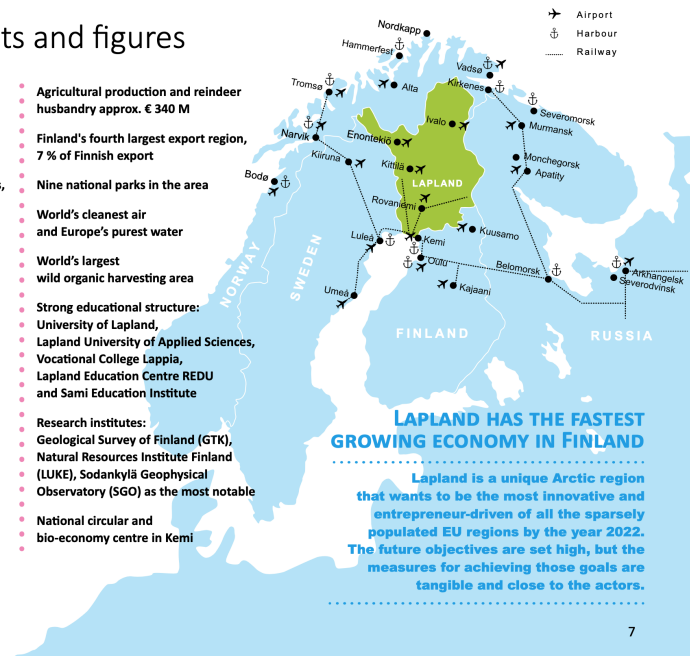


DRIVING REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

LAPLAND in facts and figures

- Surface area 100,366 km², of which 7,699 km² is water
- Population 180,200, population density 1.8 /km²
- Employment: approximately 69,000 jobs, of which approx. 50% are in private enterprises
- Number of private enterprises 9,100
- Annual revenue of Lapland €12,000 M, of which 70% comes from private enterprises
- Annual revenue of mining and metal industry approx. € 5,000 M
- Annual revenue of forest bioeconomy approx. € 1,300 M
- World's northernmost bio, mining and metal industry hub
- Europe's only chromium mine and the largest gold mine in Europe
- Tourism is the fastest growing industry with overall demand of approx. € 1,000 M and an average annual growth of 9%, in 2017 as much as 20%
- Agricultural production and reindeer husbandry approx. € 340 M
- Finland's fourth largest export region, 7 % of Finnish export
- Nine national parks in the area
- World's cleanest air and Europe's purest water
- World's largest wild organic harvesting area
- Strong educational structure: University of Lapland, Lapland University of Applied Sciences, Vocational College Lappia, Lapland Education Centre REDU and Sami Education Institute
- Research institutes: Geological Survey of Finland (GTK), Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE), Sodankylä Geophysical Observatory (SGO) as the most notable
- National circular and bio-economy centre in Kemi

LAPLAND – an Arctic and international highflier



7

*Illustrations are taken from
 'The Arctic specialisation programme 2013',
 'Lapland an Arctic and International High Flyer',
 'the Social Economy in Lapland Poster',
 'Sustainable Development and Tourism in Finland,
 2006-Sustainable-tourism-Finland Lapland'.
 'Arctic Smartness...Smart and Sustainable Arctic Tourism'*

The Arctic: some key facts



The Arctic consists of the Arctic Ocean and eight countries

including parts of Canada, Russia, the USA, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Finland, Sweden and Iceland.



Despite freezing temperatures

it is home to around four million people.



The Arctic Ocean is the smallest of the planet's five major oceans

but still covers 14 million square kilometres.



Polar bears, Arctic foxes, walrus, seals and whales

are some of the species that make up its wonderful wildlife.



There are between 40 and 90 indigenous languages

depending on the methods used to classify languages and dialects.



In 2020, it experienced its second warmest year on record

and a new record temperature: 38°C in the Russian town of Verkhoyansk.

BACKGROUND

Tourism as a Central Tenant of Regional Sustainability

We live in the heart of Europe's last great wilderness area. Most people here who live and work here do so very close to the land and many 'best practices' in terms of environmental principles are common parts of both everyday life and service products.

Having said this, whilst most people who guide here can apply trendy survival and bushcraft 'tools' like getting a fire going under nearly any circumstances, many local companies did not understand the language of 'responsible travel' and nor did they necessarily understand that this part of the market is a growing one which will eventually be the base standard, when we first started our business. Sustainable tourism wasn't yet in the Finnish tourism lexicon at either a regional or national level and cooperative habits didn't really exist between companies in the North.

In the last few years, however, there has been a growth in understanding of how to excite the consumer about how closely the people here still live to nature whilst also building a common language in terms of responsible travel principles. And Finland's tourism strategy now states: 'Lapland, Finland's top province, is measured by the quality of tourism indicators. The quality of the components, in particular the security of tourism, draws attention to sustainable development.' It also acknowledges that in northern Finland the main program services are sled dogs and reindeer farms.

Chiawa (2015) explains that responsible tourism is a philosophy focused on reinventing the tourism industry for the benefit of humanity, travellers and the industry itself. Lapland Above Ordinary states that Sustainable tourism is the idea that you can travel while having a positive impact on a destination's environment, economy and culture. Sustainable tourism is more comprehensive than just ecotourism, as it focuses only on environmental responsibility. In Finnish Lapland, our goals are aligned with the European Commission's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the broadest level.

This Agenda has shaped Finland's own goals and the programs developed to meet these goals. Sustainability is a primal core in the development of Lapland tourism. Between 2017 and 2020 millions of euros has been invested into the development of sustainable tourism in Lapland.

Arctic Sustainability

Finland has been at the forefront of driving collaboration between the 8 Arctic Nations for the protection of the Arctic environment. A historic Ministerial Conference in Rovaniemi in 1991, was the first ministerial meeting of the Arctic countries and started a continuous collaboration known as the "Rovaniemi Process" and ultimately led to the development of the Arctic Council.

Sustainable development and 'Promoting decision-making based on science informed by traditional knowledge' were two of Finland's key priorities during its first chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

In its most recent chairmanship, Finland's priorities were:

- ☐ environmental protection, including the exchange of information on best practices and emerging technologies to promote sustainable and responsible development in the Arctic
- ☐ Enhancing the connectivity and availability of broadband services in the Arctic
- ☐ Developing circumpolar meteorological and oceanographic cooperation to improve public safety, benefit international shipping and air traffic and enhance Arctic climate science
- ☐ Enhancing fair educational opportunities in the Arctic by strengthening the network of education specialists in cooperation with the University of the Arctic

One successful outcome was the establishment of the Arctic Biodiversity Congress, which brought together scientists, policymakers, government officials, Indigenous peoples, students, industry and civil society representatives to discuss challenges facing Arctic biodiversity and actions for conservation and sustainable use of the Arctic's living resources

Finland's arctic territory includes Northern Ostrobothnia, Kainuu and Lapland and this area, above the arctic circle, makes up c. 1/3 of the country's land mass (although Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013 defines the entire country as arctic). Despite its vast size, Lapland is sparsely populated with just under 180,000 inhabitants, while Finland's total population exceeds 5,500,000.

Finland has contributed expertise and modern technology to industries such as Arctic construction, Arctic environmental technology and the development of Arctic infrastructure, transportation and navigation in ice-covered waters. It also houses various Arctic research and educational programs and institutions. Several biological research stations are located in Lapland, where Arctic ecology is studied. The Arctic Centre, an institute affiliated to the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, carries out interdisciplinary research on the effects of global changes

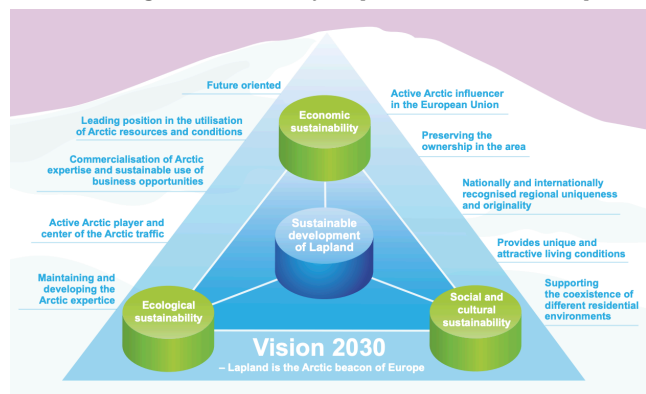
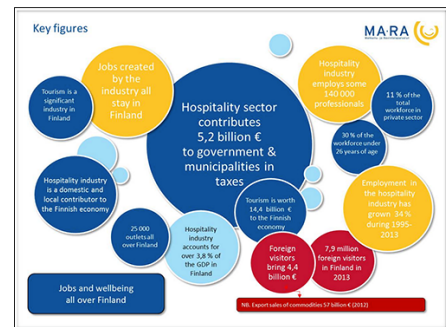


Image 5: Vision for sustainable regional development.

and on the natural balance of Arctic nature and Arctic societies. The University of Oulu has a research focus on Arctic medical sciences. Arctic-related issues are also included in teaching and research programs of many other higher education institutions in Finland. Finnish Lapland continues to be a pioneer in Arctic nature and experience tourism. Lappish tourism can be perceived as a test laboratory for all Arctic tourism, as new challenges are first faced in Lapland. Arising to the challenges requires resources, but, in contrast, resolving them facilitates the sustainable development of tourism in other Arctic areas, as well. Bold development entities consisting of tourism products and services support the growth objectives set for tourism, as well as sustainable development. International investments are also laying a foundation for the growth of tourism (Arctic Smartness).

