% of the participants state that they plan to attend at least one competition, whilst 26% of the participants said they will certainly or most probably attend the opening, the closing, or a medal ceremony. The statement: I am proud that Trondheim will host the NWSC was (rather) agreed to by 57%. Further 66% (rather) agreed with the statement that it is important for Trondheim to be able to host major sports events such as the NWSC. A total of 67% (rather) agree with the statement that Trondheim, and 65% that Trøndelag will become a more popular travel destination, 77% resp. 68% say that Trondheim resp. Trøndelag will get more known internationally. A total of 72% (rather) agree, that the NWSC marks Trøndelag as a sports region. Lastly, 84% are expecting that the NWSC will create a Folkefest in Trondheim. (Sentio Research Norge AS 2021).

June 2022

600 people were interviewed over the phone. They are residents of Trøndelag, Rindal and Bindal. It is stated that the younger generation is underrepresented in all studies of this type. Therefore, the results have to be shown according to age groups. The created age groups are under 30 years, 30-49 years, 50-69 years, and 70 years and above. The statistical uncertainty is up to +/- 5%.

Following a short summary of the main findings: when looking at the upcoming championships in the city including skiing, handball, ice hockey, and the B'ocuse d'or (chef European championship), the NWSC is the most interesting one for the people. About half the people stated, that they were interested or very interested in the event. When looking closer at the age groups a difference in age gets visible. Only 35% of the people under 30 years stated interested or very interested. In the age group 70 and older, however, it is 72%.

When asked if they plan to attend the event either as a volunteer or a spectator, it became clear, that it should be easy to recruit enough volunteers. However, it might be challenging to bring a lot of spectators to the venue. Overall, 7% answered that they are considering becoming a volunteer. With 12%, the under 30-year-olds are most motivated to volunteer. 6% of each of the other age groups consider it. 31% of the under 30-year-olds as well as of the 50-69-year-olds plan to attend an event in the stadium. With 24% resp. 23% this number is a bit lower among the 30-49-year-olds resp.- the 70 years and older group. 20% of the participants state, that they think they will watch some of the competitions up in the "marka", the area around the Granåsen venue.

Lastly, there is not much awareness about the sustainability and inclusion initiatives started by the LOC among the participants of the survey. 90% of the participants did not know about the commitment to sustainability of the LOC. With 95% among the under 30-year-olds, 90% among the 30-49-year-olds, 89% of the 50-69-year-olds, and 84% of the 70-year and older, this number is very high in all groups.

5.2.5 Expert Interviews

The interviews were set up according to the interview guides attached as Appendix 2 and 3. They were divided into two parts. The first part of the interview aimed at talking about the experts' personal experience in the field and what learning they took from that. The second

part was asking about their expert opinion on how the communication strategy should be set up for an event like the NWSC with a focus on what they think about the use of multiple languages.

Interview Magne Vikøren

From the beginning of the organisation in August 2012 until after the Youth Olympic Games were held in Lillehammer in 2016, Magne Vikøren was Head of Marketing. He had three important lessons learned from this experience. They are creating a solid strategic plan with the stakeholders, do not have any visitors – only participants, and recruit well.

It is important to map out the stakeholders and create stakeholder engagement: “to have a solid strategic platform with the stakeholders, that was success number one”. This strategy was set up in the first autumn between late October and early December. Three workshops were conducted with a good facilitator.

Furthermore, the LOC of the YOG 2016 decided early on not to want to have any spectators but only participants. “So, if you’re audience, you should do some activity yourself. For instance, try the sport or something. Uhm be part of the culture and education programme”.

Magne Vikøren suggested not to wait to hire people and not trying to save money by keeping the headcount low for too long. The right recruitment is important. They hired for talent and trained skills. This is also important with regard to the available energy resources during the event itself:

“You need to make sure, that your team goes into the event with energy, not only to cope with the daily operations. If you’re totally drained by just doing you’re daily operations during Games time, you don’t have any sufficient energy when you need to open the crisis plan.”

