

Lapland University Consortium



# Interregional Tourism Cooperation: Experiences from the Barents



Edited by

José-Carlos García-Rosell • Maria Hakkarainen • Heli Ilola  
Petra Paloniemi • Teija Tekoniemi-Selkälä • Mari Vähäkuopus

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# Preface

*Mari Vähäkuopus<sup>1</sup> & Maria Hakkarainen<sup>1</sup>*

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region is characterized by high diversity and extensive territory. The region consists of 13 municipalities located in the northernmost parts of Sweden, Norway, Finland and North-West Russia. Around five and a half million people live in this area, among them indigenous people like Sámi, Nenets, Vepsians and Komi, scattered in an area of 1,755,800 sq. km. The arctic climate, exotic midnight sun, dark polar nights, northern lights, cold winters, vast natural resources and diverse cultural heritage offer both a fertile but also a challenging ground for tourism development.

Over the years the economic and social role of tourism has not only gained higher recognition, but it is also expected to increase in the near future. Millions of visitors are annually attracted to the Barents Region, generating billions of euros and tens of thousands of jobs. While tourism will continue to grow in the future, visitor arrivals may not be equally distributed across the municipalities of the Barents Region. Indeed, the high degree of heterogeneity – in terms of business culture, levels of tourism development, infrastructure, legislation and human capacity – characterizing the tourism industry in the Barents Region seems not only to be hindering interregional cooperation but also to be preventing some municipalities from the socio-economic benefits of tourism.

This collection of articles is one of the results of the Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism (BART), a European Union funded project aiming to strengthen and enhance cross-border tourism cooperation between the public and private tourism sector. The project idea arose out of the need to improve the information exchange on the education and training systems, to strengthen the existing networks and to raise the use of resources and the level of know-how throughout the Barents Region. There was also a need to increase the visibility of the Barents Joint Working Group on Tourism as a promoter of joint tourism development in the Barents Region. While many cross-border tourism development initiatives have been implemented within the Barents Region, BART involved a wide range of tourism stakeholders (authorities, educational institutions, businesses, business supporting organizations) from all four countries of the Barents Region: Finland, Russia, Sweden and Norway.

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<sup>1</sup> Multidimensional Tourism Institute (MTI), Rovaniemi

The BART project was funded under the Kolarctic ENPI CBC Programme 2007–2013 and was aimed to promote tourism development in the Barents by:

- conducting a detailed analysis of the current state of the tourism industry in the Barents Region;
- analysing existing tourism expertise in higher educational institutions in the Barents Region;
- assessing needs and expectations of tourism entrepreneurs regarding tourism knowledge;
- stimulating research and development cooperation by supporting joint research work and initiating joint publications; and establishing and monitoring Monchegorsk Tourism Information Center in the Murmansk region as a learning environment for the public-private partnership.

The partners in the Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism (BART) project were *the Multidimensional Tourism Institute* as a Lead Partner and *the Regional Council of Lapland* from Finland, *the Luleå University of Technology* from Sweden and *the Barents Institute, University of Tromsø* from Norway. From Russia, the Murmansk Region, the partners were *the Ministry of Economic Development of the Murmansk Region, Murmansk State Humanities University, Murmansk State Technical University* and *Monchegorsk Town Authority*. And from Russia, the Arkhangelsk Region, the partners were *the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Sports and Tourism of the Arkhangelsk Region* and *Northern (Arctic) Federal University*.

The first three articles of the collection illustrate the regional tourism development in the Barents Region. In their article, Espiritu and Skaansar introduce the results of interviews conducted during the project among tourism SMEs in Northern Norway and pay special attention to the challenges and obstacles of the cross-border cooperation in tourism and the position of tourism among other industries in Norway. Koptev, Zarubina, Silinskaya, Sinitskiy and Podoplekin present the current challenges and future trends of tourism in Arkhangelsk, Russia. They emphasize the implications of tourism education and research for the future development of

the tourism industry in the region. Utyuzhnikova and Shatskaya describe the background and prevailing situation of tourism development in Monchegorsk. Special attention is given to the Monchegorsk Tourism Information Centre, which was a concrete result of one of the activities of the BART project.

The following articles continue the debate on regional development reflecting the lessons learnt during a benchmarking trip organized to Montenegro and Italy in the Adriatic Sea Region. The purpose of the benchmarking trip was to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities of planning and implementing cross-border cooperation tourism development initiatives. Although Finnish Lapland and Montenegro may seem to have very little in common, the challenges faced by the tourism industry in both the regions are very similar, as Luro states in her article. Zarubina, Demidova, Silinskaya and Kostenevich discuss the role of interregional projects in fostering tourism development. By drawing attention to the concept of hostmanship in relation to the Barents Region and the Adriatic Sea Region, Gelter illustrates a softer dimension of destination development.

The final articles of the collection present perspectives on tourism education and development in the Barents Region. In her article, Ryzhkova discusses about the academic mobility of students as a type of educational tourism in higher education emphasizing the northern dimension. Watz and Enström give a student perspective on tourism development in the Barents Region and share their personal experiences with the BART project. They were two of the many students who were actively involved in the implementation of the BART project. Bohn and Paloniemi draw attention to the high-road approach to tourism development as a way of incorporating tourism into a general development strategy.

This has been a short overview to the project Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism (BART) wrapped around an introduction to the articles in this collection. The articles will have proved to be useful if they help raise the level of debate in interregional tourism development in the Barents Region and foster a heightened level of cooperation and commitment among tourism stakeholders in the northern European region.

# 1. Discourses on Regional Tourism Development: The Case of Northern Norway

*Aileen A. Espíritu<sup>2</sup> & Nora Skaansar<sup>2</sup>*

## Introduction

This article is about the recent development of tourism in the Norwegian High North. It is particularly salient that tourism as an industry is set against the massive industrial and resource extraction activities that dominate economic activities in Northern Norway; mining, oil and gas extraction, and fisheries tend to overshadow tourism in the region. Tourism has been seen in the Norwegian context, in contrast to its neighbour Finland, as a lower priority than extractive industries even though it employs a significant number of people and has the potential to bring in significant revenues to the region and the country as a whole. (Reiseliv@Nord-Norge.) Despite globalization and the relative ease of travel around the world, tourism has not developed massively or industrially (as it has done in Northern Finland) in the Norwegian High North. We question why this is so placed within the context of the pre-eminence of resource extraction as the foundation of economic development in Northern Norway.

In order to elucidate our findings, we have divided this paper to reflect the results of a survey that we administered in the late winter and early spring of 2012 as part of the Kolarctic project Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism (BART). Beginning with a gen-

eral analysis of the surveys, we then move on to the most important and substantial part of the survey that investigates the levels of cooperation among tour operators in the Barents Region, most notably bilateral cooperation between Norway and Russia. Also extant in our analysis is an exposition on the challenges faced by tourism as an industry generally and tour operators specifically in Northern Norway, including a discussion of how some of these challenges may be mitigated.

## Analysing the surveys

Our conclusions are based on a survey that we conducted in 2012 among tourism companies in the counties of Troms and Finnmark in Northern Norway. The purpose of the survey was to get an overview of the current situation of the regional tourism industry and to see how these companies consider the challenges and opportunities for further development of tourism in this region and in the Barents Region as a whole.

The companies that took part in the survey are tour operators, hotels and tourism development organizations operating in Troms and Finnmark. The Northern Norway tourism industry is mainly composed of small, recently established companies that are operating with a vast target group. Many of the companies

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2 Barents Institute, University of Tromsø



interviewed are small in terms of employees and most of them have been established during the last decade. While most of the respondents characterized the economic situation of their business as “good” or “very good”, it was, however, highlighted by many that their economic situation is vulnerable. Almost all of the companies interviewed are working with both leisure and work-related tourism, and as such are operating with a wide target group. With regards to the target group, it was also highlighted by some of the interviewees that they focus, in particular, on people aged over 50 since the activities offered in the region are rather expensive: “Our customers are mostly people over 50 years old, because those who are younger have neither time nor money to come here; our excursions are quite expensive.”

The survey’s three last questions were specific to the regional context of Northern Norway, and the respondents were asked to describe how they perceive and how they advertise their region. A majority of the companies interviewed (9/15) said that they often use the region’s Arctic and High North location in their advertising and in their development of tourism, and 5 out of 15 said they often use the region’s border with Russia for this purpose. In contrast, a large number of the respondents (8/15) said they never (not at all) use the Barents Region identity in their advertising and in their development of tourism. One can only speculate as to why this is without doing more in-depth interviews that include both tourism operators and tourists, but we can conclude, as some of the tour operators themselves have,

that the Barents Region is better known as a political region dominated by the creation of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) through the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and the Norwegian Barents Secretariat.

## Cooperation

One of the issues the survey focused on was the degree of cooperation on the local, regional and international levels in Northern Norway’s tourism industry. The interviewees were asked to describe what kind of cooperation their company is currently involved in, and to evaluate opportunities and difficulties in further developing cooperation on all levels. In this regard, two main issues were highlighted: regional and international cooperation within the Barents Region (and Russian-Norwegian cooperation in particular), and cooperation with the public sector (municipal and county administrations).

### *Barents Region cooperation in tourism*

While a great number of the interviewees said they had a vast cooperation at the local level, only some of them could say the same about the regional and international level (i.e. within the Barents Region). However, a majority of the companies (9/15) said that they saw great potential and many possibilities in developing, or further developing, cooperation within the Barents Region, and that they were open to it. The interviews indicate that an increased and facilitated cross-border cooperation within



*Winter Tourism in Northern Norway – A Crab Safari. Photo taken by Aileen A. Espíritu.*

the Barents Region is important in order to further develop this industry, and many of the interviewees said that intensified cross-border cooperation in tourism would be beneficial to their business. In particular, it was mentioned that this would make it easier to sell the region as a whole, and to fully exploit its possibilities. As one of the respondents put it: “I think the market is interested in experiencing the whole Barents Region.”

Developing cross-border products, products related to the Barents Region as a whole (for example trips and activities that include visits in more than one Barents country), would be a way for the regional tourism industry to expand and to improve its activities. The interviews indicate that cross-border cooperation is “essential” to further development of tourism in the region since this is a way to “learn from those with best practices” and to “develop dialogue in order to be able to sell a cross-border product”.

In fact, a majority of the companies interviewed (11/15) said that they see great potential in the Barents Region as a whole as an international tourist destination. To explain this, factors like the region’s exoticness and the new emerging markets were put forward:

“This region is very interesting, and especially in wintertime. We see a huge increase in winter tourism, especially related to the Northern lights.”

“I think it will become an interesting destination, and that a new market is emerging in Asia.”

However, many of the respondents highlighted a number of obstacles and challenges to further cross-border cooperation within the Barents Region and to developing the Barents Region as an international tourist destination. First of all, language and bureaucracy problems were put forward in this regard. Some of the respondents also mentioned that in order to become an attractive international tourist destination, the regional tourism industry has to improve its consistency in quality and capacity. And one of the interviewees felt that the tourism industry is not yet using the full potential of the region: “I have the impression that today we haven’t fully exploited the possibilities of this region.”

One major problem in making the Barents Region an international tourist destination, as highlighted by a great number of the inter-

viewees, is the branding of the region. As mentioned above, 8 out of the 15 interviewees said they never use the Barents Region identity in their advertising. The interviews revealed the view that it is problematic to use the Barents Region concept in tourism development because, as some of our interviewees aver “it is more of a political term.” Moreover, the overarching sentiment is that it is relatively unfamiliar to those outside the region, with one interviewee arguing that “it is a concept that is unknown for many people”, and that “no one cares about the Barents Region concept in Europe”. This makes this concept very difficult to use in marketing and in tourism development, and it was even said that the “Barents Region is a non-concept when it comes to tourism”, and that “from the point of view of tourism, no one understands what the Barents Region is”.

We found that the tourism companies we surveyed prefer to use the region’s High North/Arctic location and the Russian border over the Barents Region identity in their advertising and their development of tourism. The growth of tourism in Troms and Finnmark is then based on other factors than Barents Region identity, and this represents a challenge when it comes to developing the Barents Region as an international tourist destination that includes all of the Barents countries, despite the willingness to cooperate and share ideas.

#### *Russian-Norwegian cooperation*

One issue that was highlighted in particular by many of the respondents with regard to co-

operation within the Barents Region is the cooperation over the Russian-Norwegian border. Over the last 20 years, since the creation of the Barents Region and the ratification of the Kirkenes Declaration in January 1993, bilateral relations between Norway and Russia have intensified. Significant and costly attempts have been made by Norwegian businesses, local and national governments, and ordinary citizens to develop meaningful business cooperation, joint ventures, and investments across the immediate border region in Pechenga and further afield to Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, but so far there have been few results or successes. Much more successful have been large joint-venture cooperative operations between large companies such as Statoil and Rosneft (Statoil, Rosneft finalize joint venture deals 2012).