Lapland's goal for Arctic sustainable tourism is to be among the top European travel destinations and to be a globally recognised destination for sustainable and ethical tourism. The foundation for the development of tourism consists of year-round sustainable nature tourism, management of Arctic conditions, experiences, well-being and safety. Innovative travel concepts are being developed all the time and Tourism in Lapland has increased to record high numbers in the recent years. Although tourism is a strong industry, it still faces new challenges. The rapid global growth puts pressure on safeguarding sustainable development. The year-round nature of tourism, challenges of public transportation, and improvement of the service infrastructure are important issues that must be resolved to create sustainable growth. The service structures of tourism, such as the customer's purchase path, service sales and marketing, have changed at an enormous speed due to the influence of digitality. The availability of skilled workers is an acute problem that can slow down the development of the entire sector.

Lapland's tourism has much to offer for other industries. Long-term tourism marketing has created a strong international brand for Lapland, which also benefits enterprises in other fields. Tourist centres and regions provide an excellent forum for example for the promotion of a low carbon ideology through circular or bio-economy collaboration. In Lapland, the development of tourism has been based on a systematic and strategic approach in which the different parties are included in the process. The latest example of this is the project that was launched in the spring of 2018 with the aim of building an Arctic tourism ecosystem in Lapland. The Lapland tourism strategy outlines the long-term vision and goals for the development of sustainable and ethical Arctic tourism. The strategy is implemented jointly with an extensive stakeholder network.

Proposals for the development entities for sustainable tourism:

- International co-operation strengthening the development of value chains in tourism
- Meeting the system-level challenges (year-round prospects, public transportation, digitality) with international collaboration (Lapland as test laboratory for sustainable Arctic tourism)
- International networking and value chains strengthening the tourism industry and increase of expertise
- Improving availability and increasing especially air traffic during low season.
- Compensating for the dependency on air traffic by developing e.g. cross-border tour products (the Visit Arctic Europe project) II)
- Building an Arctic tourism ecosystem in Lapland that promotes closer co-operation between the tourism industry, accompanying industries, and research, education and development organisations, with the aim of ensuring the future growth and development of tourism as the Lappish "export item"
- Bold development entities consisting of tourism products and services to support the growth objectives set for tourism, as well as sustainable development
- Creating a comprehensive service concept that takes the customers' individual needs into account
- Bringing industries together in productisation
- International investments laying a foundation for the growth of tourism
- Coordination and conceptualisation of investment drafts into projects.

Industrial Growth in Lapland

Lapland is the northernmost part of both Finland and the Eu. It is also the most international region in Finland and the beacon of the arctic region. Geographically, Finnish Lapland lies in the middle of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. We share our borders with Sweden, Norway and Russia for a total of approximately 1,700 kilometres so trans-border living, working and business has always been a way of life here.

At the same time, there have always been barriers linked to the different laws, practices and languages within each border country which have brought challenges to trans-border cooperation.



Whilst European tour operators, for instance, see the region as a whole, in practice there has been minimal cross-border tourism, in part because the regions of northern Scandinavia are usually marketed through national tourism promotion centres and these tend to ignore the potential for cross-border tourism. But also, in part, because of accessibility. Both arrival in the area (into the 18 regional airports) and movement between tourist destinations - either by public transport or rental car between countries - require development if there is to be effortless movement of tourists across borders.

EU cross-border programmes have strengthened co-operation and the increasing visibility of Lapland in various European forums has made the actors from Lapland not only highly desirable business partners but the region as a whole, an Arctic leader in the development of sustainable business.

Nevertheless, Tourism as an industry is growing rapidly in both Finland and the entire Arctic region due to both the perceived safety of the area and the unique nature-based experiences available¹.

In addition to the seeking of extreme adventures, current travel trends also demonstrate interest in experiencing silence and the pursuit of well-being. As the tourism flows are increasing, it is essential to develop sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism.

The Arctic areas are among the world's cleanest and ecologically best-preserved regions, but they are also facing many rapid changes. Due to global interest in the natural resources of the area and the effects of climate change, the Arctic nations are faced with a whole new situation. Lapland does not want to just sit by and watch the development of the Arctic region. In fact, Lapland can promote its interests by being an active international player.

The tourism industry brings much needed investments to the region, which promotes the regional employment and development. In contrast, the industrial field must make decisions that ensure the co-existence of the different sectors.

In Lapland, coordination challenges related to issues such as land use are always present. Consequently, the foundation for regional development work consists of acknowledging the needs of interest groups and of compromising. The development of regional co-operation models and the forming of cluster networks have provided significant results. There is a desire to continue this work complementing it with good governance, which has also proven to be an important factor in the successful development work in Lapland.

In addition to long distances, the shrinking and aging population presents challenges for the development of Lapland's economic structure. 80 % of enterprises in Lapland are microenterprises, the majority of which are not necessarily looking for growth for their business. However, a new business culture is simultaneously developing in Lapland, creating a foundation for a new kind of high-growth entrepreneurship. The development of industrial service enterprises and the increase of tourism have affected the development of other industrial fields and created a positive impact on the regional economy of Lapland.

In the past few years, Lapland has been the fastest growing economic area in Finland, which is primarily due to the strong growth witnessed in the region's industrial spearheads. This growth has enabled the emergence of a multidisciplinary SME sector alongside the industrial leaders. International business is characteristic of the SME sector in Lapland.

In the wake of digitalisation, globalisation and the resulting new economy technologies and arctic expertise, geography is increasingly losing its significance in the development of growth and jobs. At the same time, it is challenging us to perceive the entire world as an operating area and a potential market. To succeed, we need more and more courage, networking skills and co-operation – but these are weighed against almost unlimited possibilities (Mika Riipi, County Governor of Lapland).

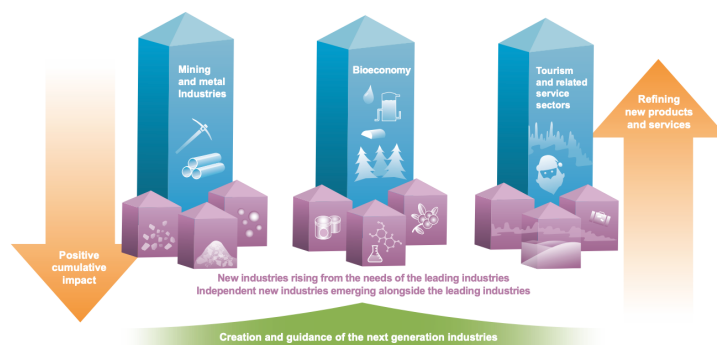


Image 4: The backbone of Lapland's economy and new emerging industries.

- Individual demand on nature is determined.
- Resource consumption and emissions are quantified.
- The area needed for regeneration is calculated based on individual use.
- As a result, individuals or nations are assigned a productive area. This creates the ecological footprint.
- Bio capacity describes the biologically productive area of a country or region.
- The ratio of required to existing surface is the benchmark for sustainability.
- Results of the ratio greater than 1 denote land use.



SOCIAL ECONOMY IN LAPLAND

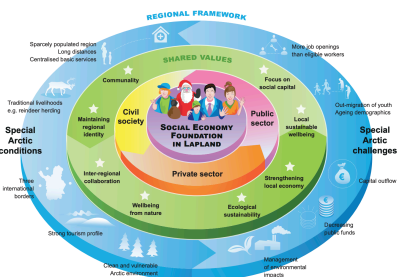
1. FOUNDATION

LAPLAND IS THE NORTHERNMOST REGION in the European Union. With the population of 180 000 people (and another 180 000 reindeer) and the area more than three times the size of Belgium, Lapland is also the most sparsely populated region.

LONG DISTANCES AND LACK OF RESOURCES create challenges for maintaining the wellbeing of locals. On the other hand, vast nature and silence are reasons why people wish to live in the north.

DESPITE THE DISTANT LOCATION, three international borders and thriving tourism make Lapland highly international region. Economy based on the use of natural resources calls for sustainability.

WITH THE HELP OF SOCIAL ECONOMY, we want to make Lapland even better place to live by promoting existing strengths and sustainable ways to operate.



¹ Finland is the world's safest country from natural disasters. Large-scale hurricanes, earthquakes or floods do not occur in Finland. Similarly, Finland is considered safe in terms of terrorist threats and health hazards.

The economic growth of Lapland is based on the region taking its place as the most advanced Arctic operating environment. In practice, this lays a foundation for internationalisation, now and in the future. It is understood in Lapland that internationalisation is based on strong regional co-operation – an ecosystem. It is built on boldly opening windows for a new kind of cross-sectoral collaboration, which promotes the creation of an internationally strong future for Lapland. The Lapland – an Arctic and international highflyer - strategy combines the different measures and goals aimed at developing the region into an even stronger ecosystem that is a recognised player in international co-operation.