The following further important topics were covered in the interview:

Magne Vikøren talked about the cooperation the LOC had with the IOC. There was a lot of guidance about the event operations. Communication is the soft part of an event. There were some guidelines about what is smart to do, but they were “not carved in stone”.

The first project Magne Vikøren really started was defining the vision, mission, and key values. It was one thing, that could be defined early on and helped to find fitting marketing and define the identity. Those values were discussed with the Board of Directors in early 2013. The communication could then be built on the defined brand identity. This was used to create the mentioned strategic platform in cooperation with stakeholders from the sporting world, the cultural world, education, hospitals, potential sponsors, and tv.

He built up a strategy after eight or nine months of working for the event giving an overview. However, he stated, that he did not think he ever looked back on it. He described the Norwegian way of working as having a plan from A to C and then seeing where it goes. Compared to having a plan from A to Z with backup plans, as he had experienced when working with international partners. “(...) it’s the execution that is crucial based on good enough plans.” Magne Vikøren said, that the two ways of working “kind of end up in the same way anyhow”. He further stated that communication happens close to the organisation. At his current job, he does not have a communication strategy, because the communication strategy is the business strategy.

The website for the YOG 2016 was available in Norwegian and English from the beginning. The English webpage was a bit less detailed.

They used Facebook and Instagram to promote their event on social media and were the first Olympic event ever to be active on Snapchat. When creating posts about specific Olympic topics, with the goal of getting reposted by the IOC, they were published in English.

Magne Vikøren would suggest using Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn at the moment when organising an event as the NWSC. He said he would probably not use Snapchat and Tiktok. The published content should get adapted to the channel. Further, he stated, that first and foremost, he would publish Norwegian content but explore the possibility of co-posts. In doing that, the different phases of event planning must be taken into consideration. His advice is to wait until you have something to say and not spill out the best news years ahead when the public interest still is low.

While talking about social media, Magne Vikøren also mentioned the importance of other media as the newspaper:

“The local newspaper actually played a vital role, because we had a really good understanding between us. They said, we’re going to dig and find s—t on you guys, but we’re also going to acknowledge what you’re trying to do, and we will have a balanced overview.”

Further, he stated: “I think that the local newspaper in particular, they were so balanced that they cheered us when they could cheer but they also slapped us when they could”.

He later gave an example including the volunteer programme. After thinking the volunteer programme was settled, they realized in August 2015 due to recalculations that they are missing 1,000 volunteers. They talked to the newspaper which published an article about it on its front cover. Further, they bought an advertisement series in the newspaper with a weekly update about how many volunteers they are still missing. After two and a half weeks, they had recruited enough volunteers. He sees the local newspaper as “a solid supporter and good channel, that was just one of many.” This example led to the topic of crisis management. “Define your own crisis. Own your own crisis:” They did not let the media uncover that they had too few volunteers but went to the media proactively. The communication of the event was “being bravely honest and being open”. When looking at the broader picture of crisis management, He stated that crisis communication is a part of crisis management, a tool that you need to have in hand and ready.

“You should talk, when to announce, and have a defined crisis plan, to bring enough resources to handle that crisis and the whole point making a plan like that is to make sure you can go back to normal as soon as possible to make the crisis a short one.”

During the Games, there were daily meetings to make sure, that everything is going according to plan. Fortunately, the carefully planned crisis strategy did not have to be put into practice.

The languages used the most were Norwegian and English. There were some targeted advertisements in each of the languages. Further, they used targeted advertisements in the respective local dialects. For the communication of an NWSC, Magne Vikøren suggests using the guidelines of the FIS and having an in-depth analysis done with them to also find out, if it would make sense to include other languages as French and German. He would use

the languages of FIS, at least during events time, and use English and Norwegian leading up to the event.

Interview Sophie Schimpl

Sophie Schimpl was the media advisor of the cross-country athletes of the ÖSV during NWSC in Seefeld 2019. She is therefore representing the side of the national federations.

The key learning Sophie took from this experience is that crisis communication should be quick and transparent. Communication should rather be proactive than reactive. Further, a strategy should be set up, about when a media release should be published, and how the athletes should be communicating. This needs good coordination with the athletes.