Russian-Norwegian bilateral cooperation was described by some of the interviewees as particularly “difficult”, and the strict border regime between the two countries as an obstacle and a challenge to further cross-border cooperation and to further development of the region’s tourism industry. Facilitation of Russian-Norwegian cross-border traffic and of visa requirements was put forward as a priority by some of these companies. In fact, one of the interviewees saw this strict border regime as the most important obstacle to further development of cross-border tourism: “Everything depends upon it becoming easier to cross the border: less bureaucracy.” It was also mentioned that Norway should look at the Finnish-Russian border regime for inspiration:



*The marginalization of the tourism industry is a stark illustration of the emphasis by the state, local governments, and businesses that heavy industry has a much more prominent place in the development of the High North and the Barents Region.*

“There are more Russian tourists coming to Northern Finland than to Norway (...) the Finns have been much better in removing border-related obstacles.”

However, many of the respondents were positive towards changes implemented in the Russian-Norwegian border regime, referring to the 2011 agreement between the two countries on the issue of “border certificates”:

“What I see as very positive in the future is that, over time, the visa-barrier will be gone.”

“What could happen in the near future is that it will become easier to cross the Russian border, and that will be very beneficial to the region.”

Most of the companies interviewed currently have little or no cooperation with Russia, but many of them expressed a desire to develop, or to further develop, this. One of the interviewees said that “it’s a pity to live in a border-region without fully using the potential it has”. Several respondents said they had a great interest in the Russian market and that

they need better knowledge of this, admitting that “I know very little about Russia, but I’m very interested in the Russian market”. In more general terms, the interviews indicate that the regional tourism companies need an increased knowledge of Russia in order to further develop their businesses. More specifically, it was mentioned that they need better competence in the Russian language: “Knowledge of Russian language is a key factor.” A better understanding of the Russian culture was also emphasized as some argued that “I need better cultural knowledge when it comes to Russia”.

#### *Cooperation with the public sector*

A majority of the respondents (11 out of 15) said that the public sector – municipal and county administrations (and regional development organizations) – has a very important role to play in regional tourism development. It was highlighted that “the municipalities have a huge responsibility” and that “cooperation with the public sector is an absolute necessity”. The tourism companies interviewed see an increased and facilitated cooperation with the public sector as an important priority in order

to further develop this industry. However, it was mentioned by many of the interviewees that the current actions of the public sector in regards to tourism are not good enough, and very few of them said they currently had good cooperation with the public sector.

Despite the discourse on tourism being an important sustainable resource, one of the interviewees pointed out that “there are no municipalities today that have a real strategy for tourism development, and [that] this is alarming”. Many of the interviewees said that they would benefit from an increased and facilitated cooperation with the municipal and county administrations in terms of practical organization of tourism activities and, maybe more importantly, financial backing. The tourism industry is vulnerable from an economic point of view. Many respondents highlighted the lack of financing as an obstacle for further development, and one of interviewees referred to the public sector in this regard: “In fact no one, neither the county nor the municipality, is backing us financially.” Placed within the larger demands of local regional development, the marginalization of the tourism industry is a stark illustration of the emphasis by the state, local governments, and businesses that heavy industry has a much more prominent place in the development of the High North and the Barents Region.

### Challenges and obstacles to tourism development

The survey also focused on challenges and obstacles to tourism development in the region

in general. The interviewees underscored, in particular, economic and financial problems such as the high price level in Norway and a lack of financing, economic backing and promotion of their activities at the national level, not least the low level of infrastructure development in the High North. Contextual factors like the global economic and financial crisis were also put forward as a great challenge for the industry. As one of the interviewees put it: “The tourism business is very vulnerable to any economic recession.”

### *Infrastructure*

A major obstacle to further development of their industry mentioned by many of the respondents (8/15) is the current state of infrastructure in the region. As one of the respondents put it: “A huge threat is that public infrastructure isn’t good enough today.” A large part of the regional tourism companies considers improvement and development of the regional infrastructure as a big priority. The interviews indicate that the tourism companies find the current state of infrastructure not sufficient and that the tourism industry is in a vulnerable situation in terms of infrastructure. In particular, the interviews indicate that the regional tourism industry is highly dependant upon the airports and the Hurtigruten (the Norwegian coastal ferry). A better-developed infrastructure was also considered by one of the interviewees as a condition for more intensified cross-border cooperation:

“I see that there are great possibilities in developing more extensive cooperation within the Barents Region, but this depends upon, among other things, a better-developed infrastructure. ... This will be crucial in order to fully use the potential that lays here.”

### *Competence*

The interviewees noted a lack of business competence and a lack of competence in the other Barents countries' tourism industries as further challenges to developing tourism in the Barents Region. The interviews indicate that the regional tourism industry suffers in general from a lack of business competence. As many as 8 out of 15 of the interviewees said that they needed increased competence in sales and marketing in order to further develop their businesses. Some of the companies also mentioned increased competence in Information Technology and in project management as being crucial for their businesses. The lack of international competence and experience was also highlighted as an obstacle to further development. A better knowledge of business management would help the small tourism companies in Northern Norway to further develop and to expand, and good competence in sales and marketing is especially important in this region since the Barents Region is a rather new international tourist destination.

The interviews also indicate that the regional tourism industry in Northern Norway needs an increased knowledge of and competence in

the other Barents countries' tourism industries. The regional tourism companies need a better knowledge of activities offered in the other Barents countries, as well as of the markets and economies of these countries, in order to increase this cooperation and to further develop and improve their businesses. It was also highlighted by one of the interviewees that this could help to sell the region as a whole, as the “Barents Region”:

“If I had a better knowledge of what they did in the other countries, of their best destinations and products... I could more easily sell our region as a whole.”

### Conclusions

The results of this survey indicate a great potential for tourism in Northern Norway and in the whole Barents Region. We see that the regional tourism companies are enthusiastic about intensifying cross-border cooperation, which is seen to be very beneficial to the tourism industry, and about further developing their businesses, in particular towards tourism that highlights meetings, incentives, conferences and events (MICE) that is considered to have a great potential in this region (but which requires more thoroughgoing research).

However, the interviews also indicate that there are big obstacles and challenges to further development of tourism in this region, and that there is still a wide range of issues to address in order to fully exploit this region's tourism potential. The poorly developed in-

frastructure, the general lack of competence in the Barents Region among the companies and the difficult branding of the region were accentuated. There was also sentiment among the interviewees, and an open discussion during a conference held in Kirkenes in early October 2012 (The Barents Region as a tourism destination?) that there must be more of a coordinated effort made among those in the region who are interested in the growth of tourism and that beyond the concentration on heavy industry development in the Barents

Region, there must be cooperation among the tourist operators, tour providers, travel agencies, local and national governments, and other local stakeholders. There must also be more communication with those who are attempting to improve the transportation infrastructure in the Norwegian High North and the Barents Region as a whole. This is most significant if the tourism industry should succeed in crossing regional, national, and international borders in order to more effectively develop tourism throughout the Barents Region.

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## 2. Enhancing Tourism in the Arkhangelsk Region: Challenges, Trends, Prospects

*Sergey Koptev<sup>3</sup>, Lyubov Zarubina<sup>3</sup>,  
Tatiana Silinskaya<sup>4</sup>, Valeriy Sinitskiy<sup>3</sup>  
& Andrey Podoplekin<sup>3</sup>*

### Introduction

This article presents the current challenges, trends and prospects of tourism development in the Arkhangelsk Region. The first section highlights the current situation in the tourism sector, regional distinctiveness and attractiveness for tourists and business. The second section is devoted to the main challenges and prospects in the tourism sphere, including professional education, knowledge demands and the needs of scientific research. Detailed characteristics are given for the features and demands of the tourist services market in the region. Public-private partnership and international cooperation are suggested to play a great role. The article concludes with recognizing the significant potential for regional development by tourism and the opportunities for sustainable development.

### Arkhangelsk Region as an Arctic tourism destination

The tourism industry in the Arkhangelsk Region is based mostly on the domestic market as only 2.5 % of visitors are international. Since 2007, tourism demand has grown by 24 %, reaching

a total of 325 000 visitors. (Ministry for Youth Affairs and Sports of the Arkhangelsk Region 2012.)

The region's strengths are described in terms of the traditional practices and use of natural resources; northern folk crafts; natural diversity; cultural, historical and architectural heritage; hospitable communities and their willingness to source new applications for their craftsmanship. The access to the White Sea enables cruise tourism. The geographical location of the Arkhangelsk Region is an advantage when it comes to the facilitation of cruise navigation through interregional and international Barents partnership. The nightless nights, a phenomenon unique for many visitors from middle Russia and abroad, are a significant asset. The one-of-a-kind productions such as diamond mining, nuclear submarine construction and a space rocket launch site – to be found in just a few Russian regions and countries in the world – might be used as attractions to boost industrial tourism and at the same time would require the development of new tourist products. At the same time, the attractiveness of the Barents Region is ensured

<sup>3</sup> Northern (Arctic) Federal University

<sup>4</sup> Agency for Tourism and International Cooperation of the Arkhangelsk Region



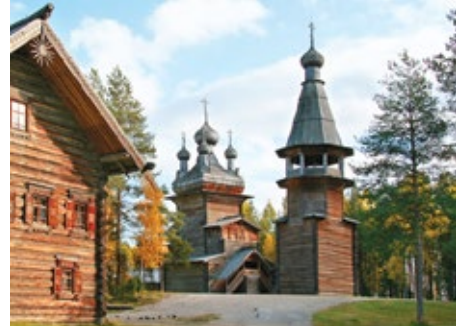


Figure 1, top left. Arkhangelsk, the capital of Pomorie. (Photo: N. Gernet)

Figure 2, top right. Kiy Island in the White Sea. (Photo: A. Stepanov)

Figure 3, down left. The Solovetsky Islands, the pearl of the Russian North. (Photo: V. Prynkov)

Figure 4, down right. Arkhangelsk State Museum of Wooden Architecture and Folk Art 'Malye Korely' is Russia's largest open-air museum of its kind. (Photo: FSCIE Malye Korely Museum)

by its nature, pristine forests, environmental safety, proximity to the Arctic Region, sports and extreme tourism activities. The region regularly hosts tourism-related workshops and meetings with regional and international participation.

The public opinion survey (respondents being the potential customers) of tourism prospects in the Arkhangelsk Region revealed its high attractiveness in the eyes of tourists. The high attractiveness rate (78 %) is evidenced by the respondents' ranking it on a scale of 10 at 5 and higher. Of the respondents, 89 % expressed an interest in travelling in the region. Yet, their interest is inhibited by rather extravagant prices (24 %), underdeveloped infrastructure (24 %), lack of information (18 %) and climate (12 %). About 20 % claimed they are not confused about anything. (BART project research 2011a.)

The support from public bodies is essential to any development initiative, and regional tourism is not an exception. In rendering support to Arkhangelsk tourism industry the state

authorities are governed by core federal and regional tourism-related laws and regulations<sup>5</sup>.

## Tourism development challenges and practical solutions

### Challenges and constraints

Apart from the environmental assets and the region's cultural heritage that might boost certain types of local tourism, there are factors that constrain development. Among them are poorly developed reception and accommodation infrastructure; underdeveloped road system; poor parking infrastructure and road engineering support; unavailability of auto tourism info support; depleted resource and maintenance base; seasonally-bound transport inaccessibility of many tourist destinations; insufficient departmental interaction for tourism purposes; inadequate tourist safety protections

<sup>5</sup> The core laws and regulations are included in the list of references.



Figure 5. Knowledge most in-demand among the staff of tourist companies operating in the Arkhangelsk Region.

failing to meet EMERCOM's (the Ministry of Emergency Situations) and health authorities' standard.

The other major downsides to tourism business are the poor information support and unavailability of full-fledged map applications, comprehensive information bases, web sites, portals, and reliable statistics. In their everyday activities, the tourist companies make use of all sorts of data – historical background, media and on-line publications, and personal communications. Often scattered, the required pieces of information are sourced by companies individually.

Among core challenges for tourism development in the Arkhangelsk Region in particular and the Barents Region on the whole, are the overpriced tours. The tourist products offered by the Arkhangelsk Region are rather highly priced, which, in turn, complicates investments. Statistically, the average tourist from the Russian part of the Barents Region is more likely to choose Turkey or Egypt; trips to Scandinavia are affordable only by the well-to-do, while those to the Arctic – by the extremely well-to-do.

