

**SMART (Sustainable Model for Arctic Regional Tourism) –project
FINAL SEMINAR, Pyhänturi, Finland October 25th -27th, 2005**

SUMMARY

“Selling the Arctic Dream”

DAY ONE

In the opening of the seminar park director *Pertti Itkonen* made a presentation on the *Pyhä-Luosto national park*. In his presentation, he also pointed out some principles of sustainable tourism implemented by Natural Heritage Services of Finland.

Monica Edmondson, A glass artist from northern Sweden talked about her Arctic Dream. The reindeer have been leading the path for Monica Edmondson in her choices in the life. Glass has been the most interesting material for her. The transparency of the glass is the most powerful factor in the glass art. Part of the arctic dream for Monica is longing for winter. Arctic dream became one step closer when the opening of first solar show took place. Sámi traditions are also leading forces for Monica. Colors are very important. With a picture show Monica described her own development and her business development from past towards the future.

Janne Anttila from *Arctic Safaris* made a presentation on how to sell the Arctic Dream. Sustainability is one of the foundations of the company. Just recently the issue of sustainability has come up in the discussions with the company stakeholders. Arctic Safaris is not purely an activity provider. An important function is operating as an Arctic DMC (Destination Management Company). One of the main owners of the company comes from the southern part of Finland.

Arctic Safaris is successfully combining business and the feeling of the Arctic. There is large market potential to share with many companies. One of the biggest tour operators brought 12.000 people in Lapland. That amount is not the clientele of one DMC only. At present the company has 50.000 guests in a year; 19.000 starts on snowmobiles, which means the policy is to have two passengers on each snowmobile. The importance of the Christmas season is crucial: 30% of annual turnover comes during December. The company receives 100 charter planes annually.

There are 5 persons working in sales and marketing all year round. Due to the large number of customers, there are different market expectations on the arctic dream. The strategy of Arctic Safaris for the future is to turn the Arctic Dream in to Active Dream. The strategy is derived from the vision of experience & activity centers. The role of local subcontractors is very important for Arctic Safaris and other major operators in Rovaniemi area. Customer feedback method is actively used in product development and continuous quality management. For Arctic Safaris operation the Arctic Dream means

- An active dream
- Unique nature experiences



- An authentic opportunity to learn
- It is based on traditions
- Full of interesting stories
- It makes you laugh and join
- It is served with a smile and professionalism

There also has to be dream makers, because it is a question of how to fulfil the dreams. The personnel are important in the ideology of delivering the dream. The Arctic Dream is a combination of makers, experiences and services.

It is important to know the expectations of the customers, to be able to fulfil their dreams. People have different dreams.

The Arctic Safaris presentation created discussion and raised some questions, for example:

- Is the operation sustainable?
- The role of subcontractors
- Effect on local economy
- Are we using right kind of tour operators? Are they mass tourism operators? (We need special interest operators in the Arctic areas)
- For some companies the level of being a subcontractor might be enough of ambition
- Sales operations in North America are not that organized as in Europe

The seminar participants discussed the topic “What is the Arctic”. The Arctic is viewed as something special and different from other destinations. This question we also need to ask from the tourists.

DAY TWO

The presentations from Geraldine Van – Bibber from Yukon First Nations Tourism Association and Venera Niyazova from Yamalo- Nenets autonomous district, Russia was heard. The indigenous people in Yukon are not that much involved in tourism business. The season in Canada is mostly focused on summer as well as in Yamalo- Nenets, where the industry is quite young but having good opportunities in the nature and culture.

WORKSHOP “Marketing the Arctic Dream”: Host Peter Lugnegård

Keynote Johanna Danielsson / R&D.

Johanna Danielsson brought up some key points for successful tourism development. Potential tourism destination has to be attractive (landscape, nature, climate, culture, history), it has to have amenities (accommodation, restaurants, infrastructure, services) and a good accessibility (transportation, easy to reach / reachable = easy to book). The distribution chain is changing towards electronic sales. The distribution chain is shorter than it used to be.

The situation with customer demand for ecotourism / ecolabels nowadays is affected by the fact that there are more than 60 ecolabels in tourism, most of them in Europe. Most important motivation factor for customers still is value for money. Landscape and scenery are also important and the price, convenience and experiences are increasing.

Ecolabels help customers to find what they want. They offer

- Information
- Comparison
- Guarantee (of quality)
- Image
- Also indication of product being more expensive

Ecolabels should not be marketed as such, but always remember that it is about quality. When offering packages, we are not promoting just suppliers that are operating in a sustainable way, but also interesting packages. Put the fun factor on top and use the environmental and other factors as interesting extras. Customers are looking for good experiences, with sustainability factors affecting in the background.