In her role as media advisor of the athletes, she was responsible to handle the media enquiries regarding the athletes and accompany them to competitions.

Most enquiries came from Austrian media in German. When working toward the NWSC in Seefeld, there was a close cooperation between the ÖSV and the LOC in Seefeld. It was planned to have a press conference before the event and publish a media release. But there was no specific content plan and strategy or time schedule for publishing them set by the ÖSV. Sophie and the other media advisors received a short education in social media marketing. They could choose rather freely what to post on the channels. There were some given posts about athletes and results, but most of the content was created by the media advisors themselves on their own initiative. Sophie Schimpl decided to keep the Instagram channel of the Cross-Country team in English. This was to make the created information accessible to everyone interested. The media releases sent out by the federation were kept in German. She remembers that the LOC of Seefeld was rather active on Instagram using English as their main language.

After the doping scandal, the enquiries got more international. However, Sophie Schimpl and the other media advisors were urged to stop communicating. The responsibility went to the management of the department. The ÖSV took a few hours until they published a media release.

Sophie Schimpl would use English as one of the main languages when organising an NWSC. She states that most of the hosts tend to use several languages. The website will probably

mostly be used to sell tickets. She would focus on the social media channels Facebook and Instagram. Sophie states that it would be ideal to strategically plan out when to post what. This could be difficult to achieve, because of all the other tasks a LOC has to fulfil. Further, she emphasises once again, the importance of crisis communication and a fast reaction in times of crisis.

6.0 Discussion

6.1 Event Management

The project management cycle introduced in Chapter 3.1.1 is applicable to this case study in several ways. The most obvious one is to apply it to the project of the NWSC itself. There, the organisation is in the planning phase. Additionally, this cycle can be applied to many shorter projects connected to the event.

A fitting example is the content strategy implemented during the NWSC in Planica. The five phases idea/brief, finances/feasibility, planning, doing, and completion/review of the cycle were passed through. First, the idea of using the NWSC as a trial run came up and was discussed. It was then checked, to what extent the project could be implemented. This included the meetings of the marketing and communications team to talk about the availability of the different people during that time period. Then detailed planning was done, as described in Chapter 5.1 Participant Observation and shown with the example of the Notion board Figure 3. The “doing” took place during the two weeks of the event in Planica. Including a mid-evaluation meeting that helped to adjust and learn from the ongoing process. After the NWSC in Planica, a meeting was conducted to evaluate, how the plan was implemented, what went well and what learnings could be taken from the experience. This is an example of how this cycle was implemented in smaller ways. The LOC can use this cycle to make sure to keep an overview of all the projects going on at the moment and how they are coming along. A collection of those projects and especially the learnings taken from them could help to refine the processes and implement them into the planning of the “big project”, the NWSC. This example further shows, how SMART objectives were implemented.

The eight capitals of special events set by Shone and Parry (2013, 20-25), uniqueness, perishability, intangibility, rituals and ceremonies, ambience, personal contact, and labour intensiveness apply to the NWSC in Trondheim in 2025. Even though the NWSC has already been held in Trondheim in 1997, the circumstances are different, including a different LOC, athletes, new infrastructure and technology, and to some degree new audience. Important will further be the personal contact to gain local support as described in Chapter 3.1.3 and to include the expectations and wishes of the public in the strategy. Magne

Vikøren stressed the importance the awareness towards labour-intensiveness. One of his main learnings was to not wait too long with recruiting staff and make sure, that there is enough energy left when the event starts to cope with possible occurring crises. Trondheim2025 should be aware of those characteristics and use them to their advantage.

6.2 Seven Capital Framework

Natural Capital

Taking the case of the Nordic World Skiing Championship, this includes the area of Granåsen as well as the surrounding Bymarka that are used as the competition area. To create a cross-country skiing competition, there must be natural resources and space to create a racing track. Further, the event is dependent on the weather to have conditions in which an outdoor competition is possible.