The other major threats for tourism development are of an environmental and risk management character: forest fire hazard may restrict access to forests during summers, whereas

swarms of gnats, mosquitoes and blackflies could to some extent endanger health.

#### *Education and research*

Many of the activities performed by staff do not require university-level education. Companies require hands-on skills and knowledge that come with practical experience. The industry's demand for qualified guides is seasonal. In the next 5–10 years, the industry might see a growing demand in IT specialists, interpreters, marketing experts, and travel and PR managers. (BART project research 2011b.)

The knowledge areas that are envisaged as able to contribute to the success of tourism growth cover a vast range of sectors (Figure 5).

Lack of tourism-related research – marketing and projected forecast surveys – makes it difficult to shape the promising tourism growth scenario.

There are seven schools in the Arkhangelsk Region training specialists in tourism and hospitality. Public bodies and business community are, too, important players supervising training and retraining processes in the region.

The Arkhangelsk Regional Employment Agency forecasts the region's demand in tourism and hospitality specialists with a basic secondary vocational degree to be as high as 260

External	Internal
Unavailability of relevant higher and continuing professional degree programmes with funding from federal and regional budgets.	Unavailability of system applied research into tourism potential. Poorly maintained cooperation between research, academic and business communities. Researchers are in no way involved in business planning or marketing.
Weak interregional relations at the national level (no internship placements in other Russian universities).	Non-performance of analysis of threats to tourism development in the Arkhangelsk Region.
Poor demand for specialists on the part of tourism industries; poor arrangement of the students' hands-on training.	The tourism specialists training programmes do not meet the industry's requirements. Unavailability of joint training programmes and unelaborate academic mobility to foreign institutes.
Graduates prefer to seek employment in the international, not regional, tourism sector.	Insufficient knowledge and low-quality of foreign language teaching among students and teachers.

Table 1. The challenges faced by professional education in the Arkhangelsk Region.

people by 2015. The analysis of the curricula in “Tourism”, “Ecotourism”, “Tourism and Managing Forests for Recreation” has identified the strengths of tourism education programmes, the needs of long-term specialist training in the Arkhangelsk Region, as well as the new challenges posed to the region’s schools.

Among the strengths of the academic milieu are the availability of structural divisions and the adjustment to the common European educational dimension; the demand for tourism distance and e-learning; the application of the outcomes of international tourism projects; the availability of funding for the services of visiting lecturers from foreign universities; the interest of universities in joint training programmes and expansion of academic mobility; and the interest of regional authorities in collaboration with research and academic communities.

The challenges being faced by professional education can be classified into external and internal (Table 1).

A certain portion of the companies admit self-education might prove a useful tool in advancing their staff’s skills (as employees often need knowledge of legal frameworks and of keeping accounting records). The central tasks to be tackled by the industry in the future boil down to the tailoring of training programmes to the needs and promising trends of tourism development. The process of developing the training programmes should rely on the recent monitoring of outcomes, projected growth and companies’ demands for staff training. It should also pursue joint tourism-related training courses to be developed in partnership with higher institutions in the Barents Region. It is suggested that the major tourist companies should function as the venues for staff training and cooperation with schools. Knowledge of successful practices and innovative tourist product marketing techniques is also very important. The strengths and weaknesses of the logistics can be more efficiently

identified by analysing the case studies and flowcharts of sales successes.

### *Prospects and practical solutions*

It should be noted here that about 10 % of companies claimed they literally have to survive in the market; another 10 % said they are actively developing themselves; and around 80 % consider their operation stable. Given the current position in the market, some companies claimed they do not rely on any long-term plans, their farthest time perspective being from three to four years, while the majority of the respondents claimed they think long term and their time perspective ranges from ten years to longer periods they need to foster infrastructural and tourism product development. (BART project research 2011b.)

In the near future, the region is expected to increasingly become the focus of special-interest tourist segments. Cultural, pilgrimage and scientific tours (Lomonosov tour, for instance) will be in demand and need thorough development. It is of great importance that cooperation with the neighbour regions (for instance, with Karelia, Komi, Murmansk, Vologda, Nenets Autonomous Area, Leningrad Region) be stimulated.

The performance of regional tourism could be improved by traditional and electronic service marketing, forecasting, personnel training, international projects and niche specialism in hard-to-find experience. Cooperation with the region's field-specific executive authorities is noted by many as essential. Sustainability in tourism is often deemed impossible without

partnership relations and e-marketing applications, especially when it comes to the development of tourist products.

To operate successfully in the cross-border tourism market, companies must be able to offer high-class products and professionalism. For their marketing strategies to become transparent, it is necessary that joint preliminary surveys should be carried out in the existing and, if possible, potential demand for a service or a product. It is important to be aware of the tourists' preferences, of their expectations of service level and of the region's need in MICE (business) tourism development. The social and marketing surveys to be implemented jointly with research and academic institutions may also help the industry to timely respond to changes in its market, identify promising areas of collaboration and forecast risks. Promotion of the products can be facilitated, among other things, through participation in relevant international roundtables, study trips, training sessions, and conferences.

The information gathering system shared by the members of the Barents Region should be made consistent and time-phased. The information content should preferably cover the number of tourist companies/agencies; number of full-time staff; investment volumes in the tourism sector; geography and structure of the visits (type-wise); visiting nationalities; duration of stay; accommodation formats; and types of services rendered. It is necessary that the analytic insight covers the service market, growth potential, and companies' needs for personnel training and outsourcing part of their services. It is



*Sustainability of tourism development in the Arkhangelsk Region appears to be closely linked to and achievable through public-private partnerships, involvement in academic and market research, and the staffing of companies with qualified tourism workers.*

suggested that a dedicated web-portal be set up where companies would post their reports and make use of the replenished database.

#### *International public-private partnership*

Tools for public-private partnership may help the Arkhangelsk Region boost its inbound and outbound tourism. The public-private partnership may also be envisaged to implement systematic research and monitoring activities; special functional-zoning plans for tourism; and recreation- and tourism-related risks. Delivering efficient training of tourism experts would be impossible without close interaction between the universities and tourist companies. Given this condition, it is essential that the tourism training and research should be arranged through social partnerships with business and academic communities.

The outcomes of the Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism (BART) project will be applied in the shaping of the region's tourism strategy, in tailoring (jointly with BEAR's leading universities) the tourism and hospi-

tality training programmes to the needs of the Arkhangelsk Region, and in expanding the potential of the inter-regional and cross-border tourism.

#### **Conclusions**

Sustainability of tourism development in the Arkhangelsk Region appears to be closely linked to and achievable through public-private partnerships, involvement in academic and market research, and the staffing of companies with qualified tourism workers. An information gathering system to be shared by the members of the Barents Region should be made.

The potential of tourism in the region is primarily perceived as manifesting itself in several types of tourism, assisted by public-private partnerships and offering new recreation areas. Place branding is perceived as a sound opportunity and thus requires the development of a policy to promote the Arkhangelsk Region. The main threats for tourism development in the Region are of an environmental and risk management character.

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## 3. Monchegorsk Tourism Development Outlook: Inbound and Domestic Tourism Trends

Irina Utyuzhnikova<sup>6</sup> & Milena Shatskaya<sup>6</sup>

### Introduction

The decline of the modern Russian tourist market began in the 1990s. After that, the first steps of tourism development were hampered considerably by the lack of a unified policy of state and local authorities. During the last ten years, tourism in Russia has grown rapidly, but mostly because of major tourism destinations such as Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, the Golden Ring<sup>7</sup> towns, Kamchatka Peninsula, Lake Baikal and the Altai Republic. In this article we discuss the tourism development of an ordinary Russian community, the City of Monchegorsk on the Kola Peninsula of the Russian Federation.

### Background of tourism in Monchegorsk

Tourism in Monchegorsk blossomed from the 1960s to the 1980s. At that time the city de-

veloped rapidly: the population grew and the tourist infrastructure belonging to the state extended. Monchegorsk was a part of the network of All-Soviet Union Tourist Routes within broader regions such as: “Kola North”, “Monchegorsk Ski”, and “Across Lapland”. The latter route was the most popular, providing water routes on Imandra and Monchezero Lakes and a hike in the area of Volchyi Fells or hiking the Hibiny’s Yumchorr, with a one-day excursion to Kirovsk and Apatity. The tourist flow was so high because of the functioning mountain-skiing complex on the Nyuduayvench and Nittis Mountains; and the Monchegorsk Yacht Club was in great demand. The city stadium held football and hockey matches, as well as *gorodki*<sup>8</sup> tournaments. Tourists at that time stayed at the Monchegorsk hotel Lapland (333 beds).

Monchegorsk is located on the coasts of several picturesque lakes – Imandra, Lumbolka, and Komsomol. Lake Monchezero is located to

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6 Monchegorsk Town Authority

7 The Golden Ring is a ring of ancient towns north-east of Moscow in which are preserved the memory of the most important and significant events in Russian history. The towns have been called “open air museums” and feature unique monuments of Russian architecture of the 12th–18th centuries, including kremlins, monasteries, cathedrals, and churches. These towns are among the most picturesque in Russia and prominently feature Russia’s famous onion domes.

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8 Gorodki is an ancient Russian folk sport whose popularity has spread to the Baltic Region. Similar in concept to bowling and also somewhat to horseshoes, the aim of the game is to knock out groups of skittles arranged in various patterns by throwing a stick-like bat at them. The skittles, or pins, are called *gorodki* (literally little cities or townlets), and the square zone in which they are arranged is called the *gorod* (city).



*Monchegorsk has had a long history of tourism, which was interrupted, but is now being rekindled, particularly in the framework of EU programmes.*

the northwest of the city, but is poorly used for recreational purposes. The Moncha River (near the Leningradskaya Route Bridge), connecting Monchezero and the lake of Lumbolk, is only 300 m long and can apply to the Guinness Book of World Records as the shortest river in Europe. Translated from Sámi, Monchegorsk means “the beautiful city”, which is quite justified. The abundance of forest and reservoirs within the city and the picturesque mountain landscape surrounding it made Monchegorsk one of the most beautiful cities of the North of Russia. The central part of Monchegorsk began to be formed at the end of the 1930s. As the city was built by architects from Leningrad, there are resemblances to the northern capital. The main street of the city – Metallurgov Avenue – has a wide green boulevard and old Stalin-baroque style houses decorated with original arches and openwork lattices. There is an area called Five Corners with a fountain and the main symbol of the city – a sculpture of a moose. In 2001 Monchegorsk was awarded a gold medal by SPI (Association of assistance of

the industry) in Paris for being the most illuminated city in Europe, which is easily possible if you consider flying over it in clear weather. In 2005, Monchegorsk was recognized as one of the well-planned cities of Russia in the All-Russian competition among small cities.

Until recently, Monchegorsk was not very popular with foreign tourists as it was considered to be one of the most polluted cities of Russia, and strongly associated with a zone of ecological degradation. In the 1980s the combined industrial zone of “Severonikel” formed an extensive zone of ecosystem fracture, which pushed away potential tourists and became an area of concern for the government and ecological organizations. Fortunately, for most of the year, the prevailing winds blow away from the city, so the harmful industrial emissions do not blow over the city. The modern ecological policy carried out by the Kola Mining and Metallurgical Company (Kola MMC) to decrease the harmful substances emissions release into the atmosphere as well as the recultivation of lands and the woods in a neighbourhood of the city



	2010	2011	2012	2013 (est.)	2014 (est.)
Accommodation /beds	4/421	4/565	5/615	6/665	7/705
Tourists	6 050	6 361	6 743	7 147	7 576
Visitors	35 192	36 727	38 329	40 000	41 746
Employment	1 137	1 193	1 253	1 328	1 421
SME, firms	255	286	302	309	313
Tourism sites	98	117	124	131	139
Income, thousand rub.	828 989	927 551	970 218	1 007 087	1 045 356
Taxes, thousand rub.	33 904	42 508	44 463	46 153	47 907

Table 1. Statistic of Monchegorsk tourism sector. (Source: Monchegorsk Town Authority)

resulted in a considerably improved ecological situation over the last 17 years.

### Monchegorsk tourism trends and outlook

Undoubtedly, the historic events in Russia during the 1980s and 1990s played a significant role in the development of Monchegorsk. It resulted in the stagnation of all spheres of the economy including tourism. Over 20 years a number of industrial facilities stopped, the population decreased by one third and the tourism infrastructure was almost completely lost. The current recovery of the tourism industry in the Murmansk area started in the end of the 1990s together with development of international cooperation and cross-border programmes of the European Union such as Interreg III, EU Tacis, Kolartic ENPI CBC, and so on. As for Monchegorsk, the tourism sector started to recover in 2004 within a framework of the international research project “Strategic tourism and traffic planning for Monchegorsk region” sponsored by the EU’s Tacis programme. Current economic facts and figures can be seen in official statistic (Table 1).