One example of a new emerging industry here is the promotion of socially sustainable economy models, where emphasis is on transparency and societal gain, in addition to financial profit. The education and research institutes in Lapland have traditionally participated actively in international collaboration through various mobility and research programmes and different collaboration networks. The Arctic industry of refining natural resources has brought global enterprises to Lapland.

Sustainable utilisation of natural resources and conditions and the increasing of value added are important themes for the future of Lapland. The industrial beacons of Lapland are the mining and metal industries, utilisation of forests, and tourism based on natural conditions. Led by these leading industries, the region has developed into a vibrant business field producing industrial services, natural products, food products and support services.

Given the depth to which the arctic environment is still an integral component of all aspects of Laplanders' everyday life, and the extent to which regional activities have been shaped by the surrounding nature, the potential exists for us to become the leading experts in sustainable development should we choose to take on that challenge. Indeed, Lapland is one of the most attractive destinations in Europe for nature and adventure tourists so it is critical that we utilise our environment in tourism in a sustainable manner, and become committed to the development of sustainable and ethical tourism. The increase of tourism has created a new kind of "on site" internationalisation in Lapland.

More about Tourism in the North

According to Visit Finland 2018, the number of domestic and foreign tourists visiting Finnish Lapland are extremely similar. Statistics Finland back this up in a report showing that the two largest groups of foreign visitors are from the United Kingdom and Asia. There was an almost 5% increase in British tourist numbers between 2016 and 2017 and the growth looked set to continue also with the Asian market - until covid threw a curve ball. Burkhard (2016) reported that the top two travel trends for 2017 were going to be centred around millennials (born post-nineties and widely described as travellers looking for unique and thrilling excursions, (Glass, 2007)), and that they were set to spend \$1.4bn in the next year (BBC Global News Limited, 2017)².

It is not surprising, therefore, that > 5.5% of Finland's population are employed within the tourism sector. In rural areas, including the fourteen key regions that comprise Finnish Lapland, (ref. the Visit Lapland 2018 figure shown here), this figure is far higher.

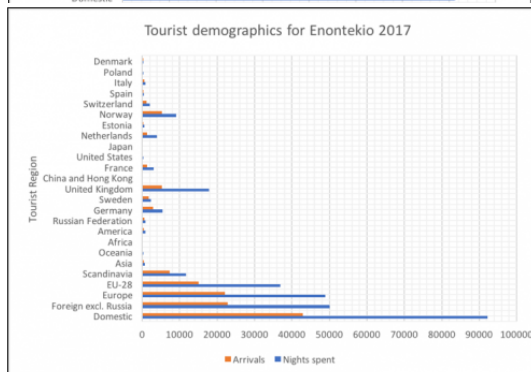
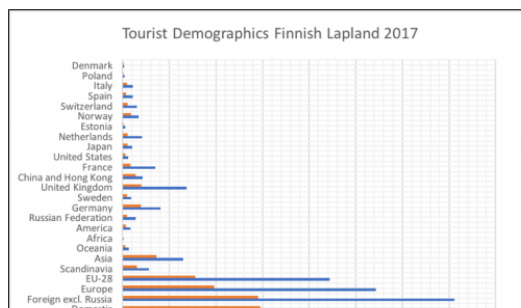
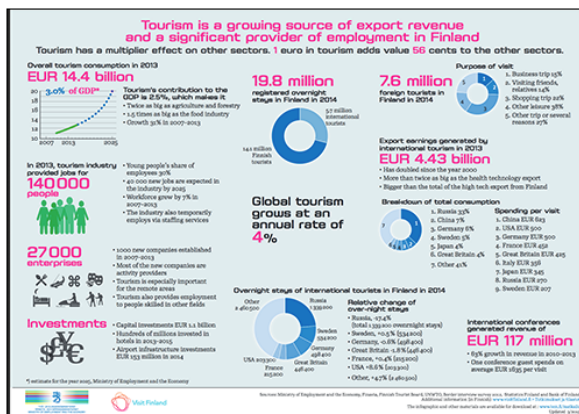
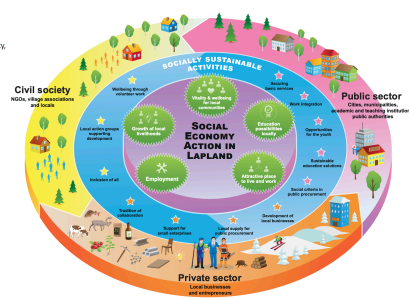
2. ACTION

IN LAPLAND SOCIAL ECONOMY CONSISTS OF multiple actors representing civil society, private, and public sectors.

AT THE MOMENT SOCIAL ECONOMY actions in Lapland are conducted by civil society from private sector. We aim to attract more enterprises with interests in creating positive social impact and supporting vitality and wellbeing of local communities.

WE ALSO FOCUS ON including social economy thinking in the policies and actions of regional actors and municipalities. For example public procurement policies can be used as tools to encourage social economy thinking. In addition, public organisations can act as forerunners for including social sustainability in their everyday work.

WITH COOPERATION TOGETHER with different actors we can develop models for action to support employment, education, local economy, livelihoods and increase vitality in both rural and urban areas.

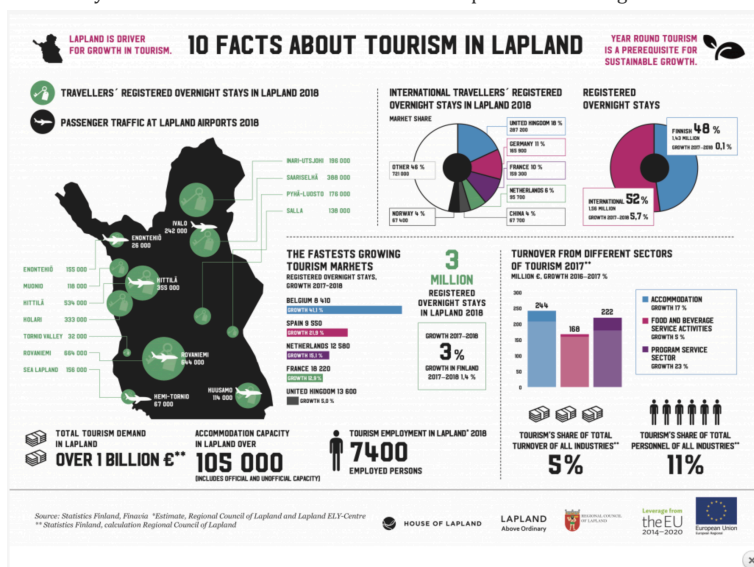


² The BBC (2017) suggested that 'affluent-millennials' choose to travel for things such as shopping and parties, whilst 'non-affluent millennials are more likely to pursue once in a lifetime experiences and cultural and spiritual journeys.

In our small municipality which borders Norway and Sweden, domestic tourists dominate (but primarily in Kilpisjärvi, which is one of the few parts of Enontekiö to be actively growing) although a significant number also pass through having completed a traverse of the national park. Neither market uses local activity providers although the hikers and skiers sometimes spend a night in local accommodation). The next largest group is from other countries in Scandinavia - primarily day visits by trans-border shoppers from Norway (in Kilpisjärvi and Hetta) or Sweden (Karasuando) to Finland in search of cheaper products. Tourists from elsewhere in Europe are the third largest market and the first to really use the services available. Asian tourism is almost non-existent here (unlike in eastern Lapland) but there is a reasonable amount of summer campervan and motorbike tourism en route to Nordkap which simply passes through – again without utilising many local services.

It is said that the progress of tourism should be based not only on numbers of tourist arrivals but also on the socio-economic benefits generated by tourism since a few tourists with higher spending patterns may generate as much or more benefits than a larger number of tourists with lower spending patterns. The fewer number of tourists are also likely to create fewer environmental or social problems of congestion and over-use of tourist attractions, facilities services and infrastructure. Therefore, emphasis in establishing tourist targets should be placed on economic benefits including consideration of the spread of benefits to local communities, as well as minimizing negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts.

It was interesting that footfall in Hetta changed very little during covid despite there being a huge spike in domestic tourism elsewhere whilst the borders were closed. Large centres like Levi, Kilpis and Yllas had a marked increase in numbers of visitors in the Covid winters - but we were simply too far off the beaten track and with too few supplementary services. There was a slight increase in numbers in the summer but domestic tourists in normal years in particular, are more likely to go into the wilderness by themselves rather than to pay for activities available in the location they are visiting. Hence, whilst it might seem like an attractive market environmentally, I am not sure how much business it could bring to the operators in this region.



Prior to covid, christmas charters and French corporate holiday groups had been extremely important winter markets in Enontekiö – and the annual presence of which had impacted positively upon both the demography and developmental potential of the whole region. Such groups, however, are likely to have made their company or regional selection on responsible tourism grounds. Understandably, therefore, it is not surprising that many of the tourism companies operating in these markets did not see value in the added quality standards that responsible tourism providers need to bring to the table. Hence, it has been rare for much more than lip service to be paid to environmental practices, local-area cooperation, local sourcing of supplies etc.