Human Capital

Applied to the NWSC this is about the whole staff. Most importantly the local organising committee has to be filled with educated, skilled and experienced people. Further, it also includes everyone else who works with the realisation of this big event. This includes about 3000 volunteers who need to be recruited and properly deployed. The LOC of the World Championships in Trondheim is set together of experienced people with a big network in the Norwegian and international skiing and sports world

Financial Capital

The NWSC in Trondheim in 2025 is financed through the three owner parties, the municipality of Trondheim, the Norwegian Ski Association, and Sør-Trøndelag Skikrets. Further, there will be funding from the FIS, ticket revenues, local cooperation agreements and possibly public support.

Cultural Capital

The cultural capital was shown several times throughout Chapter 5.0. Nordic skiing has a long tradition in Norway and is deeply rooted in the culture. The previous events in this country have left good memories that people want to relive and share.

Physical Capital

The ski jump hill Granåsen has been renovated for the upcoming NWSC. Co-operations have already been started with public transport and other local companies to ensure a high quality of material goods provided, such as water and energy supply and accommodation. As stated, in Chapter 3.1.2. the physical capital also includes communication, which is addressed later in this chapter.

Administrative Capital

The LCO is working closely with the municipality, as it is part owner of the event. Not only are they cooperating, but they are also physically close. The LOC has its office space in the building of the Municipality of Trondheim.

Communication

As this summary shows, the seven capitals are all important to bring a successful event together. However, my conclusion is that they cannot be seen as independent capitals. All of those aspects are important but also have to work together great and function alongside each other. Successful internal communication is key there. If not, everyone is working towards the same goal and has the same vision in mind, the capitals might be of high quality individually but might not work together. Further, those advantages and positive characteristics of the event want to be communicated to the public to create a strong image and bring across the motivation and enthusiasm the LOC has for the event. Successful external communication is crucial. In my opinion, communication can therefore not just be seen as a little part of the physical capital, but as a part of all the seven capitals. It connects them to find the best way to develop together as an organisation to take advantage of all the benefits they offer and share them with the public.

6.3 Support of the local community

As established in Chapter 3.1.3, according to Gursoy and Kendall (2006) people often react positively to environmental sensibility shown by the organisation. The LOC is putting a lot of effort into its sustainability strategy and has sustainability at the core of its organisation. As the population study in June 2022 showed, the local community is not aware of this yet. It is planned to force communication and education about these initiatives. This is important and should be done carefully planned and thought through to maximise the local support that can be gained from the already existing and taken measures. The LOC should think

about cooperation with the local media and running a campaign in the newspaper. As shown by Gursoy and Kendall (2006) and McCombs (2002) media coverage can have a big influence on people's perception of events. This was also supported by Magne Vikøren, as stated in the expert interview: "(...) the local newspaper played a vital role, (...)". Both interviewed experts say that transparent and proactive communication should be implemented.

The analysis of the newspaper articles has shown that especially the local media is interested in the event and the organisation and does not shy back from criticising and challenging them. The fact that only six out of 71 articles are connected to criticism towards the organisation, leads to believe, that the newspaper is not out to get the organisation but challenge them when it can. As Magne Vikøren also mentioned it was for the YOG 2016.

Gursoy and Kendall (2006, 605) suggest a democratic planning model to increase local support. This was partly implemented for the YOG 2016 when engaging the stakeholders in the strategic platform. It is similar for Trondheim2025. Workshops to include the stakeholders as well as several social sustainable initiatives to increase the input from the local community are implemented.

The benefits for the local community connected to the event as for example stated in the legacy chapter of the bidding questionnaire seem not to be communicated yet. The LOC should use those factors to its advantage and include them in its marketing and communication strategy.

Furthermore, the newspaper analysis revealed, that sustainability and social sustainability are mentioned often. However, the population survey showed, that people are not aware yet of the sustainability and inclusion efforts taken by Trondheim2025. The upcoming projects, initiatives, and sustainability efforts should therefore be clearly named and described so that they can easily be communicated to the public. Further, Trondheim2025 could try to push the communication and introduction of their planned lighthouse projects connected to environmental sustainability.