Over the last seven years, a package of federal laws and governing acts of special tourism regulations were implemented. These deal with border crossings, fiscal matters, sanitary standards and rules for international tourism development in the Russian market. In 2009 addendums were adopted from the Federal Law On the General Principles of the Organization of Local Authority in the Russian Federation (Federal Law on 06.10.2003), which gave power to the municipal authorities to provide suitable conditions for tourism development. It is notable that until recently, only the federal and regional governments have had the authority to deal with the regulation and development of tourism in the Russian Federation (see Federal Law on 24.11.1996). However, the deficiency of quality tourist information in Russia constrains the development of inbound and domestic tourism in the country. Today the local authorities persistently seek to advance the city economy, foremost by developing SMEs and tourism infrastructure. Regional and local authorities are carrying out collaboration to support the attraction of private investments in tourist infrastructure.

# Swot Analysis



## Strengths

1. Destination resources (Lapland Biosphere Natural Reserve, Imandra and Lumbolka Lakes, Monche, Chuna and Volchi Fells, three waterfalls).
2. Historical and culture tourism (Monchegorsk cathedral, ancient history, Sámi culture, anthropogenic impact on the environment around “Severonikel” plant).
3. Polar region (polar day/night, northern lights).
4. Architecture (birch-lined Metallurgov Boulevard surrounded by “Stalin baroque” buildings).
5. Russian – exotic by tradition, customs and beliefs.



## Weaknesses

1. The underdevelopment of the tourism infrastructure and services.
2. Price and quality discrepancy.
3. High tourist activity of public organizations and the small share of business in the tourism field.
4. The high cost of credit funding and difficult access to funding sources (due to lack of collateral security) against the high launch and long-term investment requirements for infrastructure, image and promotion.
5. The lack of expert managers and specialists in economics and management.
6. The lack of experienced personnel for business and industry.
7. The low level of enterprise culture and the reluctance of the majority of the population to perceive entrepreneurship as a way to solve their own social and economic challenges.
8. The low efficiency of the tourism market participants' common efforts.



## Opportunities

1. Improvement of infrastructure.
2. Government support cooperation of tourism sector stakeholders.
3. Personnel training.
4. Ecological and rural tourism, development of unexplored territories.
5. Cooperation with foreign tour operators of border territories.



## Threats

1. Fragile nature.
2. Pollution.
3. Climate change.
4. Economic and political instability.
5. Image as a dangerous region.

Table 2. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of tourism development in Monchegorsk.

For the present time, the challenges and opportunities of tourism development in Monchegorsk are those presented in Table 2.

During the last three years the network of hotel complexes was reconstructed; the city roads and federal highway were overhauled; the quantity of catering facilities increased; a number of large federal retail companies built a network of shopping centres in the city. The construction of a new sport complex is underway; and during the next two years some sport facilities improvement projects will be carried out (such as construction of a covered skating rink and an outdoor roller-ski stadium). Unfortunately, out of Monchegorsk's 16 travel companies, just two of them deal with inbound and domestic tourism, while the rest presently only promote outbound tourism.

One cannot deny that the small activity of regional information resources does not sufficiently provide local destination promotion. For promoting and branding Monchegorsk as a tourist centre at regional, federal and international levels and to increase the availability of information for tourists, local residents and the enterprises of the tourism sphere, a Tourism Information Center was established within the framework of the cross-border project Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism (BART).

### Monchegorsk Tourism Information Centers

At present there are seven municipal Tourism Information Centers (TICs) in the Murmansk

Region and one is going to be established in 2013 in the City of Murmansk. During the Russian-Finnish project LapKola-2, TICs have been established in the cities of Kirovsk, Kandalaksha and Uмба. There is still no TIC or Destination Management Organization (DMO) at the regional level, although promoting functions is mostly the responsibility of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Murmansk Region.

The importance of the Tourism Information Centers cannot be overestimated. Within any form of organization the TICs make a significant economic contribution to tourism at national, regional or local scales by providing information to tourists and fostering them to stay longer and spend more money, experience more attractions and revisit destinations. Most Russian TICs assume some responsibility for DMO (Destination Management Organization) in their promotion of local destinations. In this case the creation of TICs on the Kola Peninsula of the Russian Federation started to be a successful practice in recent years as shown by the adequate recovery of local tourism and the development of tourist services.

The Monchegorsk TIC was established within the framework of the cross-border project Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism (BART) and was supported by the Ministry of Economic Development of the Murmansk Region within the long-term target programme Tourism Development in Murmansk region 2009–2011. In the course of the BART project 2011–2012 in Monchegorsk, an analysis of the tourism industry's current state was

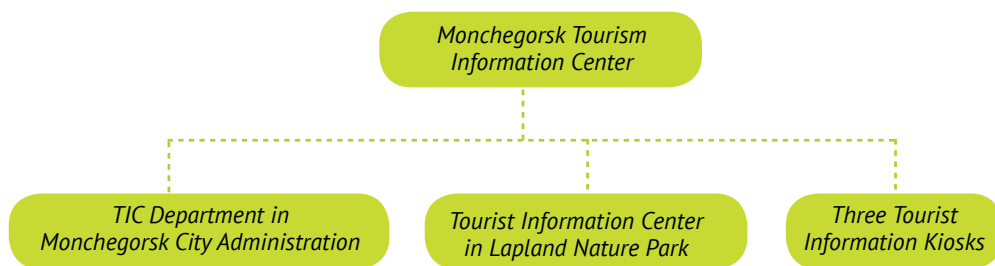


Figure 1. Structure of Monchegorsk TIC.

carried out along with a sociological poll of local entrepreneurs and the collection of information about local tourist resources. The main purpose of the Monchegorsk TIC is the development of internal and entrance tourism by increasing information availability about the local destination, promoting local tourist products and the coordination of tourism sector stakeholders (such as authorities, business, NGOs, and tourists). The structure of the Monchegorsk TIC (Figure 1) allows not only improvement of the organization of tourism services, but also allows the carrying out of large-scale marketing activity. It is becoming a powerful analytical resource for management, coordination and development of tourist infrastructure in Monchegorsk. Activities of the Monchegorsk TIC's structural divisions are regulated by agreements about cooperation between stakeholders, and by the Monchegorsk Tourism Information Centers Development Concept (see Monchegorsk Municipal act 8.09.2011).

The main TIC office was established in the Lapland Biosphere Natural Reserve in a visitor centre reconstructed by the Kola Mining and Metallurgical Company. The Lapland Reserve has created good tourist facilities with a tourism department with guides, a visitor and information centre, and some museums and nature trails. The Lapland Biosphere Nature Park TIC is conveniently located on the Saint-Pe-

tersburg–Murmansk federal road, just in the centre of the Kola Peninsula. It offers tourist information for the whole region. The Lapland Biosphere Natural Reserve's TIC duties include the collection and distribution of the local tourist resources information (accommodation, transport, catering etc.) and providing visitors with information such as maps and brochures. There are four permanent staff members and the office is maintained by the Lapland Biosphere Natural Reserve.

The second part of the Monchegorsk TIC is the Tourist Information Centre sector of the Economic Department of Monchegorsk City Administration with two full-time employees for local promotion and the provision of public-private partnerships in the field of tourism, development and the realization of investment projects for the improvement of tourist service quality and the expansion of a spectrum of local tourist services.

The last element of the Monchegorsk TIC is the Tourist Information Kiosks (TIKs), equipped with touch-sensitive terminals with on-line databases for tourists, such as information about transportation, accommodation, catering, attractions, and different services available in Monchegorsk. There are three of them, located in the Metallurg and Sever Hotels and at the Monchegorsk bus terminal.

Simultaneously the Monchegorsk City Administration organized a tourism work-

ing group acting at the Monchegorsk SME's Council. It brings entrepreneurs from various spheres of the tourist industry together with local authorities to share information, exchange views, and develop and promote the Monchegorsk area.

### Benchmarking of Montenegro and Italy for tourism development in Monchegorsk

From the Montenegro and Italy experience the great social benefits of TICs are becoming more obvious as an important community facility and platform for public-private partnership and a volunteer workforce. A potential significant duty of Monchegorsk TICs should be to promote the destination and support tourism stakeholders with creating local Destination Management Organizations (DMOs). Practically it should be a regional DMO, but it is necessary to note that Russian tourism development mostly comes from bottom to top. For many years Russian entrepreneurs were unable or unwilling to show an interest in societal cooperation in the tourism field because of the low competitiveness, gaps in laws and old prejudices. The current rising of the entrepreneurs' and citizens' marketing enlightenment and interest in the promotion of local territory let us hope to create the local DMO in the coming years.

Another effective tool for local – and especially regional – tourism development might be the European institution of the tourist development taxation or fees as well as other

financial forms of direct tourism destination support.

From the Italy and Montenegro benchmarking experience, it seems that local authorities could improve tourism in Monchegorsk by doing the following: promoting the MICE, ecological, mountain-skiing and water sport tourism; supporting the local SME and investment climate; creating a local Destination Management Organization; utilizing civil society and volunteer resources. Monchegorsk's geographical location (the foothills of Khibiny Mountains and numerous lakes) and climate conditions provide relevance for the development of various facilities. Especially winter time provides possibilities for many activities: development of the Loparstan mountain-skiing resort, including the erection of extra ski-lifts, expansion of the slope territory, modernization of infrastructure, mobilization of qualified personnel for training and organization of outdoor activities; restoration of potentially the best slope of Monchegorsk, the mountain Nittis (G-slam trails); construction of a roller-ski stadium with ski and biathlon routes; organization of infrastructure and development of winter windsurfing and kiting. Summer sport tourism could be promoted by reconstructing the Monchegorsk Water Sport & Tourism Center on the shore of Lake Imandra to support the growing demand for sailing regattas, yachting and kayaking.

For the local entrepreneurs it would be useful to apply the practice used in Italian and Montenegro tourist infrastructure where

universal wireless (Wi-Fi) access is free in any tourist place (accommodation, cafes, transportation terminals etc.) as well as the existence of free wall outlets which are very useful during long trips for charging many modern devices (mobile phones, laptops, tablets, MP3 players, cameras and so on). In addition, one good example for Monchegorsk SMEs might be the very popular elegant Italian guesthouses of high comfort on the basis of private apartments.<sup>9</sup>

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In conclusion, Monchegorsk has had a long history of tourism, which was interrupted, but is now being rekindled, particularly in the framework of EU programmes. There are many plans and opportunities for the present and future development of Monchegorsk as a nature, culture and sport destination. Seeing how other tourism destinations develop, like Montenegro and Italy, spark ideas of what could be possible in Monchegorsk.

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<sup>9</sup> For example, guesthouse Casa Dei Venti in Bari has five rooms in a nicely designed private apartment with free Wi-Fi and it is only a 15-minute walk from Bari's centre. Each classic-style room at this guesthouse is equipped with a flat-screen TV and a minibar. All rooms have a private bathroom with hairdryer and toiletry set. Breakfast at the Casa is a buffet served in the apartment's lounge.

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Monchegorsk Town authority. Statistic of Monchegorsk tourism sector.

## 4. Same Problems, Similar Solutions? Tourism Development in Finnish Lapland and Montenegro

Satu Luiro<sup>10</sup>

### Introduction

At first glance, Finnish Lapland and Montenegro do not seem to have anything in common. Lapland is the northern part of Finland with an Arctic climate, while Montenegro is a mountainous country located by the Adriatic Sea. Nevertheless, when one looks at the tourism industry in these regions, surprisingly many similarities can be found. Tourism is a very important source of livelihood for both areas and the problems that the industry struggles with are also very similar.

Finnish Lapland is going through a very fast development period driven by the growth of the mining and energy sectors in the Barents Region as a whole. The tourism industry is growing too, but at the same time it has to adjust to the rapid changes taking place in the operational environment. Montenegro is also undergoing changes, although they are not necessarily as visible as in the North. In order to succeed in the fierce competition, tourism destinations have to diversify and develop tourism products, and attract new tourist segments.

This article compares the features of the tourism industry in both the countries and seeks to identify common challenges and suggest solutions to them.