Market research commissioned by Tui in January 2017 (and reported by Tui in 2018) showed that around 70% of holidaymakers wanted the option of excursions...of those holidaymakers, 60% said they would only feel that way if those attractions met global animal welfare standards. However, even for customers who cared, it was hard for them to distinguish green-wash from reality since traditionally, organisations acting responsibly have been accredited only by traveler reviews.

In recent years, bodies such as the World Responsible Tourism Awards (which ran between 2004 and 2016 and were always awarded at the WTM, World Tourism Market in London) and, more recently, 'Sustainable Tourism Finland' have started to make best practices more transparent by giving credit to companies showing increased morality or those taking steps to create a healthier environment³ (*Responsible Tourism 2016*).

The WRTA award categories have been many and varied (as you can see from the table), with the intention of drawing attention to different aspects of responsible tourism. We received a Gold World Responsible Tourism Award for Animal Welfare in 2015.

Whilst it is obvious that the security of the tourism industry is of vital importance to Lapland, and that there has to be a systematic effort to ensure both high quality and safety standards and sustainable development of small rural tourism businesses, there is still a long way to go in standardizing contemporary social values about the conditions in which animals should live. There are so many perceptions about optimal animal welfare that there is a real risk that activists aiming for responsible tourism may actually force companies out of business and endanger the animals they are hoping to protect in the process. (Mikko Äijälä cited by Lapin Kansa 2017). Nevertheless, the image that the sleddog industry has, internationally, within each region, will clearly impact on its growth and sustainable development. Therefore defining minimum standards at which the least advanced of the sleddog businesses has to be seen to comply will increase confidence in the reputation of the sector as a whole.

Animal Tourism in Finland

Best accommodation for disability access
Best accommodation for employment
Best animal welfare initiative
Best contribution to wildlife conservation
Best cultural heritage attraction
Best destination for responsible tourism
Best for beach tourism
Best for child protection
Best for engaging people & culture
Best for poverty reduction and inclusion
Best for water conservation
Best innovation by a tour operator
Best innovation for carbon reduction
Best responsible tourism blog
Best responsible tourism campaign
Best sea or river cruise
People's choice

³ 'Sustainability', although very much a buzzword, is here to stay. It provides a larger purpose and some new deliverables for companies to strive for and helps them renew their commitments to basic goals like efficiency, sustainable growth and business value. The trend seems to be making sustainability and a public commitment to it basic business practices, much like compliance is for publicly traded companies. If this comes to pass, then companies lacking a sustainability plan could see a market penalty, rather than proactive companies seeing a market premium. For some companies, sustainability represents an opportunity to organize diverse efforts under one umbrella concept and gain public credit for it. For other companies, sustainability means answering hard questions about the how and why of their business practices that could have a serious, if gradual, impact on their operations.

Sustainability encompasses the entire supply chain of a business, requiring accountability from the primary level, through the suppliers, all the way to the retailers. If producing something sustainably becomes a competitive edge for supplying multinational corporations, this could reconfigure some of the global supply lines that have developed based solely on low-cost production. Of course, that scenario depends on how strongly corporations embrace sustainability and whether it is a true change of direction or just lip service.

Despite all of this, sleddogs are currently protected poorly under existing national legislations. There are neither enforceable sleddog-specific regulations dictating their basic standard of care, nor are there agreed-upon voluntary codes of best practice for the farms to baseline against. Meaningful and targeted guidelines as well as recommended best practices need to be developed for the sleddog industry in order to protect this business in the changing face of consumer-driven pressure for responsible use of animals in tourism practices.

When considered in this light, it becomes obvious that we should be spearheading a European drive towards tighter legislation in order to safeguard this important part of the northern economies. The fact that much of the legislation relating to animal welfare in Finland is only available in Finnish is also a stumbling block since a large number of sleddog farms in Scandinavia are owned by foreign entrepreneurs and at least half of the workforce on the farms would be non-native. This is not so surprising since it is impossible to follow this passion elsewhere in Europe. Given that it is arguably one of the key business areas in which foreign investors / entrepreneurs can be attracted to these regions, (itself a theoretical goal for Finnish business) language accessibility needs should also be recognised by authorities when drawing up new laws and recommendations⁴.

Looking forward in Enontekiö

According to the World Tourism Organization, future customers will increasingly demand quality, safety, environmental consideration of the local nature and authenticity. As product development and marketing will become increasingly more closely tied to the needs and expectations of the customer group, different age groups will also demand and develop their own products, thus creating further challenge within sled dog tourism. Tour operators and other customer groups will increasingly require that the program services provided are operating under a documented safety and quality program and the sleddog industry needs to be proactive vs reactive in this regard to safeguard its own future.

Enontekiö has been planning towards a future in which individual adventure travellers will be a welcome target group since we believe that their respect for the land and love of nature-based tourism will be the ideal fit with what the area immediately has to offer in terms of the wilderness location, outdoor products and natural lifestyle holidays that the Finnish tourists who come here currently enjoy. One of the most commonly used definitions of sustainability is one developed by Gro Harlem Brundtland in 1987: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

We believe that the kind of standards we set in all areas of our business will be the expected norm rather than the exception in the years to come. We believe that there is definitely a more environmentally conscious international traveller out there who would love the type of wilderness location, outdoor products and natural lifestyle holiday that the Finnish tourists who come here enjoy. This would be in keeping with the larger development goals of the area (since the aim is not to become an alpine-style resort destination but, rather, to maintain the integrity of the area and the natural lifestyles it supports).

The mass tourism market has been extremely important in the far North for the inherent survival of the area. However, it has very different needs and principles from the tourist market the area hopes to attract for sustainable growth, long-term. There is no point in Enontekiö trying to develop along the same alpine-ski-resort style as some of the ski centres c. 100km south of us. Rather, the aim is to match development to suit the area and the natural way of life (and travel) it supports.

Enontekiö for entrepreneurs

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Where three countries meet Unique villages with own profiles Strong border trade tradition Environment, nature, nature-based tourism Availability of labor Education possibilities Small municipality, you don't need big numbers for development growth, fast ability to react Strong systems and processes in place – and familiarity of locals to cope with daybreaks and week packages The local airport makes day packages a possibility in the area The purchase of the local airport by the municipality makes the continuation of daybreaks and week packages a continued possibility. Lapland Safaris and Hotels does a lot of work in bringing big groups of tourists to Hetta annually Santa Safaris brings large numbers of British tourists to Karasundo annually (although most services are run in-house so the money does not spread greatly through the economy). Companies have started to look at sustainable accreditation. We have two large husky farms which can handle international tourists and a number of farms working with reindeer.</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>There has been too little attention paid to other industries than travel industry The operators are scattered, differentiation of the villages Absence of common goal The attitude atmosphere, dissension, Travel industry is very seasonal Traffic connections Marketing, communication, language skills There is a lack of high end accommodation in the area and therefore it is impossible to attract, for instance, business groups Many services close in low seasons – there are months when the only place to buy food in the whole village of Hetta is the grill, despite there being three large hotels here. The nature centre's opening hours is targeted more at domestic vs international tourism so for the important December market, for instance, there is little to do here outside of their provided activities. This reduces the flow of money through the wider business community. There is a lack of cooperation between the businesses and the municipality to rectify these issues. There is a lack of expertise in how to manage and expand the airport post purchase by the municipality For a nature-based target market, we should be pushing hard for over 50% of the companies to become certified as operating responsibly, so that we can promote that as a region. It is hard to answer private clients about availability since everything is on hold until the big companies (eg Lapland Hotels) communicate their needs. Lack of diversity in the economy-economic leakage</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Succession Small things.</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Travel industry is sensitive to economic fluctuations</p>

⁴ This is discussed in more detail in our 'Quality in Animal Services Document'

<p>Border trade Wilderness high school Possibilities of northern Norway Traditional, nature based livelihoods Joint marketing and active information Creating strong spirit of co-operation and development International tourism</p>	<p>The remarkable state support for the northern areas of Norway and Sweden reduces Enontekiö's competitiveness Lack of co-operation and increase of dissension States actions towards municipalities – municipality reform Southern Finland sees Lapland only as travel destination Ministry of Forestry's resources (especially Natural Heritage Services) are reduced in Lapland</p>
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A SWOT analysis was originally carried out by Kirsti Näkkäläjärvi many years ago - but we have added to it, here. As far as I am aware, there has been no research carried out in cooperation with other stakeholders, businesses and local authorities into the area's environmental, social and basic services carrying capacity. It would be good to gain a clear indication of the impacts of tourism on the area's natural, historic and cultural heritage services so that we can take up corrective measures to ensure that the needs of local communities are respected and define the area's target groups within our ecotourism development plan.