6.4 Communication and Marketing Strategy

The head of marketing and the head of communication are working closely together. Therefore, there is one joint communication and marketing strategy that is worked on. The three dimensions of the communication mix according to (Jackson 2013, 16), providing information, encouraging attitude change, and persuading stakeholders to change behaviour can be linked to the current communication of the LOC. It is using several channels to communicate to the public and inform about current as well as planned processes. One goal is to get people excited about the event and persuade them to become a part of the event in some form for example as a volunteer or spectator. As seen in the population survey of 2022, it should not be difficult to recruit enough volunteers. However, attracting enough spectators might be challenging. Successful communication to convince people to change their minds and join the event is therefore important.

As Magne Vikøren stated, one of the first things he did was define the vision, mission, and key values of the event to build the communication upon. The NSWSC in Trondheim has its ambition of becoming the most sustainable NSWSC ever. The work and the communication are conducted based on this. However, it would be advantageous to formulate clear and short vision and mission statements that can easily be communicated also to the public in English and Norwegian.

Theory, as described in Chapter 3.2.1, further suggests that sporting events can be used for the branding of a city, region or country. That this is an expected effect is evident from the survey of March 2021, when people were asked if they think that Trondheim respectively Trøndelag will become a more popular tourist destination after hosting the NSWSC and other big sporting events, getting better known internationally and marking it as a sports region. All of those statements are supported by at least 65% and up to 77% of the survey participants.

Trondheim2025 is mostly focused on online promotion and advertising. The process of creating a strategy for online communication is described and illustrated by an example in Chapter 6.5.

6.5 Social Media Marketing

Implementing the 6 C model the focus first lies on the company and the content creation that can be illustrated by the 6-step model explained in Chapter 3.2.2 by (Hollensen 2020, 617-619 based on Parent, Planlegger, and Bal 2011). It should be implemented when defining a social media strategy. This model aligns with the theory provided by (Zeiter 2003, 17-21) about general communication concepts. It has been done on a small scale for the NWSC when testing the social media marketing during the NWSC in Planica 2023. In the preparing meetings, SMART objectives were set on rising the number of followers on Instagram and Facebook. To do that, an audit was done about the number and demographics of the followers the channels had at that point. The chosen platforms were Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok and the Website in the form of creating blog posts. The content was similar on Facebook and Instagram which differed a bit from the content on LinkedIn and the website. However, Instagram was the only channel English content was implemented. According to Sophie Schimpl and Magne Vikøren, the social media channels should be maintained in English or bilingual English and Norwegian. Magne Vikøren stated that he would follow the FIS languages. As seen in Chapter 2.2, FIS is generally communicating in English. Before creating a content plan, brainstorming was done about what type of content should be produced. This included looking at the benchmark and browsing social media pages of other mega sports events. The content plan created, including all the platforms is shown in Chapter 5.1. With the evaluation meeting after the NWSC in Planica, also the 6th and last step of this framework was implemented. Using this model has proven successful and seemed to work well for the organisation. It should therefore be implemented for further upcoming smaller events as well as for the NWSC as the main event. Since social media is evolving fast and the content has to be up to date, creating fix SMART objectives and a content plan for the next two years cannot yet be done. However, some main objectives of what they want to achieve could be written down and altered if needed. Further, this model could be implemented during the weekly marketing meeting. The evaluation of one week could be used as the audit for the next week and weekly SMART objectives could be set to keep an overview of the development and illustrate what was already achieved. If stored correctly, it would help to document the process, development, and learnings throughout the years.

Crossing the border of control in the 6C model, the Community is the focus. As further discussed in Chapter 3.2.2 the use of influencers and ambassadors can create more reach and engagement. This should definitely be used by the LOC to draw attention to their event. The LOC is in the process of defining an ambassador programme. However, while developing an ambassador programme, the LOC should not forget about the three ambassadors already stated in the questionnaire of the bidding document and use their reach to create engagement.

6.6 Use of multilingual communication

Currently, the website of the Trondheim2025 is available in Norwegian. A small part of it is also available in English. The social media channels are run in Norwegian. The change to English communication on Instagram during Planica did not lead to a persistent change. Most of the captions are again held in Norwegian. In some cases, a part of the caption is translated into English. Looking at benchmark social media channels and the fact, that as a World Championships, there might be international interest in the event, the suggestion would be to implement a bilingual strategy using English and Norwegian for communication on Instagram. The pages of Swiss Olympic Team or the Alpine World Championships in Courchevel Méribel could be taken as a role model. Further, the website should be available in English as well, to give possible international spectators the chance to inform themselves about the event. This was also the case for the YOG 2016 in Lillehammer and Courchevel Méribel 2023.