### Finnish Lapland and Montenegro as peripheral tourism destinations

*Finnish Lapland – an Arctic peripheral tourism destination*

Tourism has been recognised as a spearhead sector in the industrial structure of Lapland for a long time. Tourism in Lapland began to grow quickly in the late 1980s and continued to grow in the 1990s apart from a few exceptions. There has been a steady phase of growth since the beginning of the last decade. The share of tourism of the GNP in Lapland is approximately 3 %, as compared with 2.3 % for the whole of Finland. There are some 1 000 companies in Lapland that operate in the tourism industry, mainly in the accommodation and restaurant business, programme services and transport. In 2010 it was estimated that the tourism income in Lapland was approximately EUR 600 million with an employment effect equivalent to some 5 000 full-time jobs (excluding seasonal employees). (Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011–2014, 15.)

Lapland is a very sparsely populated region with only about 2 people/km<sup>2</sup>. The most attractive travel destinations in Lapland are situated in regional centres or fells in the middle of sparsely populated rural areas. The development of tourism has helped municipalities and villages maintain or even increase their range of services, which has also benefited the local population. Businesses set

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10 The Regional Council of Lapland

up in the tourism industry have created new jobs and brought well-being to small localities and generated positive multiplicative effects in other sectors, too. (Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011–2014, 10.)

Thanks to its nature, Lapland has excellent preconditions to be an attractive tourist area. It has been exploiting these strengths superbly in the past few decades: the tourism trade has seen strong growth and development. The global growth of international demand has rebounded quickly since its temporary slowdown due to the recession of 2008. Finnish Lapland tourism products are still very attractive. However, Lapland is considered to be an up-scale, once-in-a-lifetime destination, which means that in order to get tourists to re-visit Lapland, the tourism industry has to take some action to develop new products and services. (Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011–2014, 10; Lapland Tourism Statistics.)

Lapland's Regional Plan 2030 delineates long-term development objectives for Lapland and the strategy for reaching the objectives. The long-term objective in the regional plan is to increase tourism income three-fold to EUR 1.5 billion per year and employment in tourism services two-fold to 10 000 labour-years in the next two decades. (Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011–2014, 46.)

#### *Montenegro – a Mediterranean peripheral tourism destination*

Montenegro is highly dependent on tourism. The share of tourism of the GNP is 18 % and the share of total employment is 12 % (Per-

vits 2011). Today every fifth job is related to tourism and it is estimated that in the future every third job will be in the tourism sector. There are no other internationally competitive industries in Montenegro, which makes the country's economy very vulnerable to changes in tourism demand. The total revenue from the tourism industry was EUR 671 million in 2011 (Montenegro Tourism Organisation 2012).

Over 13 million tourists visited Montenegro in 2011 and there were nine million overnights. Before the Balkan War the number of overnights was eleven million, so tourism in the region has recovered relatively well from the war despite destroyed infrastructure. Montenegro also pulled through quite well in the global recession that began in 2008. The effect of zero growth was actually positive, because it controlled the overheated market in the tourism construction business. (Montenegro Tourism Organisation 2012.)

Not only the number of overnight stays is growing, but also investments are being made, new products are being developed and a professional labour force is being educated. During the past few years Montenegro has also successfully invested in marketing and brand development under the slogan "Montenegro – Wild Beauty". All this development work is done according to the guidelines presented in the *Montenegro Tourism Development Strategy to 2020*. Montenegro's vision for the future is to become an internationally competitive, year-around tourism destination for different up-scale and niche markets. In particular, Montenegro wants to position itself as a leader in sustainable nature



	Lapland	Montenegro
Total area	100 369 km <sup>2</sup>	13 810 km <sup>2</sup>
Population in 2011	183 700	661 800
Tourism share of GNP	3 %	18 %
Registered overnight stays in 2011	2,2 million	8,7 million (all)
Share of international overnight stays	40 %	89 %
Tourism income	EUR 600 M	EUR 671 M

Table 1. Comparison of tourism industries in Finnish Lapland and Montenegro.

Sources: Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011–2014; Montenegro Tourism Development Strategy to 2020; Regional Council of Lapland; Suomen matkailustrategia 2020; Worldstat.

tourism in the Mediterranean region. (Montenegro Tourism Development Strategy to 2020.)

#### *Differences and similarities*

Montenegro and Finnish Lapland are two peripheral regions in Europe. Neither rank in the top of the short lists for tourists' travel destinations. This is not due to the lack of the destinations' force of attraction, but rather to remote location, difficult accessibility, strong seasonality and limited marketing resources.

There are also differences between the two countries. Even though both destinations have attracted international visitors throughout their history, Finnish Lapland is a relatively young tourism destination compared to Montenegro. Finland is a high-technology country with well-developed infrastructure, whereas Montenegro is still building its infrastructure. Education and research in tourism are at a high level in Finland, whereas Montenegro is still developing the knowledge pool and human resources aspect in tourism.

Coordination, professionalism and cooperation with the public sector are the characteristic features of tourism in Finland. Montenegro, in turn, has a long tradition in the tourism and service culture, but coordination and strategic

planning between different stakeholders still needs to be developed. Nevertheless, there are already several ongoing EU-funded tourism development projects in Montenegro (e.g. TurGrate 2), which help build cooperation and interaction between tourism actors and thus allow for effective development work. (Montenegro Tourism Organisation 2012)

#### **Development challenges in peripheral tourism destinations**

##### *Economic fluctuations*

As a global industry, tourism is very vulnerable to changes in the global economy. Managing economic fluctuations is critical for the success of tourism companies. Companies benefit if they have means to adjust their operations according to economic changes, which sometimes take place very quickly.

The tourism industry in Finland was already forced to adapt to a difficult recession in the early 1990s. Experiences from that period also helped companies adapt to the latest recession, which began in autumn 2008. The previous few years had been the time of a strong investment boom in the tourism industry, which also imposed extra economic pressure on

companies. However, companies survived the recession with relatively small damage, mainly because they had more means to adapt to the situation and they were in better financial shape than during the previous recession. In addition, the growth in Russian and domestic demand helped the situation. (Lapland Tourism Statistics.)

Tourism in Montenegro began to develop quickly after the Balkan War. From 2000 to 2007 the number of overnight stays increased by 130 % from 3.2 million to 7.3 million. This was followed by zero growth in the tourism industry for a few years, but since then tourism has continued to grow very quickly. (Montenegro Tourism Development Strategy to 2020, 17.)

### *Seasonality*

Seasonality affects the tourism industry because tourism companies have to earn their annual income during only a few months. In the low season, some of the accommodation capacity stays empty causing costs and reducing the annual occupancy rate. Conversely, there may be a shortage of accommodation capacity during the high season. The low season in Montenegro's tourism lasts from October to May, whereas in Lapland the low season is summertime from May to October.

Due to seasonality, tourism is for many entrepreneurs just one source of livelihood among others. Therefore, the long-term development of the tourism industry is challenging. There is also a lack of skilful labour, as companies cannot offer year-round work. Both the desti-

nations are characterised by a strong need to extend the current tourism seasons and create new seasons through product development.

Building year-round tourism has been one of the main goals in Lapland's tourism strategies for years. Plans have been made both to extend the high seasons (Christmas and spring skiing holiday) and develop the summer season. Developing summer tourism has been a priority in Lapland for a long time and many actions and initiatives have been taken in order to reach this goal. There has been some progress, but a lot still needs to be done. Surprisingly, many of these actions are very similar to those in Montenegro.

### *Accessibility*

Accessibility is a problem in both regions, but for different reasons. Montenegro has two international airports: Podgorica and Tivat. There are other airports too, but they are not used for international flights. Many tourists who like to visit Montenegro fly to Dubrovnic Airport in Croatia. From the tourism point of view, Montenegro needs more international airports, better infrastructure in the existing airports, and more airline companies to operate on the routes.

There are five international airports in Finnish Lapland, so infrastructure and aviation services are very good. However, the problems are a lack of competition and the high costs of flying, which both affect ticket prices. When some low-cost carriers started to operate in Lapland, ticket prices came down a little, but tickets are still expensive.

## Practical solutions to meet the challenges

Practical solutions to meet the development challenges can roughly be divided into product development and marketing. In the current *Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011–2014* the following means of attracting international tourists in summer are identified: 1) developing nature products that take better into account the needs of international tourists, 2) raising awareness abroad about Finnish national parks, and 3) boosting marketing efforts about Lapland's summer. In the *Montenegro Tourism Development Strategy to 2020* three main actions are presented to make Montenegro a well-known and recognised year-round tourism destination: 1) diversifying hotel products and enhancing recreational and active leisure facilities, 2) developing and enhancing specific products, and 3) establishing, promoting and marketing the tourism attractions.

### *Developing year-round products with high quality*

Lapland's main attractions in summertime are nature and natural phenomena, such as the midnight sun. Several attempts have been made to build interesting products around these attractions, but the top product is still missing. There are many interesting activities available in summer, such as hiking, biking, kayaking, rafting, Nordic walking, fishing and golfing. However, so far, international tourists have not found these activities or do not consider them interesting enough. Hiking, for example, is a very popular activity among domestic tourists, but it does not appeal to international tourists even though the routes are in

excellent condition. One reason for this may be that international tourists are not used to wilderness and therefore consider it somewhat intimidating.

So far the development of national parks in Lapland has proceeded quite well. New tourism products are being developed in a project. Another project focuses on improving the quality of services and routes in the parks. New wilderness guides are trained to serve international tourists. Pallas-Ylläs National Park is applying for membership in the European Charter Network of National Parks.

In Montenegro there are many up-scale hotels, most of them located by the Bay of Kotor or by the sea. The aim is to diversify hotel products in order to address the needs of various target groups throughout the year. There are also plans to increase bed capacity.

Montenegro's main tourism attractions are beautiful scenery, mountains and historical places. Cruise tourism is a very important business on the coast. Despite excellent hiking conditions, Montenegro has not yet become well known as a hiking destination. In order to attract different tourist segments, Montenegro has to develop hiking and biking products.

Montenegro's national parks and mountain resorts offer good possibilities for both hiking and biking, which can easily be combined with other attractions, such as visits to wineries or historical places or bird watching. However, more infrastructure and especially routes with services are needed. This tourist segment requires accommodation facilities and services different from what Montenegro traditionally has to offer.



*By developing and marketing new, nature-based products both destinations try to attract new market segments, and especially niche markets.*

### *New markets and marketing*

It is difficult to extend Lapland's high season, the Christmas season, because it covers such a specific time of the year. However, Christmas is present throughout the year and tourists can visit Santa Claus every day of the year. Spreading this message requires a lot of marketing effort especially in the international markets. So far, Lapland has succeeded quite well and gained a lot of positive attention in international media. For instance, Rovaniemi has been registered as the Official Hometown of Santa Claus®. The Christmas season continues naturally thanks to Russian tourists who celebrate their Christmas on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January. Tourism companies in Lapland develop their business in order to address the needs of Russian tourists better, e.g. by serving them in their own language. Shops have also extended their opening hours.

"Lapland – The North of Finland" is an image marketing project that aims to market Lapland by using social media. In 2012 the project launched a summer marketing campaign that utilized the Midnight Sun as a theme. The campaign was very successful and significantly raised the key target group's awareness of the region. The campaign will continue in summer 2013 based on the same theme, but with a new twist.

According to Kirsi Hyvärinen (2011) from the Montenegro National Tourism Organisation, mass tourism is not a goal in Montenegro, but instead the country seeks to attract many small niche markets. A recent study indicates

that a lot of assets are currently being utilized. New products, such as kitesurfing, are based on these assets. Marketing efforts are targeted to individual travellers, too.

### Conclusions

There are many common challenges in tourism development in both regions, despite the fact that the destinations are located in very different natural environments. Both Montenegro and Finnish Lapland have found similar solutions to the same problems. By developing and marketing new, nature-based products both destinations try to attract new market segments, and especially niche markets.

If we think of tourism products, what could Montenegro teach Lapland and vice versa? In Lapland, the emphasis is on delivering experiences to tourists. Although this is a good goal, it often leads to very complex, expensive tourism products. Experiences can also be gained by very simple means if they are based on genuine things. A good example of this is a visit to a winery, a product offered to tourists in Montenegro. The product includes the tasting of local wines and cheeses in a rustic environment where the entrepreneur tells about the winery.

Lapland's tourism can offer Montenegro, among other things, practical examples of quality control and professionalism in the tourism industry. Another important aspect in tourism development is to raise know-how through education and research. In this, Lapland has a lot to offer.