Viabono could be mentioned as a good example www.viabono.de. It is a German label with:

- Moduled product packages
- 450 packages: wellness, families, canoeing...
- Costs: 500 €/ year. Yearly turnover 10-50000€
- Gets financial support through government
- Goal: independent 2007 (possibly getting international AUT)
- 1300 visitors on web daily
- 2/3 choose to look at the special packages
- Printed catalogue of 30.000 copies.

Keys of success:

- Offer packages, not only sustainable working suppliers.
- Offer interesting packages of high quality - environmental factors are important extras.

WORKSHOP “Reaching for Excellence”: Hosts Peter Lugnegård and Maureen Bundgaard

Conditions for creating a tourism quality label / certification can be described in a triangle:



Training modules:

- Sharing sustainable tourism knowledge in the arctic
- Training centered round SMART principles
- Training modules are living documents

- Updating hopefully on annual basis
- SMART has produced Trainers' manual for now
- Creation of Learners' manual up to respective countries

WORKSHOP "Key to sustainable development": host Håkan Landström. Key-note speaker: Nils Torbjörn Nutti

History and background of Nutti Sámi Siida

The tourism business started 10-15 years ago. Nils-Torbjörn wanted to keep the reindeer and find another way to finance the reindeer herding. The ice hotel was getting attractive and growing in the Village of Jukkasjärvi. Nils-Torbjörn found out that the people were interested in reindeer. This is how Nils-Torbjörn became a reindeer herder and a tourism entrepreneur. Tourism is a way to sustain the Sámi identity. It is also a way to market Sámi traditions and it involves wider development within the Sámi community. Some of the traditions are disappearing and for example food traditions change naturally. Nutti Sámi Siida actively promotes networking in the community, especially with the Sámi people.

Tourism has both good and bad effects. At the same time it is a source of living and and on the other hand there is a risk of reaching a level of mass tourism. The Ice hotel with 50 000 guests may risk the silence and sustainability. It needs to be thought, how to make it in a sustainable way and prevent the Mallorca phenomenon in the North.

WORKSHOP on Networking: host Miriam Geitz

As a summary can be said that, networking:

- Is a voluntary action
- Is used to reach efficiency
- Is one of the means to get more clients
- Can be done for saving costs
- Between operators / networks between associations
- In accessing the area
- Natural networking (between "friends") / subcontracting
- Clusters of companies uniting the efforts
- As a strategy
- In product development
- University of the Arctic: Networking sharing the idea of home-like arctic
- Can open some doors that used to be closed before
- Membership in Sustainable Arctic Tourism Association will provide a possibility for networking
- Network has to be based on mutual trust and confidence
- Clients also have their role in networking as ambassadors

DAY THREE

WORKSHOP “Selling the Arctic Dream / Future of SMART project”: host Mike Couvrette and Geraldine Van-Bibber

The SMART project tools for selling the Arctic dream:

- Principles and their guidelines
- Training modules
- A Sustainable Arctic Tourism Label
- SATA (Sustainable Arctic Tourism Association)

Group discussions I

Commercializing the label + what will work for operators

Future perspectives and the road map to success (e.g. regional programs, accreditation, membership)

Group A

- New idea to have SATA as an international body
- Bylaws
- National chapters
- Marketing tool for operators and by operators
- Is it a benefit to join the association?
- Is it viable?

Group B

- Complement the results of group 1
- A willingness to work for SATA
- Operators have feel they get a return on investment
- Marketing as a main factor, sustainability as background factor
- Sustainability more in visibility
- It should not be focusing ecotourism niche market
- Label has to sell in two fronts: in tourism / for tourists
- Value is the circumpolar aspect (marketing + networking)
- A possible joint electronic marketing platform
- Arctic "lovers" club. Club members as ambassadors
- Market place is brand itself.
- Label: Certification + marketing (emphasis on marketing)
- The label has to be within the reach of operators.
- Some mean for operators to access online.

Group discussions II

Climate change

Group 1

- We should develop our own knowledge on climate change
- We should provide information to the tourists about the climate change - through that gradually change opinions
- It is the responsibility of an operator at all to concern about climate change
- Each operator has responsibility and show positive example
- Each operator can change their ways of operations
- Accurate information on climate and snow conditions in the arctic

Group 2

- Climate change is happening
- Is it going to change expectations? - yes
- Education will cost more - cost finally to the customer
- The tourists need extended information on climate change
- Information towards decision makers
- Promote the environmental visits
- Tourism mentors
- Some responsibility with operators also (not totally quilty though)
- Tourism industry has to unite - positive power towards decision makers