The bilingual strategy should also be used on-site when the event is taking place. The speaker should be speaking English and Norwegian and include international spectators as much as the Norwegians. As already planned, the signs should be in English and Norwegian.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Conclusion of the Research

The proposed research questions:

What aspects need to be considered from an organiser's point of view when planning the communication strategy of a major international sporting event?

- *How can communication be used to secure local's support?*
- *What role does print media play in the local's perception of a major international sporting event?*
- *What is the strategic reach and role of bilingual communication for a major international sporting event?*

can be answered as follows:

A LOC should be aware of the characteristics of an event as well as the several capitals an event possesses and can use. Combined with following a project cycle process, a LOC should know the strengths and weaknesses of the event early on and create a long-term strategy that can be altered if necessary. The communication strategy should be set up to highlight the advantages of the event and the benefits, the hosting of the event could bring to the city, region, and country. Doing that, it is important to keep in mind, that the support of the local community is crucial for a successful implementation of an event. They should be included in its development, and communication towards them should be open and honest. A democratic development process, including the local community, is appreciated. The LOC of Trondheim2025 is implementing that by including stakeholders in the development of sustainability initiatives and including the broader local community through initiatives as the Logo Competition. Furthermore, local support is influenced by the media.

Adresseavisen, the local newspaper, is interested in the event and regularly publishes articles about it. They also criticise the LOC and ongoing processes. Communication should happen proactively if possible. Generally, the local but also national press is expressing their interest in the event by publishing articles about it already two years in advance. The influence, the media has on the local community can also be used as an advantage, when actively

approaching the newspaper with stories they could write about and use paid campaigns. Articles on their planned lighthouse projects related to the three pillars of sustainability - social, environmental, and financial sustainability, should be encouraged by the LOC.

Further, it is crucial to take the international audience into consideration. It is important to provide information in English additionally to the local language. The website and social media channels should include English content. On social media, this can be done by creating bilingual captions, as implemented by several international sporting events and federations already. Social media, especially with its international reach, is predestined to use for ambassador marketing. Finding fitting ambassadors to promote the event and creating awareness amongst their community can increase its popularity.

As the planning phase of an international mega-sporting event is several years long, the proposed techniques as using the 6 steps to create a social media marketing strategy can be implemented in smaller projects during the planning phase and used to further develop and alter the overarching strategy. Smaller events, as in this case the NWSC in Planica can be used as trial runs and to test procedures. The use of the proposed theory helps to get an overview of the conducted communication and to use the learnings from trial runs optimally. If implemented ongoingly, it documents the development and growth throughout the whole process. This could also help to secure information flow when organisational or personnel changes occur.

The seven capital framework by Mykletun (2009) could be extended to include communication not only as part of physical capital but as an integral part of connecting capitals to externalise their benefits.

The implemented multimethod qualitative research approach connected to a case study examining the communication of the LOC of a major international sporting event in the real-life context helped to see different internal and external aspects that influence the communication and marketing strategy development.

7.2 Suggestions for Further Research

This research could be extended by further examination of the social media channels, their reach, and engagement rate. Additionally, as the conducted newspaper analysis was limited to print media, a similar analysis could also be done examining online media. Furthermore, this study only analysed a specific period of time during the planning phase. A more comprehensive study could be conducted that examines the entire process from the application for the event to its implementation.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Newspaper Analysis: Table of Categories and Results