Basic Services

There is a lot of talk of circular economies in the north and that this is one of the strongest potential fields of expertise in Lapland (since their development will create a foundation for new entrepreneurial activities based on the management of industrial side-streams), but to date, there has been little talk of this in Enontekiö even though people tend to recycle and purchase locally since the next nearest shops are so far.

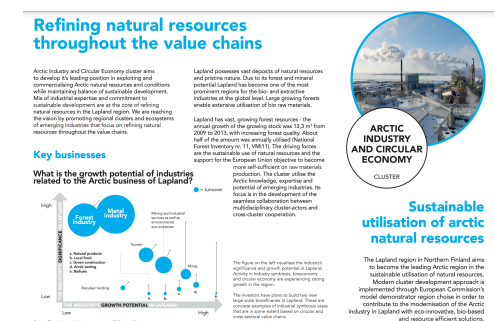
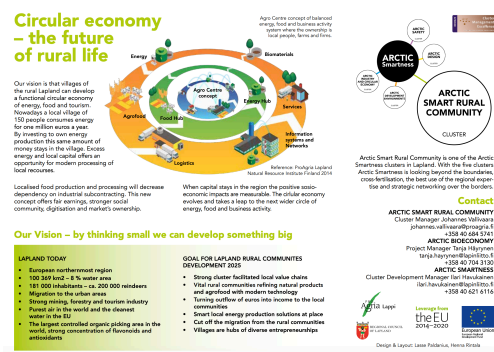
The theory of circular economies is that they will help dwindling resources to last, despite rising consumption. As the world's population rises and consumerism flourishes, new affluent middle classes, for instance in Asia, follow the lead of those in the west in terms of their energy demands to enable their consumerism and pressure is brought to bear to return to cheap sources of energy like coal. Wealth becomes increasingly unbalanced and the number of people living without food and clean water increases alarmingly whilst natural resources are diminishing at untenable rates. At its current rate, consumerism will consume the Earth. Indeed, the Global Footprint Network has estimated that if everyone on earth lived like us, we would need three equivalent earths to sustain us at our current rates of consumption.

One reminder of the state of our finite natural resources is Earth Overshoot Day⁵ which marks the statistical day when our environmental footprint outsizes the Earth's capacity to produce more natural resources and process the greenhouse emissions caused by fossil fuel use. Alarmingly, this comes sooner every year. In the early 2000s, Finland's Overshoot Day was in October, by 2015 it was in August and in 2017, it came already in April.

However, we do have the power to change our ways, seek out sustainable means of energy production and live in a way that would allow future generations to enjoy clean, vibrant nature as well. We still have time to save the world from an environmental catastrophe and circular economies are one proposed solution for providing alternative solutions for continuous financial growth. In these, the aim is to maximise the retention of materials and their value for as long as possible. Instead of selling products, circular economies create revenue through services and smart digital solutions. Production as well as consumption should create the least amount of waste and trash possible.

Finland has set out to seek those solutions, and one of them is the world's first national circular economy roadmap and the plan of action that accompanies it. The roadmap is being developed by Sitra, The Finnish Innovation Fund, as well as the Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Employment and the Economy and various industries and stakeholders. Effective use of materials comes with environmental benefits, but circular economies also create financial and social opportunities. Finland's roadmap is believed to have great potential for international export.

Whilst this is great in theory, we are typical in that in our relatively remote community, our economy is not very diversified. There are few industries or service operations or suppliers in which the community can find work so economic linkages (which keep money flowing through local businesses) aren't extensive. Employment opportunities at different educational and skill levels for different age groups (youth, elders etc) are lacking. So too are educational services to support local hires (skill development, training for real jobs etc).



⁵ This is based on calculations by the Global Footprint Network.

There is not a great deal of regional integration with businesses feeding into one another and transportation links and accommodation options could be better (eg the lack of a route to connect to the north and the lack of high-end accommodation options for corporate groups). Community infrastructure is adequate (water, power, sewage) but skilled operators (electricians etc) are hard to find and many supplies and equipment need to be purchased from elsewhere. Economic leakage is therefore a negative factor in business operations and for the community.

We contribute to economic leakage in the sense that we tend to use 'imported' workers rather than hiring locally since we need language skills that are not available locally. However, we try to offset this and put money back into the community by creating both direct and indirect benefits.

In terms of direct benefits, we, for instance, purchase local arts crafts made of local materials and encourage our clients to do the same, attend and pay for local cultural events and buy the bulk of our food products, gasoline, building supplies, etc, locally⁶.

Our company obviously brings direct tax benefits to the community, and we use local building contractors, electricians (when we can find them!) etc for any work that we cannot complete in-house. We contribute to all local charities and innovations that request funds (scholarships etc), offer internships and summer employment for students and volunteer our time and the time of our staff to local projects like the building of a climbing wall for local children, the removal of an old building from the ski centre and the demolition of an old building from the land of an elderly lady who couldn't do it herself. These kinds of direct benefits are the kind that can be seen by the community, and hopefully engender local support for local tourism.

Our 'purchase local when possible' policy strengthens the 'local flavour' for customers at the same time. By making use of local services (eg cross-selling products like reindeer farm visits from other companies as well as purchasing food locally as opposed to through online systems⁷ or simply suggesting different places and activities for our customers to go to after visiting us) and suppliers (eg our 'fair trade' husky necklaces, made locally and elk hunted by Pasi and our local hunting groups) and cultural components (eg joik performers @ our farm, a tundrada design as the end point of our escape game, and in our souvenir shop, etc⁸), we build 'authenticity' into our products⁹.

Our small souvenir shop includes goods from local artists, artisans and photographers and some items (eg customised husky pendants using our logo from one of the local silversmiths) are designed specifically for us by local craftspeople, thereby increasing their value to our customers and their sell-through potential¹⁰. We use ornaments representative of the region (Saami clothing in the kota and souvenir shop) and we make our own husky wool clothing in-house as well as sending dog hair to an ecological clothing manufacturer in Switzerland¹¹.

We have a strong cooperation with both Lapland Hotels and Hotel Majatalo and try to foster good links and relationships with other accommodation and service providers. We also have good links with one restaurant and one café to which we frequently send our customers. We were one of the first companies to create a website and the first to have an online booking system so for many years we fielded requests for snowmobile safaris, reindeer farm visits etc and passed them forward – often without asking for commission¹².

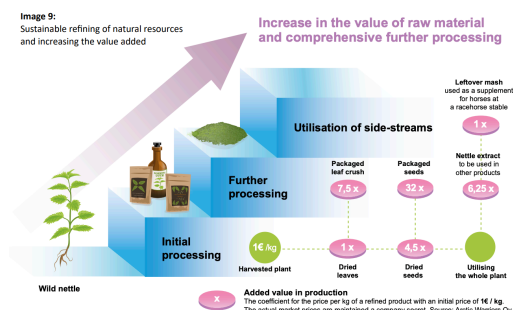
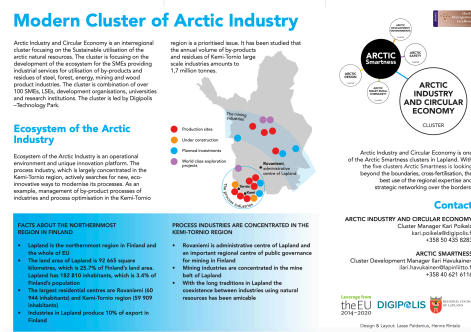
We have always worked cooperatively with a number of local businesses and share, for instance, a storage building rented from the municipality with one company so as to both reduce overheads and make optimal use of the space available. We make joint purchases with HettaBikes when our companies need new bike supplies and we purchase food from one restaurant's daily menu that would otherwise be thrown out, so as to reduce waste¹³.

We have shared surplus bread from local restaurants with horse and chicken farms for years and we even bankrolled purchases for Santa Safaris when the company was opening and had no line of Finnish credit.

We also directly utilise products we have picked from nature. In terms of the meals we provide, breakfasts include jams that we make in-house, having picked the berries by hand. Dinners include elk (hunted), reindeer (locally 'raised' and provided) or fish (locally caught and provided) and deserts include our homemade jams. Coffee and teas are fair trade and we will start to offer also hot drinks made with local berry leaves.

Whilst I am not sure about the validity of the circular economies concept for our region, I do think that there is lot we could be developing in terms of utilizing nature's bounty more. There is an increasing demand for superfood and local foods grown in clean nature, as well as for wellness products. International customers who visit us then spread the message of pure Lappish food to their home countries, and the growing global wellness trend creates a demand for export. However, local food and natural products are currently being manufactured only in small amounts at a time, and it is challenging just to meet the local demand.

A number of northern companies have started to be successful in this and a project in Kolari is looking at how to complement the current small scale artisanal quality of production with increasing quantities and security of supply, so as to be able to escalate production to meet industrial export needs. For that to be achieved there would need to be a local food facility with a test kitchen, aimed at industrial production, in the process of which, we would create production chains that generate new jobs for the area."