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# 5. Cross-border Cooperation in Tourism: The Barents Region and the Balkans

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## Introduction

This article is based on observations and findings obtained during the authors' benchmarking trip to the Balkan Region with consideration of tourism cooperation experience in the Barents Region. The article provides a brief overview of the positive world experience of different cross-border tourism promotion models. It emphasizes the Balkan area example, highlights the Barents Region progress in the field of tourism cooperation enhancement, and makes an attempt to analyse the perspectives and challenges of the Barents Region promotion as a cross-border tourism destination.

## Interregional tourism development programmes

A tourism-related issue that is presently gaining more and more relevance is cross-border cooperation and promotion of regional tourism destinations. Looking across borders, tourism could be a major player in sub-regional integration, achieving socio-economic sustainability in the area and increasing the region's competitiveness in the global context. There are considerable opportunities for regional collaboration and learning from best practices

of the neighbouring countries – in general and through cross-border projects.

By now there are several examples of regional tourism programmes around the globe. Among them, for example, are Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme (CRSTDP) and the Danube Regional Development Project. The first one was launched by the Caribbean Forum for African, Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM) in order to equip its members (Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago) with necessary resources and knowledge to reach their shared vision of regional sustainable tourism. The programme helped significantly to stimulate economic growth and relieve poverty in the area. The indicators for success were not only the number of tourist arrivals and cruise passengers, but also improvement of the quality of the tourism industry by developing its niche-oriented products, including bird watching, extreme sports, weddings and honeymoons. (Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme.)

The Danube Regional Development Project began in 2003 and united four South-Eastern

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European countries on the Danube River – Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia – with the purpose to increase activities for the tourism and investment sectors, as well as to address environmental protection in the Danube region. Earlier separately developed and promoted river cruises, bicycle tours, national parks, hiking and wine tours were brought together under one cross-border project in order to develop small- and medium-sized enterprises, improve human resources, especially marketing and promotion skills, increase cooperation among the four South-Eastern European countries and assist these states in their European integration processes. (30 GTZ German Technical Cooperation.)

### Tourism development in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region

In the European North, cross-border cooperation in tourism has been realized within the Barents countries' collaboration, which was established in 1993. Geographically, the Barents Region spans the northern territories of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Northwest Russia, including the counties of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, the Nenets Autonomous Area, and the Republics of Karelia and Komi.

As with many similar cross-border regional structures established in various parts of Europe, the Barents Cooperation aims to contribute to a more stable and peaceful Europe. The former Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the author and ideologist of the Barents Cooperation, Thorvald Stoltenberg, frequently

stressed the importance of regional cooperation areas in Europe speaking about the Barents Region in the North, regional cooperation around the Baltic area, the Black Sea and the Balkans. "If we succeed in the regional cooperation in these areas, it is quite obvious that we will turn an area of tension into an area of stability and cooperation, which of course is of vital importance," highlights Stoltenberg (2000).

Promoting tourism relations between the near-border regions is undoubtedly an efficient way to bring the countries closer. The Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) looks upon its tourism as an independently developing sector of the economy able to considerably increase the gross regional domestic product in the northern areas of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (Koval 2011).

### Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Barents Regional Council Joint Working Group on Tourism as a tool for cooperation

It should be noted that tourism and tourism cooperation were identified as the areas especially promising in terms of regional development already back in 1993, when the Kirkenes Declaration on Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) was signed. However, it was only 15 years later that the dedicated interregional interaction facility – the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Barents Regional Council Joint Working Group on Tourism (JWGT) – was established upon the initiative of the Russian side. Among JWGT members are

Project title	Period	Partners	Goal	Results
<i>Labour Market Development for Economic Growth in Arkhangelsk Region</i>	<b>2004–2006</b>	Folkuniversitetet in Uppsala (Sweden) in collaboration with the RF Federal Agency of Education, Committee for International Relations and Tourism Development of Arkhangelsk Region and Arkhangelsk State Technical University.	Development of a sustainable mechanism to provide the labour market for the tourism sphere in the Arkhangelsk Region with qualified staff as a result of the enhanced continuing professional education system.	Over 100 participants from Arkhangelsk during a nine-month-long professional education course obtained new skills and knowledge in hospitality and tourism. 60 % of them were tourist companies' employees, 40 % socially unprotected women (single mothers and young women with a low education level). Twelve teachers from the local high school took professional re-training in tourism and hospitality in Sweden.
<i>Developing Opportunities of Events Tourism cooperation between the Arkhangelsk Region and Northern Norway</i>	<b>2008–2009</b>	Committee of International Relations and Tourism Development of Arkhangelsk Region; tourism associations in Troms and Finnmark counties; Norwegian Barents Secretariat and "Innovation Norway".	Development of event tourism products to enhance direct tourist exchange between the Arkhangelsk Region and Northern Norway.	Studied the potential for event tourism development in the partner-countries. Mapping out the events calendar, creating joint tourist programmes. In June 2009 on the Solovetsky Islands, the project hosted an international workshop on the Barents event tourism cooperation where further perspectives of MICE tourism development were discussed.
<i>History of Northern Seafaring as a Resource in Promoting Cultural and Educational Tourism in Arkhangelsk Region (1 stage)</i>	<b>2008–2009</b>	Committee of International Relations and Tourism Development of Arkhangelsk Region; Ministry of Culture of Arkhangelsk Region; Troms County, Norwegian and Arkhangelsk museums; Norwegian Barents Secretariat.	Expand collaboration of the Norwegian and Arkhangelsk museums, joint study and preserve the history of northern seafaring and Pomor culture, embody the partnering countries' common history in the newly created tourist destinations and promote them as parts of the joint tourist routes.	Experience exchange within the international conference "Pomor Culture and Northern Seafaring", selecting material for creating a joint exhibition. Study trips for Russian and Norwegian museum specialists; joint workshops, seminars and training sessions focusing on how to enhance attractiveness of history museums in the eyes of tourists and arrange joint exhibitions featuring the polar history of Russia and of Norway. Creating and promotion of a joint exhibition. In 2011, parallel joint exhibitions on Northern Seafaring were arranged in Onega, Arkhangelsk and Tromso.
<i>Cold Shores – Warm Relations (2 stage)</i>	<b>2009–2012</b>			
<i>Professional Development of Specialists Engaged in Tourism Sector of Arkhangelsk Region</i>	<b>2009–2010</b>	Committee of International Relations and Tourism Development of Arkhangelsk Region; local tourism businesses, PUM Programme "Senior Experts" (the Netherlands).	Increase the service standards in the tourism sector through professional development of tourism specialists.	A series of workshops and training sessions was organized by the Dutch top experts in Arkhangelsk and several municipalities on different aspects of tourism. The target group included over 200 local representatives of over 20 tourism organizations (tourist agencies, hotels, cafes and restaurants). Both theoretical knowledge and practical skills were acquired. The experts' recommendations on how to enhance service quality were implemented by the local companies.
<i>Development of joint educational programme "Travel and Tourism Management"</i>	<b>2007–2009</b>	Northern (Arctic) Federal University (Arkhangelsk), Harstad University College (Norway), Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences (Finland).	Develop a joint educational programme, enhance the quality of tourism managers training.	Experience exchange in training tourism managers, academic materials exchange, creating an international pool of teachers, using on-line training practices, development of the joint English-taught on-line course "Management in Tourism" (Bachelor course, 60 ECTS), organizing students enrolment, training and summer schools. Over 30 students from the three partner countries have completed the course.

Table 1. The most notable international tourist projects implemented with active involvement of the Arkhangelsk Region.



the Norwegian county of Troms, the Norrbotten County Administrative Board (Sweden), the Province of Lapland Finland, the Arkhangelsk and Murmansk Regions, the Nenets Autonomous Area, and the Komi Republic. The JWGT's overall objective is to unite tourism potential of the Barents countries and to develop multi-lateral and interdisciplinary cooperation in the field of tourism in the Barents Region. (Mandate for the Joint Working Group on Tourism).

Many efforts are also taken by the Working Group towards Arctic-related tourism development, the promotion of tourism in remote places, the involvement of local inhabitants in the creation of new destinations, and preservation of cultural and natural heritage. Nowadays BEAR members share an understanding of the necessity to facilitate cross-border tourism cooperation by designing joint tourism products and routes.

### International tourism cooperation experience in the Arkhangelsk Region

During the past 20 years the Barents Region has accumulated significant knowledge and experience of cross-border tourism cooperation mostly based on bilateral and multilateral projects, international tourism events and other appreciated joint initiatives. The experience of international tourism cooperation gained by the Arkhangelsk Region during the recent period is worth mentioning here. In Table 1 is the summed-up overview of the most notable tourist projects implemented with active involvement of the Arkhangelsk Region.

A major stimulus for tourism-focused cross-border cooperation in the BEAR and in the Arkhangelsk Region as part of the BEAR, became the project Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism (BART). Being implemented since 2011 within the framework of the ENPI CBC Kolarctic Programme, it targets the development of a Barents tourism strategy and application of efficient mechanisms of public-private partnership. The project pools together the efforts of partners in Finland, Russia, Sweden and Norway who represent regional and local authorities and educational establishments training tourism and hospitality specialists. Involvement in the project of the BEAR Joint Working Group on Tourism is expected to meet the project's purpose of developing a joint action plan the BEAR countries could rely upon when launching the joint projects and programmes targeting enhanced potential of the interregional and cross-border tourism.

### Development of the tourism industry in the Balkan area

The benchmarking trip to Montenegro and Italy undertaken in June 2012 enabled the authors to get familiarized with the Balkan countries' experience in cross-border tourism destination development as well as to define best-proven approaches and tools to be considered under the elaboration of the tourism development strategy in the Barents area.

Tourism in the Balkan area has demonstrated constant growth in the past years. It is



*Tourism is one of the most efficient tools for interregional and international cooperation that facilitates good neighbourhood relations and ensures sustainable social and economic development.*

noteworthy that Montenegro is a small country of only 620 000 inhabitants where tourism accounts for over 25 % of gross domestic product. Every fifth citizen in the country is employed in the tourism sector. The estimates from the Central Bank state that the total income from tourism has increased from 2001 to 2007 by 460 %, or from €86 million to €480 million (Montenegro Tourism Development Strategy to 2020). Being world famous for abundance of geographical attractions, UNESCO World Heritage sites, exciting history, unique cultural heritage and significant road corridors, the Balkan countries offer great opportunities for the region to establish itself firmly as a cross-border tourism destination that is nowadays gaining more and more power for further advancement in the world market.

One of the significant tools for promoting cross-border cooperation in tourism in the Balkan area is European Union funding programmes favouring the integration of the Balkan countries into the EU zone. TurGrate 2 project (Integrated Actions to Promote Sustainable Tourist Development, 2011–2014) is co-financed by the IPA Adriatic Cross Border Cooperation Programme and aims at fostering an innovative system for managing the integrated tourist product in the Adriatic countries. The project partnership consortium is represented by different organizations from Italy, Montenegro, Albania and Greece. The project's

mission is to build a different kind of tourism based on the enhancement of the distinctive values and cultural identities of the involved territories (TurGrate 2). The project partners are actively cooperating on the creation of a trans-border network for developing and improving territorial cooperation; increasing competitiveness of a shared tourist system; and the creation of new common tourist products. It was also interesting to get acquainted with the approaches and mechanisms the partners are utilizing for destination branding and marketing, stimulating public-private partnerships, developing universal quality standards, and implementing various methods to enhance the tourism potential in cities and municipalities.

### **The use of Balkan experience for cross-border tourism development in the Barents Region**

The knowledge gained in the Balkan countries has assisted us in making an attempt to consider the Barents Region as a possible cross-border tourism cluster and in outlining pre-requisites and conditions necessary for this.

The northern areas are becoming more and more attractive and popular among tourists who have experienced enough sunny resorts and are turning towards exploration of the northern sights and new impressions. The

world's overall attention to the North and the Arctic area, its natural and cultural strengths as well as the positive political image of the Barents Region in a global context, create favourable conditions for effective positioning of the Barents area and thus increasing the tourist flow to the North.

Considering the assumption that in the near future the interest to the North will grow sustainably, the geographic and political concept of the "Barents Region" could become an attractive umbrella brand for the promotion of regional tourist destinations. In this context, and to ensure sound planning and forecasting, it is advisable to study and take into account efficient models of cross-border tourism cooperation and proven approaches in establishing interregional brands.

Based on the Balkan experience, the key prerequisites for tourism development in the Barents Region under the joint umbrella brand should reasonably include certain measures on the institutional level, like enhancing trans-border networking via setting-up trans-border tourism boards and an interregional tourism association. Such an association could take up the functions of pursuing an overall joint tourism promotion strategy, integrating tourist potentials of the member-countries, enhancing tourist trade and promoting the region as one of major travel destinations. It could also solve the tasks of collecting statistical data as well as creating and maintaining an interregional web tourist portal. The role of the BEAR Joint Working Group on Tourism could become cru-

cial in creating and supporting such instruments.