Group	Category	Abbreviation	Articles	Description	Example Quote	Translation of Example
NWSCs in Norway						
	Trondheim is getting WSC	TrWSC	10	Mentions about the appointment of the WSC to Trondheim	"Etter seks års innsats ble Trondheim tildelt ski-VM 2025 (...)" (Namdalsavisa 2020, 20)	After six years of effort, Trondheim was awarded the 2025 Ski World Championship
	NWSC in Norway	Nor	31	Previous NWSCs in Norway are mentioned, 1997 in Trondheim or 2011 in Oslo	"Trondheim arrangerte også ski-VM i 1997. Sist gang mesterskapet var arrangert i Norge var i 2011 med Oslo som arrangør." (Arbeidets Rett 2020, 31)	Trondheim also hosted the World Ski Championships in 1997. The last time the championship was held in Norway was in 2011 with Oslo as the organiser.
	Folkefest	Ff	22	Use of the term folkefest	"I 1997 var det folkefest i Granåsen da ski-VM ble arrangert." (Ringstad 2020a, 26)	In 1997, Granåsen was a popular venue for the World Ski Championships.
Sustainability						
	Sustainability	Su	6	General statements about sustainability	"(...) ønsker å gjennomføre et VM med fokus på bærekraft, teknologitvilling, idretts glede og folkefest." (Arbeidets Rett 2020, 31)	(...) want to organise a World Championship with a focus on sustainability, technological development, sporting enjoyment and public celebration
	Social Sustainability	SuSo	20	Statements connected to social sustainability	"Skoler og barnehager skal også engasjeres, (...)" (Bratberg, 2022, 9)	Schools and kindergartens will also be involved, (...)
	Logo Competition	SuSoLo	8	Statements connected to the Logo competition	"Ski-VM i Trondheim 2025 ønsker hjelp og inspirasjon fra barna i arbeidet med VM-logoen." (Evensen 2022, 18)	The Ski World Championship in Trondheim 2025 is looking for help and inspiration from children to create the World Championship logo.
	Barnas Mini-VM	SuSoBa	3	Statements connected to Barnas Mini-VM	"Allerede i år arrangeres 16 skirenn i lokale idrettslag for å bygge opp til VM i Trondheim i 2025." (Nyaas 2022, 17)	This year, 16 ski races are being organised by local sports clubs to build up to the World Championships in Trondheim in 2025.
	AktivVM	SuSoA	0	Statements connected to AktivVM	No result	
	Financial Sustainability	SuFi	0	Statements connected to financial sustainability	No result	
	Environmental Sustainability	SuEn	8	Statements connected to environmental sustainability	"Nå får vi begge deler, og vi skal samarbeide videre med idretten for å skape et folkelig, miljøvennlig og fantastisk VM i Granåsen." (Fremover 2020, 28)	Now we will have both, and we will continue to work with the sport to create a popular, environmentally friendly and fantastic World Championship in Granåsen.
Organisational Structure						
	Organisation	Org	19	Statements about scheduling and how the LOC is built up	"Nå går VM-prosessen inn en ny fase, der selskapet SkiVM Trondheim 2025 AS blir etablert." (Ringstad 2020b, 19)	The World Championship process is now entering a new phase, with the company SkiVM Trondheim 2025 AS being established.
	Board of Directors	OrgSty	15	Changes and additions in the Board of Directors	"Med seg i styret får hun Kjell Bjarne Helland (56) som nestleder, mens Eldar Rønning (40) og Knut-Eirik Dybdal (47) er nye styremedlemmer." (Bugge 2023, 15)	In addition to Mr Havnelid, Kjell Bjarne Helland (56) has been nominated as deputy chairman, while Eldar Rønning (40) and Knut-Eirik Dybdal (47) are expected to be new board members.
	New CEO	OrgCEO	14	Change of the CEO	"Berit Svendsen blir sjef for ski-VM i Trondheim i 2025" (Aftenposten 2021, 42)	Berit Svendsen to become CEO of the World Ski Championships in Trondheim in 2025
	Municipality	Mu	8	Statements about the Municipality and actions taken	"For kommunen har det vært like viktig å få til et godt hverdagsanlegg som folk kan bruke i tår fremover." (Arbeidets Rett 2020, 31)	For the municipality, it has been equally important to create a good everyday facility that people can use for decades to come
Athletes and Media						
	Negative Mentions	NeMe	6	Mentions criticising the event or the organisation as well as the reactions to it	"VM-ledelsen får kritikk: - Tåpelig argumentasjon" (Strand 2021b, 20)	World Championship management is criticised: - Foolish argument
	Media release	MR	10	Statements made based on a media release	"Ansettelsen av Skinstad kommer fram i en pressemelding fra VM-ledelsen." (Fæderlandsvennen 2022, 36)	The appointment of Skinstad was announced in a press release from the World Championship management.
	Russian Athletes	Ru	3	Mention about the right of Russian athletes to compete in the NWSC	"Ingen plass i ski-VM i Trondheim 2025 for de russerne som fortsatt hyller Putins krig." (Sæther 2022, 24)	No place in the 2025 World Ski Championships in Trondheim for those Russians who still honour Putin's war.
	Norwegian Athletes	Ath	9	Portraits of Norwegian athletes and their path leading to the NWSC 2025	"Håkon Skaanes (21) fra Trondheim og Astrid Stav (22) fra Meråker har vært to av de mest suksessfulle juniorløperne de senere åra." (Strand 2021a, 22)	Håkon Skaanes (21) from Trondheim and Astrid Stav (22) from Meråker have been two of the most successful junior runners in recent years.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide Magne Vikøren