6 ECOT B9 Basic Services

7 ECOT B3 and B4 Fair-Trade and Local Entrepreneurs

8 ECOT C4 Incorporation of Culture

9 ECOT D.1.1 Purchasing Policy. Our business obviously also abstains from products produced with child labour.

10 ECOT B3 Fair Trade, GreenKey 4.11

11 ECOT B3 Fair-Trade

12 ECOT B3 and B4 Fair-Trade and Local Entrepreneurs

13 Green Key 1.5 (I)

At present, there are two local businesses in Hetta that create products sourced from nature. One focuses on education to keep the skills and knowledge in the industry and the other is a fledgling company manufacturing natural products from natural ingredients with whom we can partner to share nature's bounty with our clients in the future.

We should probably do more community open days and we could also think about offering 'community experience days' within our products¹⁴ (eg in the free day of the 8 day packages) in which clients could specifically opt to get to know the community, make purchases and use more services – although we effectively do this by having reindeer farm visits, visits to Juhl's Gallery etc suggested, it is just not packaged thus¹⁵. Cultural tourism products usually show little economic leakage in the north where leakage from other tourism sectors may be rampant.

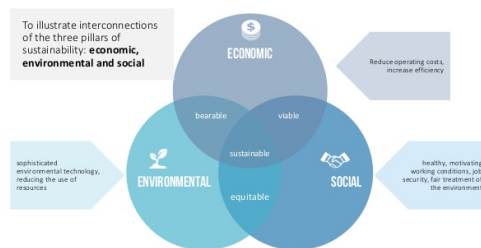
We could also think about offering free dog care seminars for local school classes as a community service, or an after-school club in the spring and autumn - but language might again get in our way. We have identified a lack of summer camps for local children and that is something we hope to change by offering adventurous camps next year.

In terms of the indirect (aka less obvious to the general public but no less important) positive economic impacts from our company to the community, the fact that we are a well-run, sustainable and respected business that serves nearly 18000 tourists per year, can help the municipality in financially justifying improved infrastructure (roads, public utilities, transport links and services etc). Local governments decide upon developments which they believe will either attract visitors, increase tourist numbers, or better serve those who are already arriving¹⁶.

In accordance with the economic pillar of sustainability, a business must be profitable for it to be sustainable. This need for profitability often ensures that sustainability-targeted changes often need to be phased in as opposed to being adopted instantaneously. The economic pillar of sustainability also incorporates compliance, risk management and proper governance – which essentially means that the company's interests need to align with the interests of its community, value chains and end-user, that its accounting methods are transparent, etc.

PRINCIPLES

Sustainability Models: Venn Diagram



Source: Hodge Majer

PRESENTATIONLOAD
Presentations made easy

Economical sustainability aims to align human activities with environmental requirements so that tourism will promote regional welfare and enhance growth. Travel businesses benefit their community by employing locals and therefore creating tax income for the region. In an ideal world, sustainable businesses make long-term plans and put environmentally critical investments and lasting, fixable purchases ahead of quick financial gains.

Finland's national tourism strategy sees improving profitability and the ability to invest as the cornerstones of economical sustainability for businesses. The travel industry has a significant role in Finland's economy and is the strongest-growing employer in export-related fields. Finnish tourism has started on a road to success that is lined with people and set in genuine natural surroundings. Success requires financial stability, proper education and support for entrepreneurs. Finland has made the strategic decision to aim for niche markets instead of the mass tourism that has been at the heart of Lapland's early tourism infrastructure growth. Venture capital investors around the world are expected to be drawn to Finland's selective approach and improved profitability, which in turn should reduce the need for investments loans. Economical sustainability demands that all investments are considered and in line with the other factors of sustainability

Local zoning, design and siting

We comply with land use zoning¹⁷ by obtaining all relevant documentation on permitted land uses from the competent authorities and acting according to land use regulations.

We comply with environmental protection zoning. We know the area in which we operate, well, and know the regulations and requirements pertaining to each protected area¹⁸ and we obviously ensure that any land we are buying has clear titles of ownership¹⁹.

We ensure that we gain rights of access from landowners whenever you need them for our activities and try to cultivate good relationships with those whose land we cross.

We respect natural and cultural heritage surroundings and ensure that the building and other infrastructure included in your investment reflect to the natural and cultural environment, by using, for example, local materials and local architectural styles²⁰.

Gates are closed behind us – apart from when they cross trails and shouldn't be there (we open one wire reindeer fence at the start of every season since it blocks a frequently used snowmobile trail).

We mark our most frequented safari routes with non-permanent natural stake markings which we produce from tree thinning exercises in the Spring.

¹⁴ Green Key 1.5 (I)

¹⁵ ECOT B3 and B4 Fair-Trade and Local Entrepreneurs

¹⁶ Green Activities 1.2 (I)

¹⁷ ECOT A.6.1. Local zoning

¹⁸ ECOT A.6.1. Local zoning

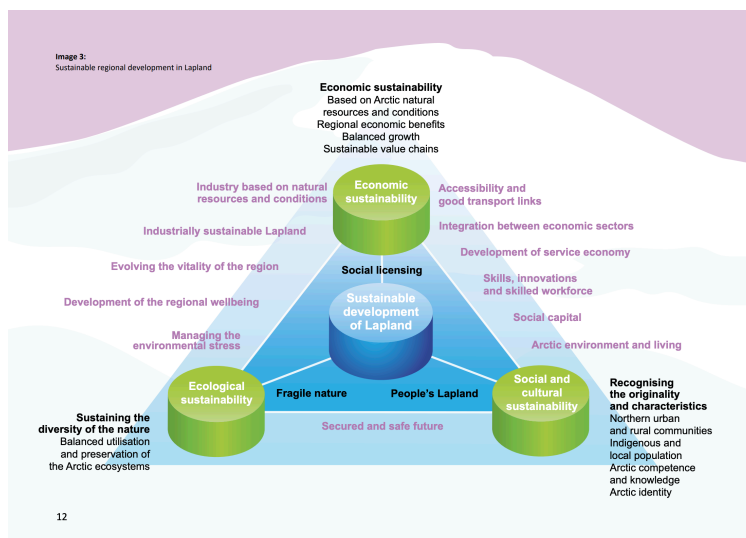
¹⁹ ECOT A.6.2. Design and siting

²⁰ ECOT A.6.2. Design and siting

In terms of our own collaborative actions locally, we have been active for lobbying (for a number of years!) for infrastructure development that would not only make access to our farm safer for those clients who come to us by foot down an unlit road with no footpath but which would also make travel to and from school / dog walking etc, safer for all locals.

BUILDING REGIONAL CAPACITY

It does not matter how good a company we are, how much better our products may or may not be than those offered by other comparative companies or how high our standards are, if there are few tourists coming to the region as a whole. Whilst we do generate a substantial amount of business directly or through tourism operators, it is important for the long-term future of the area that the infrastructure needed to grow this vital market is improved upon, that clear marketing strategies are determined and that a wide range of products, transport and accommodation options are available.



Whilst the general perception about tourists coming to Lapland is that they come to a destination as opposed to a business, I am not sure how true that is of the foreign tourism market in Enontekiö. The majority of our private winter customers come to the region because of us and then the accommodation providers and other service providers benefit as a result. There are an increasing number of smaller operators interested in the region because of its lack of larger players. However, many summer visitors simply passing through and are definitely not here because of either us or the region – they are simply set on Nord cap as a destination goal.

Those who come here in winter as part of big tour groups often start their holiday selection by choosing a trusted international company with whom to travel and then that company in turn decides on which of their many Finnish destinations they will send that client to, linked to their priority locations. We are more an overflow than a priority location for most of the larger companies but regardless of this, it is important that the area gains a reputation for quality and that it also determines what other reputation it wants to create as an entity. To that end, the whole network of tourism actors that serves the traveler needs to function well and be of good quality and all actors in the region should have a commitment to producing memorable quality experiences. How the whole system functions together impacts on the service image of our travel destination. (Susanna Jänkälä, *The Employment and Economic Centre of Lapland, Finland.*)

To this end, Pasi spends between c. 40 hours of his time, per month, voluntarily participating in EU and local municipality-driven projects working towards the long-term viability of the area as a whole (identifying target markets, planning marketing strategies etc)²¹. He has played many roles regionally: for instance, as chairman of Enontekiö's Entrepreneur's Association, a board member of Enontekiö Development Ltd²², a member of the Enontekiö / True Lapland marketing group, the Revontuli Opisto group (which provides ongoing educational services to adults in the region) and the municipality healthcare board²³. He has been a substitute member for the regional Environmental Health Board and sits on the national Survival Guild Finland board as well as being a member of Survival Guild Finland's 'masters council'²⁴.

Pasi has also been part of the KKTM EU leader group deciding funding for Fell Lapland and on the steering group for three projects; a group that focuses on attracting immigrants to work in Western Lapland, a project called 'Destination Enontekiö'. He was also both a board member and MD of Hetta's small Ski Resort and was also on the board of the Fell Lapland Travel Association²⁵.

The work that Pasi does towards strengthening the community within the municipality also benefits tourism. Communities are not the only beneficiaries of a cooperative relationship with tourism businesses; healthy communities make better tourism destinations. Appreciative communities make better hosts to visitors. Loyalty is two-sided. Enontekiö is a little challenged in this way because of the numerous fractures within the society linked to very different stakeholder groups' needs within this frontier community. Hence, developing a functioning and cooperative community is simply a long-term goal²⁶.