Secondly, it is hardly possible to promote the Barents area as a universal destination without offering joint tourism programmes. Foremost the efforts shall be made on identification of main typical products and cultural heritage, their improvement and promotion. Like the Balkans, grounding its promotion strategy on the three common products (olives, seaside and monasteries), the Barents Region should also define its distinguished brands. The multicultural itineraries and routes linked to the regional trend shall be developed to promote unique values of the territory.

Thirdly, it is significant to qualify tourist services by setting-up homogeneous tourism standards for the whole region, particularly on hotel classification. This measure will minimize the differences in service levels and enhance the overall quality standards in the region. Support of national and regional governments is seen as the essential requirement and should envisage effective public-private sector cooperation as well as exploitation of fund-raising resources for the implementation of pilot projects.

Obviously, the Barents Region has great tourism potential and many visitors find it attractive due to its unique nature, polar lights, virgin forests, great possibilities for snow activities, rafting, hiking, hunting and Arctic tourism. The idea itself of using the Balkan example and creating an umbrella brand for the Barents Region seems to be quite promising. However, certain specific features of the territory and barriers shall be considered in de-

veloping this trend. The most evident of them are an insufficient uniform perception of the Barents Region, long distances and poor connections, poorly developed tourism infrastructure (especially in the Russian part), language barriers, few joint tourist routes, different service quality, visa formalities, the need for special permission for entering border zones, and a lack of knowledge about offering services at the international level, among others. Therefore, the viability and feasibility of the “Barents Region umbrella brand” is to be further studied by undertaking joint integrated research of geographical, ethnic and cultural identity of the Barents Region in the context of tourism cooperation, elaborating a regional tourism development strategy, identifying potential

common tourism products and destinations, market research, fund-raising, etc.

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The analysis of tourism development in the Balkans and the Barents Region has once again confirmed that tourism is one of the most efficient tools for interregional and international cooperation that facilitates good neighbourhood relations and does, undoubtedly, deserve continued effort on the part of the authorities, business and academic communities with a view to ensuring sustainable social and economic development and an improved quality of life in the regions.

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## 6. A Theoretical Reflection on the Concept of Hostmanship in the Light of Two Emerging Tourism Regions

Hans Gelter<sup>13</sup>

### Introduction

This paper explores the potential of shifting from providing services to producing experiences in emerging tourism destinations such as the Barents and the Adriatic Sea Regions. It is based on a theoretical reflection and personal experiences of service and hospitality in these areas. It explores the progression of offerings in the experience economy as a means for destination development. In the light of three main ways of product development for experience offerings, the “soft” dimensions of hospitality and hostmanship will be discussed, and how the experience economy can transform unique selling points to experiential value promises.

### Background

Emerging tourism areas and new destinations, such as the Barents Region and the Adriatic Sea Region, have demanding challenges to find a competitive position on the world tourism map. These challenges include identifying and defining tourist attractions as unique selling points, finding a brand and core value of the destination, identifying markets and target groups, developing tourism infrastructure such as transportation, lodging etc., attracting investors and finding funding for tourism development, and packing the tourism resources into attractive tourist products and experiences.

Although these “hard” dimensions of tourism development are challenging to manage for both public and private stakeholders, even more difficult to manage are the “soft” dimensions, consisting of the human resources of a destination. These include among many dimensions, attitudes towards tourists among locals and tourism employees, service quality and hospitality, competence and education levels among tourist operators and employees, and their understanding of the complexity of the tourist experience. In a time where tourism is shifting focus from the traditional “tourist gaze” and consuming places (Urry 1995, 2002) towards consuming experiences and even demanding personal transformations and personal growth through experiences (Pine & Gilmore 1999), the human resources and “soft” dimensions of a destination will play an increasing significance in destination branding in addition to the “hard” tangible dimensions.

Pine and Gilmore (1999) in their paradigm shifting book *The Experience Economy* explained this development towards experiences as a new economic offering. Applying their model of progression of the economic value on tourism, we can regard “commodities” as the natural and cultural heritage resources of a destination, which *per se* usually have low market price and competitive position. For example, the Sámi culture and boreal forest of

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Sweden is basically the same as in Norway, Finland and Russia. “Goods” can be regarded as tourism facilities such as hotels and resorts, which are still fairly similar globally in price and differentiation. “Services” are the tourist products and tourism offerings, such as snowmobiling through the forest, which can differentiate the Barents from other global destinations, but within the Barents area, are moderately differentiated, mainly in service quality and hospitality management. However, staged experiences, according to Pine and Gilmore, will have both a stronger competitive position and higher pricing. Here, customers become “guests” and service and hospitality are transformed into personal “hostmanship” (for definition, see below) (Gunnarsson & Blohm 2008). This means more personalized experiences than within the service sector. Even a higher level of economic offerings, not yet theoretically explored in a tourism context (Gelter 2011) are the offerings of personally guided transformations through transformative experiences, where guests are called “aspirant” and the seller “elictor” and the offering “a guided transformation” (Pine & Gilmore 1999, 170).

Interestingly, in the forewords of their updated edition of their book (2011, ix), Pine and Gilmore write: “Although the book has since been published in fifteen languages and purchased by more than three hundred thousand people world-wide, the book’s thesis has not sufficiently penetrated the minds of enough business leaders (and policy makers) to give full bloom to a truly new – and desperately

needed – economic order.” Therefore, new destinations such as the Barents and Adriatic Sea regions have a possibility to find a competitive position within global tourism by adopting these new business concepts of experience production and guiding transformations.

The aim of this paper is to highlight the “soft” dimensions of destination development in the perspective of the experience economy, in the light of the Barents and Adriatic Sea area destination development. The background to this paper was an assignment for a benchmarking trip to destinations in Montenegro and southern Italy within the ENPI CBC Kolarctic project Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism (BART). The aim of the benchmarking trip was to learn about cross-border cooperation within a similar project in the Adriatic Sea Region, the project “Integrated actions to promote sustainable tourist development” of Adriatic IPA Cross Border Cooperation funding, with the aim of sustainable cross-border tourism development between southern Italy, Greece, Albania and Montenegro. The benchmarking trip revealed similar challenges and problems in both the Barents Region and Adriatic Sea area in regard to the “soft” dimensions of destination development.

## Method

This paper is based on a theoretical reflection on the emerging theory of experience economy, framed by my personal experiences and observations of the service quality and experience production in the Barents Region and Adriatic

Sea area. Both areas are emerging tourism destinations with similar challenges regarding both hard and soft dimensions of destination development. This paper will not address the “hard” dimensions of attractions, infrastructure etc. in these regions, but focus on the potential of using the “soft” dimensions to gain competitive positions on the world tourism map. Through benchmarking within the BART project and involvement in other tourism projects, I have gained extensive personal experiences of tourism and tourism offerings within the Barents area and elsewhere. My experiential platform also includes experiences as a tour-leader in international destinations in Europe, Africa and Asia, my own business involvement as a tourism entrepreneur in Swedish Lapland, as well as being a chair and developer of the Bachelor programme of Experience Production at Luleå University of Technology, Sweden. A reliability weakness in my analysis is that benchmarking was not done in a systematic way according to theory, and empirical data were not collected systematically. This paper will not discuss the cultural differences between the areas in regard to the potential of developing hospitality and hostmanship. This paper is therefore based on a qualitative deductive analysis based on personal experiences and observations, framed with theoretical models.

### Strategies for tourism product development in emerging destinations

Tourism businesses within emerging destination such as the Barents and Adriatic Sea areas

can use several different strategies for tourism service and product development, but the main strategies would be:

1. Copycatting – imitating others’ products and services.
2. Benchmarking – cooperating with best-in-practice and adaptation.
3. Innovation – creative development and productification of new products and services.

There are several other options to improve or develop processes and products such as blue-printing, customer surveys, focus groups etc. (Kandampully et al. 2001; Williams & Buswell 2003, and others), but I will here shortly reflect on these three main methods.

*Copycatting* is simply copying, imitating, replicating or repeating an innovation or a pioneering process, or others’ products or way of working. Although copycatting at first seems unethical and bad business practice, it appears to be the most applied, and in many cases the most successful strategy (Shenkar 2010). This is also my impression when looking at tourism offers in the Barents Region. Looking, for example, at winter products, we can see that copycatting appears to be a norm among activity businesses in the Barents area, finding the same set of activities such as dog sledging, snowmobile driving, snow-shoe hiking etc. at almost every winter destination. The higher we move up the ladder of Pine and Gilmor’s economic progression, the harder the economic offerings will be to copycat. This is because they are to a higher degree based on the “soft” dimensions and human resources of the pro-

vider and the personal involvement of the buyer. This scenario is similar to the model by Boswijk et al. (2007) for actor's involvement in the experience production.

Boswijk et al. (2007) envision experience production as three "generations", where the first generation is the traditional "staging" of experiences. Here the suppliers arrange, design and provide the experience for the guest, who is more or less a passive consumer of the experience. In the second generation there is a co-creation of the experience by the supplier and the guest, and in the third generation the supplier only provides the conditions and prerequisites for the experience that is self-directed by the guest. Service and hospitality have to be staged and can be regarded as the first generation, and thus also easier to copy. Experience production of the second and third generation will be more difficult to copy as a co-production such as in hostmanship depends of the human qualities of the provider.

Thus, if a destination seeks a competitive position, it should strive to develop second and third generations of experience production that will be distinctly differentiated from the general tourism service offerings. This seems to be the strategy in Swedish Lapland, where much effort (education, development projects etc.) is put into moving away from traditional tourism service provision to co-created hostmanship and experience production. In contrast, my impression is that Norway and Finland are still geared towards traditional tourism service, while in Russia even basic

service quality management has to be developed in many places. The latter also applies to the Adriatic Sea area, where well-developed tourism areas are geared towards traditional tourism services.

The other way of developing products and services, which is similar to copycatting is *benchmarking*, a word that is sometimes sloppily used with the meaning "studying and copycatting" what others are doing. However, the theoretical framework for benchmarking is based on cooperation and reciprocal benefits between the *benchmarker* and the *benchmarker*, i.e. a co-creation (Pyo 2001). Its aim is a structured learning process that is formalized to find performance gaps that are identified and measured, and a commitment made to operational processes to close the gap (Camp 1989). There are at least forty different models of benchmarking (Pyo 2001, 11), but most are based on Deming's (1982) four stages of: plan, do, check and act. Criticism against benchmarking is that as with copycatting, it removes diversity and heterogeneity from within the industry and the best practices become a kind of standardization (Pyo 2001). Thus if Russia, for example, would benchmark Finnish Lapland for their destination development, we would end up with fairly similar products in both destinations.

True *innovation* is aiming towards completely new processes or products without using present structures. Innovation differs from *invention* in that innovation refers to the use of a better and, as a result, novel idea or method, whereas invention refers more directly to the



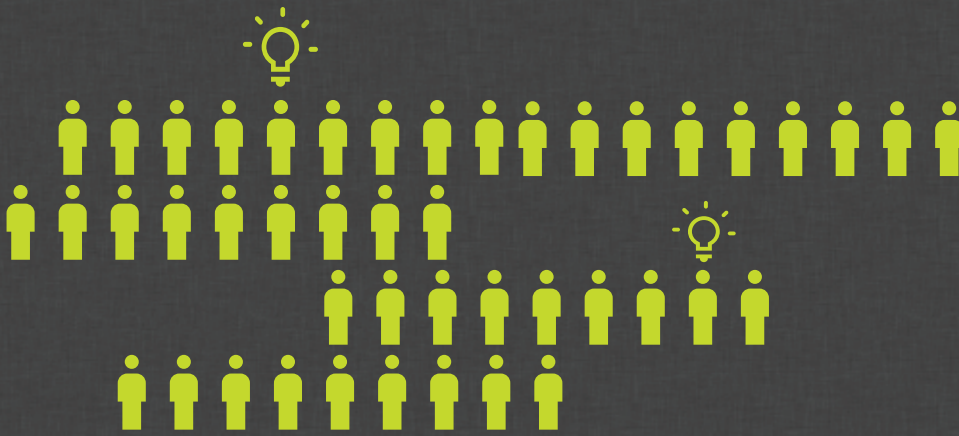
creation of the idea or method itself. Innovation also differs from *improvements* (as from benchmarking) in that innovation refers to the notion of doing something different rather than doing the same thing better. Innovation has become a political buzzword, but in my opinion true creative innovations within tourism experiences are much rarer than the copycatting of existing products. Good examples from the Barents Region are the Icehotel (which has been extensively imitated in Norway and Finland), the Tree Hotel, the Ice Dome Concert Hall, the Santa Claus Village and the northern light thermo-glass Igloo Village of Kakslauttanen in Saariselkä.