Interview guide Magne Vikøren – Head of Communication Youth Olympic Games Lillehammer 2016

- What was your job in connection with the Youth Olympic Games? What were your main tasks?
 - What was the biggest challenge?
- What role did multilingual communication play at the YOG?
- What was the main language that was communicated in?
 - Were there regulations from the IOC about what languages should be used?
 - Were there regulations about the communication schedule from the IOC?
- What was the communication strategy for the YOG 2016? How did you prepare for this event?
 - In which languages was communication carried out?
 - On which channels?
 - Who was communicating? Who was responsible?
 - What were the target groups?
 - When was communication carried out?
 - Was there a specific schedule leading up to the event?
 - When did strategic communication start?
 - Was there a crisis communication concept?
 - Was it developed by yourself or by the IOC?
 - Did you have to use it?
- How big was the communication team?
 - What was the division of tasks?
 - When was the team assembled?
- How was the slogan developed? (Go beyond, create tomorrow)
 - When was it created and implemented?
- Was a media analysis (quantitative / qualitative) carried out?
- What are your lessons learned / what would you do differently today?
- In your opinion, in which languages should communication take place at international Nordic skiing events? Why?
 - Which channels should be used?
 - Is this the same on all channels?
 - Is there a distinction between type / importance of information?
 - Which language(s) should be the focus?
- What are the difficulties in multilingual communication?
- What information is needed from the LOC?
 - How would they like to receive it? (Channel & language)
 - When does this information need to be available?
- What else do you find important?

Appendix 3: Interview Guide Sophie Schimpl

Interview-Guide Sophie Schimpl, Media advisor Cross-Country skiers at NWSC in Seefeld 2019

- What was your job in connection with the World Championships in Seefeld 2019?
 - What was the biggest challenge?
- How did you prepare for this event?
- What role does multilingual communication play at ÖSV?
- When does the ÖSV communicate in different languages?
- What was the communication strategy in Seefeld 2019?
 - In which languages was communication carried out?
 - On which channels?
 - Who communicates? Who is responsible?
 - What are the target groups?
 - When to communicate?
- How big was the media team?
 - How was the division of tasks?
- Has a media analysis (quantitative / qualitative) been carried out?

- In which languages should communication take place at international Nordic skiing events? Why?
 - Which channels should be used?
 - Is this the same on all channels?
 - Is there a distinction between type / importance of information?
 - Which language(s) should be placed at the centre?
- What are difficulties in multilingual communication?
- Which channels should be used?
- What information do the national federations need from the LOC?
 - How would they like to receive them? (Channel & Language)
 - When does this information need to be available?
- In the event of a crisis (e.g. Seefeld 2019) - what communication is expected from the LOC?
- In the event of a crisis (e.g. Seefeld 2019) - What communication will be undertaken by the associations?
- To what extent was the ÖSV involved in the LOC's communication strategy?
- What else do you find important?
- What are your lessons learned / What would you do differently today?