Anna takes part in EU English-speaking projects and does a lot of work in the background, contributing to project meetings that the company is part of, and was briefly on the board of Enontekiö's Voluntary Rescue Services but language is a huge barrier. As a company we have supported numerous regional EU projects including the establishment of a [Village to Village](#) project designed to develop cooperation between the villages and service providers in the vicinity of the area's national park. During this process we were one of a handful of companies visited by Metsähallitus and a Europarc representative baselining the level of current environmental practices in the businesses around the park. This, in turn, led to the Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park gaining [Europarc status](#) in 2013 and we became part of a small pool of local 'National Park Guides' who took part in a training program and accreditation program to be able to guide in the park and to communicate about nature and sustainability therein²⁷. The hope is that with better local area knowledge, the companies can encourage tourists to increase the length of the average visit to the area, to enhance responsible tourism in this destination (aka around the park) and to the benefit of the wider local economy.

²¹ ECOT A2 Legal Compliance, Greenkey 4.10

²² Green Key 1.5 (I)

²³ Green Activities 1.2 (I) and 1.5 (I)

²⁴ ECOT B1 Community Development

²⁵ Green Key 1.1 (I)

²⁶ Often those who are not directly involved in the tourism business imagine that operators are deriving huge profits while sharing very little with the community. Either 'hard feelings' build up, or excessive demands are made. This is more likely to happen in small remote villages where residents are not experienced in running businesses nor have an understanding of businesses finances. Many costs go into running a tourism operation (say an outfitting package) than are obvious to the general public. Attending consumer shows, brochure development and distribution costs, advertisement design and placement, travel related to marketing, commissions paid to wholesalers, equipment maintenance and replacement costs, fuel costs, telephone, fax and computer costs, taxes, and endless hours of work on the part of the owner, are only some of the expenses which must be paid out of the revenues received from clients.

²⁷ Green Key 1.5 (I)

This project aligned with our general support for the establishment of protected areas such as national parks and reserves to safeguard the finest wildlife and scenery and our aim to be part of the integration of local community and tourism needs into the long-term plan for these areas.

Our region has signed up to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism program. This, in turn, raised the international importance for nature tourism in the region which was one of the original goals of the marketing group for Enontekiö when we first came to the region and brainstormed with the municipality about how we saw the area developing sustainably in the years to come. The charter park development project has been successful in bringing together nature tourism and entrepreneurs in the development of sustainable nature tourism in protected areas.

In addition to the above, CAPE Lapland (our parent company) was part of an EU project called Region Arctica which was essentially started to increase trans-border tourism cooperation between providers in this area (ie within a few hundred kilometres of us, in both Finland, Sweden and Norway). Pasi was part of the steering group that set up this project. Traditionally, companies in this region have worked more or less in isolation. However, as access to hire cars in the area is facilitated and as regional airports offer more flight options, tourists are more open to the option of travelling to see more than one country at once so knowledge of the wider potential for tourists within the area as a whole is to the benefit of all. More recently we have been part of both the first and second round of a Visit Arctic Europe Project with similar goals²⁸

We have also been part of a safety network project whose aim has been to improve safety standards in northern-area tourism²⁹ by sharing best practices and tools for both the service providers and their staff. The company has also participated in the Ounasjoki water-tourism based project and the initial stages of a mountain biking network development project.

Our company was also part of the first sleddog-specific EU project targeted at driving higher safety and quality standards within husky companies in Lapland. Developing communication platforms between the providers was a key goal since the participants understood the need to come together and to both share best practice and to decide a common ground in terms for the industry. Sleddogs are one of the leading attractions to tourists and yet they had no common voice in terms of accepted standards and the right to operate / the ongoing development of a stable, approved network for sleddog activities in the region³⁰.

Our staff have attended these meetings – primarily during their working hours - whenever possible (although we haven't kept a tally of their hours spent in such developmental projects (in fact, I am specifically against recording such things...it seems to go against the essence of the action itself, despite this being a requirement by Greenkey 4.10)³¹. One outcome from this project was the establishment of the Northern Sleddog Entrepreneur's Association. Dog sledding is considered of low importance, at present, when it comes to decision-making by those in the Ministry of Forestry and Environment. Whilst it makes sense to us that reindeer herders have high priority in decision making, it is unclear why snowmobiling takes priority over more natural activities like sledding and skiing – particularly given that dog sledding is one of the key drivers of international tourism in the region. Hence, building bridges and understanding as to why dog sledding operations should be taken into consideration when making decisions about area use targets is of vital importance to the long-term sustainability of the region.

We are still part of Visit Arctic Europe, a project in which tourism operators in northern Scandinavia work together to develop tourism in the northern regions of Finland, Sweden and Norway. The project, coordinated by the Lapland Tourism Industry Association (LME), based on a study they commissioned in 2014, aimed to increase the number of tourists in the region by developing northern Scandinavia as a unified tourist destination.

The project partners are the Finnish Lapland Tourist Industry Association (LME), the Swedish Lapland Visitors Board and the Northern Norway Tourist Board in addition to c. 90 companies from Finland, Sweden and Norway and Interreg North. The project was awarded the Arctic Award in a category called 'Overcoming critical mass' in 2017³².

The focus of the three-year project was on tourism marketing, strengthening the networks of tourism operators in the region and improving accessibility. The study found that tourism operators in the region share the same challenges and that there is a demand for common tourist destinations in the northern regions.

In the first two years of the project there were c. 69,000 new tourists in the area and more than 500,000 new overnight stays. Whilst a high percentage of this growth would probably have occurred organically without the project, new cross-border package tours have definitely resulted. In addition, there was a boost to international marketing of the Arctic region (for instance with the fact sheet provided here) and the participating companies made new contacts and cross-border business connections were established³³. A second phase of the project was joined by an additional 30 companies and focused on off-peak tourism enhancement, strengthening the image of the region as a pioneer in sustainable tourism, further developing accessibility and digitalisation."

Regional Cooperation Needs between Stakeholders

Regional cooperation between businesses will become more vital as tourist numbers increase. When it comes to the dog sled businesses in particular, an important aspect of securing their long-term viability will be linked to the outcome of negotiations with reindeer herders and other land users over protecting their access to an operational route network. Cooperation should clearly support the northern region's natural and cultural values and provide customers with authentic northern experiences and clearly consumers want access to both reindeer farms and sleddog enterprises (and snowmobiles and the ski track network - and some of these use the same trails!). Even though securing cooperation between the various stakeholders is likely to be a challenging process and one which will need to be handled sensitively, the risk factor involved in avoiding such discussions is potentially too high for each of the industries.

²⁸ ECOT B1 Community Development

²⁹ ECOT B1 Community Development

³⁰ ECOT A2 Legal Compliance

³¹ Greenkey 4.10

³² <https://www.interreg-npa.eu/arctic-cooperation/arctic-awards/>

³³ One shortfall with VAE as opposed to Region Arctica has been that the focus has been on bringing new companies into the region as opposed to expanding B2B knowledge and sales potential within the region.

As cooperation between the northern business grows and the stability of their operations increases, the cultural and environmental risk that currently exists from the sleddog companies travelling north to work in the area just in peak seasons should hopefully decrease. Those who live and work year-round in any given area have an incentive to ensure that the trails are, for instance, disease free, and that the needs of their neighbours are respected. Companies visiting for only a short time have less incentive to invest in, or care about the cultural issues or nature in an area.

In 2014, for instance, Santa Safaris / Transun (a UK company) chose to bring a Swedish company to Enontekiö for the short winter season rather than using local businesses and they unfortunately carried kennel cough with them and infected some local dogs - thus putting all of the area's dogs (not just sleddogs) at risk. This disease is periodically a big risk to the whole industry since farms with kennel cough should theoretically close their doors and let the dogs just rest until it has passed through. In reality, there is so much pressure to make them earn their keep during the few short months when it is possible that the farms are likely to hide the fact that they have the disease and hope for the best in terms of the long term health of the dogs. A healthier model for sharing trails between the sleddog companies would be the one that is being developed in Alta for 2016 in which the farms are working towards an agreement to give an additional nasal vaccine to all of the dogs sharing the same trails during the same time frame - and to communicate with each other if any farm sees any symptoms of their challenging illness. That level of cooperation is definitely something to aim for, in each sleddog area, in the future.

The risk from outside operators is not just, however, in terms of disease. Trail access is such a sensitive subject - particularly in the Saami areas - that it is vital that those using the trails respect the shared need of local stakeholders.

Trail-Use Planning

Whilst driving huskies privately or with clients falls under 'everyman's right' in Finnish law (ie we have the same access rights to trails and open huts, in general, as walkers, skiers and bikers powered by non-mechanized means), and we do not, therefore, need permits in order to operate, we still negotiate our route access³⁴ with local people in order to ensure that we impact as little as possible on any traditional activities.

This subject is quite a hot topic locally but official statements by the Ministry of Environment (which is above the Ministry of Forestry which allocates permits and works between stakeholder groups, locally), makes the position quite clear ³⁵ Pasi also spent time talking with Pekka Tuunanen, the Environment Counsellor for the Ministry of the Environment, prior to setting up the business here, so as to gain an absolutely clear understanding of the current rules, regulations and rights of owners of sleddogs and sleddog businesses (since the everymans' right also applies to enterprises running sleddogs, until such time as preparing tracks by snowmobiles (outside of everymans' rights) comes into play, to ensure that we would (more than) comply with whatever was needed³⁶.

Since outside companies and private individuals visiting the region to run their sleddogs do not necessarily understand the local issues or sensitivities, they might, for instance, use trails that the reindeer herders have specifically asked the sleddog companies to steer clear of, during calving time, thus increasing resentment unnecessarily between the industries. That is definitely one challenging aspect of assigning access to trail networks since the fear for the herders is that if the dogs are allowed to run on more and more trails, their herd will be impacted.

Visiting private sleddog owners tend to pretty much go where they want irrespective of the needs of the herders whilst the companies residing in the area who have chosen to be collaborative rather than to follow everyman's rights, become restricted to such a tiny track network that when the reindeer herders ask them to take alternative routes to avoid reindeer movements, they often have no routes open to them. All of these issues need careful consideration in order to safeguard the development of the northern industries in a sustainable manner in the face of a growing tourism need.

Huskies and reindeer coexisting is relatively new concept to reindeer herders and, as with many traditional groups, they have to see the new reality functioning without incident before fully coming to understand it. At the moment, we run a very limited number of clearly defined trails with the dogs through the season - almost to their detriment, since it impacts on the fun and stimulation they can have during their training season. We take a long-term view on this, however, in an attempt to challenge the perception that husky companies and reindeer herders can only coexist uneasily. We believe that once people understand how committed we are to our dogs and the local community, an understanding of huskies will grow, fear of the unknown will subside and we will be able to negotiate wider trail access for, for instance, times outside of calving seasons.

There are other route access challenges from recent legislation which arose from congested 'traffic' causing potential hazards in large tourist centres. In many tourist centres, snowmobiles, huskies, skiers etc are no longer able to use the same trails (whereas they all co-exist without issue in many similar parts of the world). This might make sense in a busy tourist centre but in Enontekiö, if we did not open the snowmobile trails in our area between December and February, no-one would since the responsibility for opening tracks is shared between two or three different bodies, all of whom are lacking in time and resources³⁷.

Here, we have no issues with co-trail use so hopefully legislation won't mandate something that would have a huge impact on track maintenance. Our short safari trails criss-cross along the local area snowmobile trails and established reindeer herder's trails so we create both the main tracks and sliproutes in case of snowmobilers needing to go past us when we are out with the dogs. If we did not open these short safari trails ourselves, many of the trails would either not be open to anyone for much of the winter - to the detriment of the region - or people would have to open these (with the linked ecological impact of additional fuel and time cost) in addition to the ones we would have to open just nearby. Similarly, our multiday safari routes would have to be completely renegotiated since they now follow the snowmobile trails through the tundra and pass by the only accessible cabins that are available for use.

³⁴ ECOT A6.1 Local Zoning

³⁵ Koiravaljakolla ajaminen on jokamiehenoikeutta, siinä missä muikin motorisoimaton liikkuminen. Vähistä suurempaa haittaa ei kuitenkaan saa aiheuttaa toisen omaisuudelle. Mm. latuja ei saa sotkea.

³⁶ Sillä, että toisen maalla toimitaan kaupallisella periaatteella tai muutoin järjestäytyneesti, ei ole merkitystä jokamiehenoikeuksien kannalta. Eli liiketoimintaa saa harjoittaa toisen maalla jokamiehenoikeudella, jos siitä ei aiheudu vähäistä suurempaa haittaa (rikoslain hallinnanloukkaussykälä). Siis lupia ei tarvita. Jos liiketoiminta on tärkeää, on käytännössä syytä neuvotella maanomistajan kanssa toimintaolosuhteista.

³⁷ ECOT A6.1 & A6.2 Local Zoning & Design and Siting

This is a sound decision ecologically, culturally and also practically since opening trails after snowstorms is a huge amount of work and this way, the work is shared and the clients are therefore safer. I also doubt that the herders would prefer having to steer clear of two sets of trails going through the tundra, rather than just one. Top-down legislation doesn't always function at a local level.

Whenever possible, we think about the surfaces we are travelling across and camping on, to ensure that they are durable. Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses and snow. Summer paths in this area are restricted to higher sandy ridges or rocky outcrops whereas winter routes traverse the landscape and cross marsh, rivers and lakes. Summer walking is generally done in single file, since the dogs are invariably learning to pull in a straight line. Hence, we do not contribute to path erosion but, rather, help to maintain the trails in good condition.

A general underlying principle is to 'conserve the present'; in other words, we close gates behind us and we mark our routes with non-permanent natural stake markings (which are collected back in at the end of the seasons) for the sake of safety. We also think carefully about what we remove from the natural environment in terms of rocks, fauna etc.

Respect for farm animals and wildlife

This area is full of wild animals – from bear to fox, to wolf to wolverine. A couple of bear hibernate within 5km of our dog farm and we know that there are fox living between our farmhouse and the dog farm. Rabbit and lemmings come out to play in the Spring, along with many mice, voles and numerous birds. We talk to all tourists about arctic wildlife and how amazing it is to live in an area where all of these animals coexist with us, as part of each and every farm tour. Reindeer are obviously the most important animals in the area and we understand their life cycles and when it is particularly important for them to not be disturbed by dogs. We don't feed wildlife although we do have bird houses scattered around our yard since otherwise they use the eaves of the farmhouse itself. We conserve the present; all rocks, flowers, plants, animals and natural habitats are left as we find them and we try to leave things behind us as they were (apart from for rubbish)³⁸.

Product Planning

Whenever a new product is being considered, we haven't specifically re-designed our initial business plan. However, we do assess its possible impacts on both the environment and the local community. Judgements are made based on the scope and duration of the activity, the size of the group targeted and the area covered.

Cumulative impacts that would arise from the product being executed multiple times are considered, to see if there would be any detrimental impact on other activities in the area. The technology and procedures available for environmentally safe operations are identified and we make a decision as to whether we have the capacity to monitor key environmental parameters and ecosystem components to identify any early warning signs of both predicted and unforeseen potential adverse effects of the activity. Operating procedures are modified accordingly.

A general principle across all products that minimises their environmental impact and increases their safety margin, is that we keep numbers as low as possible and this target for small group individual travellers aligns with our area's identified target clients. It is thought that individual adventure travellers who respect the land and have a love of nature-based tourism are the ideal fit for the area in terms of what it immediately has to offer (wilderness location, outdoor products and natural lifestyle holidays).

Overnight Locations & minimising campfire impact

Finnish Lapland has a large number of shelters and cabins dotted around the wilderness that are either privately owned, exclusively for the use of reindeer herders (supplied through the Ministry of Forestry) or designated for tourism purposes. Some of the tourism-targeted cabins are bookable. Others serve the last group to turn up. Some are restricted to skiers and some, rather bizarrely, are restricted to skiers and snowmobilers but dog-mushers are either not permitted access or access is permitted but with the dogs kept so far away, that it is hard to ensure the welfare of the dogs.

When we create our products, we attempt to do so around existing structures and prefer not to establish new camps in the wilderness unless we are travelling with tents and tiny groups – for instance during our survival courses³⁹.

We always protect water quality by camping at least 30m from lakes and streams and we aim to always leave camps and huts in as good condition as when we found it, if not better. Whilst we like the concept of using open huts and whilst some clients are happy to take a gamble on sleeping in a cabin or, if full, a tent, most clients are not willing to entail this level of uncertainty, hence this further restricts our products to routes which can incorporate bookable huts and private accommodation and this is an important safety factor.

For instance, we generally cook over lightweight camping stoves rather than over fires, and rarely use fires on the trail, even though that is part of the culture, since we think that fires made close to winter tracks can cause risk to others travelling on them. If we do make fires in the wilderness, we try to use established fire rings whenever possible or create fire mounds. We keep the fires small and use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand on the rare occasion when there is no firewood in place in huts etc. Fires are burnt to ash and put out completely and then the cool ashes are scattered.

We always protect water quality by camping at least 30m from lakes and streams and we aim to always leave camps and huts in as good condition as when we found them, if not better.

³⁸ ECOT A.6.1. Local zoning

³⁹ ECOT A.6.2. Design and siting

So What Does all of this Mean?

The environmental and social implications of our actions as a company have been considered from the very beginning. As a small family company we haven't had the financial potential to always follow best practices (for instance installing geothermal energy) but we have taken progressive action in many areas as we have grown in both size and security.

We have a commitment to continuing to baseline our processes and to improving our actions, whenever possible, in the forthcoming years. This document is essentially, at present, just a dumping ground of all of the varied documents and communication touch points that we have dealing with sustainability. One big target for next year would simply be to tidy it up!

A. McGmack