If a destination lacks highly attractive natural or cultural tourism attractions, copycatting or benchmarking of others' tourism products will not be good enough to attract global tourist attention. But according to Pine and Gilmore (1999), even an ordinary tourist service or product can be transformed into an attractive and expensive offering when transformed into a meaningful experience or transformative product. Thus copycatting and benchmarking world class destinations will not help developing destinations such as the Barents Region or the Adriatic Sea area. Rather these destinations should focus on innovative experience production and hostmanship, or even attempt to develop transformative experiences. The challenge for a destination is to develop products and services beyond expected service quality, and innovatively offer meaningful experiences.

### Moving from service to experiences and hostmanship in product development

The most obvious contribution to the tourist experience besides the attractions *per se*, is the tourism services. And in my experience, service quality usually is of very varying quality in developing destinations such as the Barents area. I have even experienced "anti-service" at a hotel in Kandalaksha, where the hotel clerk for five minutes refused to pay attention to my request for a room, and then needed almost another ten minutes of discussion before a hotel room could be offered. In other places such as Murmansk, hotel service had world quality. The aims of tourism services are to fulfil different needs and expectations of the tourist (Bergman & Klefsjö 2003; Grönroos 1984; Williams & Buswell 2003), such as the need and expectation to obtain a room in a hotel. The extent to which such needs and expectations are fulfilled and the quality of the provided services determines the satisfaction of the tourist.

High-quality tourism service is a major source of competitive advantage, and a major differentiating element in tourism positioning according to Payne (1993), while bad service quality negatively affects the image of a destination (Grönroos 1984). One observation of bad tourism service resulting in a negative experience was a guided tour at some ruins in Montenegro. The tourist product, and its selling point, the historical remains, and the information provided about the ruins, held high quality. But the guide lacked all understanding of service quality and experience production. Having no interest in our per-



*By moving into the experience economy, adapting methods of innovative experience production, and stepping up from providing service to co-creation through genuine hostmanship, businesses and destinations in the Barents Region and the Adriatic Sea area will be able to develop experiential value promises in addition to their unique selling points.*

ception, understanding or even hearing her “monologue” of information, even sometimes talking to herself according to her memorized script, the guide managed to completely “destroy” the experience of this old city. The guided tour was definitively not a memorable or meaningful experience of the place and its history, rather an annoying experience of bad guide performance. Had she added hospitality to her knowledge about the place, and interest in the tourist guests according to experience production, the guided tour could have become a very interesting, memorable and meaningful experience.

Thus, one way to increase the quality of a tourism product or service is to increase the quality of hospitality. *Hospitality* is a term usually defined in the narrow sense as the service provided in the tourism sector of “accommodation and catering” i.e., the “hospitality industry” (Lashley & Morrison 2000, 3), while in a broader sense it includes a social, private and commercial domain in the relationship between a host and guest: “To be effective, hospitality requires the guest to feel that the

host is being hospitable through feelings of generosity, a desire to please, and a genuine regard for the guest as an individual.” (Lashley & Morrison 2000, 15). *Hospitableness* is the trait possessed by hospitable people that can be defined as including general virtues such as benevolence, public-spiritedness, compassion, and affectedness (Telfer 2000). The hospitality research discusses whether hospitableness can apply to the commercial host (Telfer 2000), i.e. can employees at a large hotel chain show real hospitableness or only through hospitality management put on a “show of staged hospitality” (Lashley & Morrison 2000)?

While traditional hospitality usually lies within the first generation experience production where the host is “performing” (sometimes in a scripted way) for the guest, the Swedish concept of *hostmanship* (*värdskap*) is based on a true co-creation (second generation experience production), where the private domain of genuine hospitableness is part of the business domain, and the host shows genuine concern for the guest’s happiness, invites the guest not only to the business of the host, but invites the

guest to share the life experiences of the host. Hostmanship is defined as the “art of getting people to feel welcome – to us as persons, to our business and to our places” (Gunnarsson & Blohm 2008).

In contrast to (staged) hospitality, hostmanship is a private value and attitude, a way of living, a proudness of one self, one’s business and place, and how you see and value your guests. This can be exemplified by my taxi transfer from Dubrovnik Airport to Kotor in Montenegro, where the taxi driver did not say a word during the almost three-hour drive, leaving me in a vacuum of questions about where we were and what I saw, and giving me an insecure feeling, whereas there are many examples of proud taxi drivers in Swedish Lapland, who enthusiastically explain and promote their destination. Likewise, the dedicated local bus guide in Montenegro did not have the knowledge and values of proudness to get us to feel welcome to the destination and places we passed or visited. In contrast, a local guide at Lake Skadar provided genuine hostmanship during a wine-testing excursion.

According to Gunnarsson and Blohm (2008) hostmanship is based on six values: the value to serve and contribute to another person; a holistic view to be able to see yourself through the eyes of your guest; responsibility to act on every problem that appears; to trust and let lose your consideration to guests and co-workers; the values of dialogue, to listen and rather understand than be understood; and finally knowledge – to know your guest’s

habits and culture, to meet the guest in his or her conditions. In a larger business, there is a management concept of value your employees and make them proud, “When I feel I am worth something, I can be hostable”. This management issue was very obvious in souvenir shops in Kotor, Montenegro, where in one, the employed young girls had problems with basic service quality and hospitality, apparently with a very angry shop owner. In contrast, next door the staff had fun, were happy and provided not just good service and hospitality but genuine hostmanship.

Such value building by the management is expressed by the Fish! Concept developed by Johnny Yokoyama, owner of the now world famous Pike Place Fish in Seattle, USA (Lundin et al. 2000). He realized that by having fun and play at work, he created not just a great work place for his employees with a lot of energy, but also created an attraction of entertainment. He invited his employees to join a work culture with four messages: “Choose Your Attitude” – you can always choose how to feel about your work; “Have Fun” – joy and happiness creates energy, play at work; “Make Their Day” – share your joy and engage your customers in the play (i.e. co-production); and “Be There” – focus on your customers, put all your attention on them. However, “having fun” must be genuine! I have tested a Swedish rafting company where their business idea was to be the “funniest rafters in Sweden” and released a cascade of scripted jokes during the rafting experience, which completely destroyed the total experience.

We're committed to quality.	We never say 'no'.
We're friendly, helpful and courteous.	We're impeccable.
We smile.	We're on stage and we know our role in the show.
We are a team.	We're professional and efficient.
We're positive.	We strive to be the best.

Table 1. The Disney 10-point staff code.

Quality of hospitality and hostmanship and the performance of the staff is a business management issue, and its values must be communicated to empower their staff to deliver such standards in their daily work. This can be illustrated by Disney's 10-point staff code (Table 1) to all employees based on Walt Disney's legacy of creating happiness through imagination, attention to details, and an appreciation of people's needs and desires. Staff are employed by a process of casting to test if they share the basic values of Disney (Williams & Buswell 2003, p 128).

Any of, or a combination of, the Disney staff code, the Fish! Concept and the Swedish hostmanship would by itself create great experiences for the guests, and thus contribute to a competitive edge of a business and destination. Traditionally, destination marketing and market communication have been focused on the *unique selling points* (USP) of a destination, which is a sales-driven, product-centered and outcome-focused view. But today's consumers are not function driven, but rather value, experience and emotion driven, more interested in how an offering informs (transforms), entertains, and contributes to personal branding and self-fulfilment. Schmitt (2003) suggests replacing USP with ESP, the *experiential selling paradigm* with an experiential positioning and *experiential value promise* (EVP) for a destination. The new paradigm of the experience economy and the "critical turn" towards co-creation in tourism, such as in hostmanship, indicate that

competence of experience production that gives guests not only unique, but rather meaningful experiences will be a critical prerequisite to succeed as a destination. Emerging tourism areas such as the Barents and the Adriatic Sea areas, would therefore gain a competitive edge by focusing on the "soft" dimensions and EVP's for the destinations.

## Conclusions

I have here argued that for developing destinations to find an international competitive edge, copycatting products and good service quality will not be good enough. By moving into the experience economy, adapting methods of innovative experience production, and stepping up from providing service to co-creation through genuine hostmanship, businesses and destinations in the Barents Region and the Adriatic Sea area will be able to develop experiential value promises in addition to their unique selling points.

Having done informal benchmarking around the world, my feeling is that most tourism businesses still are within the framework of delivering service, i.e., the service economy. There is therefore a great opportunity for companies in developing destinations such as the Barents and Adriatic Sea areas, to gain a competitive position by entering the experience economy, or as Pine and Gilmore (2011, ix) expressed "...to give full bloom to a truly new – and desperately needed – economic order."

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## 7. Academic Mobility of Students as a Type of Educational Tourism in Higher Education

*Inna Ryzhkova*<sup>14</sup>

### Introduction

Academic mobility is a priority in the realization of the Bologna Process and is a significant phenomenon in the integration processes of higher education in the world community. Integration of higher education institutions into the world educational space needs to direct much attention to the problem of academic mobility.

According to the recommendations № R (95) of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (1996), academic mobility is understood as the movement of students, teachers or researchers for a certain period (usually, up to one year) to another educational institution (in the native country or abroad) for the purpose of study, teaching or research after which they return to their home institution. Moreover, academic mobility can be considered as a type of educational tourism, meaning temporary departures of people from their permanent places of residence for a period from 24 hours up to 6 months for the purpose of education without doing activities connected with earning an income. Naturally, educational tourism is not connected with the age or status of the potential “tourist” (Pevzner & Nikolaeva 2012).

Educational tourism is an efficient means of education that is actively used in domestic and international practices. According to Pogodina and Solomin (2007) there is a special tourism pedagogy, a science dealing with laws of edu-

cation and the maturing of a person by means of tourism. Educational tourism is regarded as a very important component of tourism pedagogy. Pogodina and Solomin describe educational tourism as a specific form of organized educational process implemented outside of the main educational establishment. Universal social-personal and general qualities (gnostical, moral-volitional, communicative, organizational and image competences) of participants of educational journeys are formed under the condition of their efficient organization. The integrative phenomenon of educational tourism emerges as a result of interaction and correlation between educational and touristic activity.

### Mobility of academically oriented youth

In the epoch of globalization, the student population, mainly composed of the youth, should be aimed at mobility (both internal and external) as one form of study in a higher education institution, which is, moreover, obligatory according to the requirements of the Bologna Process. The Bologna Process expects that students who go through different forms of academic mobility within different cultural and educational fields and different social systems are capable of perceiving the world of another culture with its identity and uniqueness. The world of one’s native culture then acquires

clear contours because when the students get into another country's educational space, they become of great interest to their peers as bearers of other strange cultures. It leads to a negotiation of national self-sufficiency. Naturally, the "mobile" student's system of values should change as the skill of constructing dialogue within intercultural fields becomes significant in it and the "other" culture begins to act as one of the key values. In this respect we can speak about the significant influence of the academic mobility instrument on the process of the student personality development.

Migration of academically oriented youth is the central segment of the world system of higher education (see, e.g. OECD 2010, 32–33). Quantitative indicators of the academic mobility of students are impressive: for the last 40 years the increase in the number of foreign students has exceeded that of the general sphere of higher education. According to UNESCO data, over the last 25 years international academic mobility has gone up by 300 % (Brinev & Chujanov 2010). Many researchers consider that this process will continue to gather pace even if the yearly student increase will decrease.

Educational researcher Ledeneva (2003) mentioned that about 13 000 immigrants from Russia get education in degree programmes or short tailored courses (from 3 months up to one semester) at universities in 33 countries, but the majority of them study in four countries: the USA, Germany, France and Great Britain. In 2008 the most attractive countries for foreign students were: the USA, Great Britain,

Australia, France, and Germany. With reference to American research by Artamonova (2008, 44) there are 26 000 Russian students in foreign higher education institutions in the USA.

The Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education (held in Louvain-la-Neuve, 2009) called for all the countries to widen the space of student academic mobility and provide its high quality. According to the conference prognosis, by 2020, at least 20 % of graduates from higher education institutions in the countries participating in the Bologna Process should study or research abroad (The Bologna Process 2020).

Academic mobility, thus, should become a hallmark of the European space of higher education. In connection with this it becomes necessary to analyse the complex of projects and programmes that enable students to take a degree programme or short tailored courses in a country different from the location of the home institution.

### The University of the Arctic and academic mobility of students

Northern universities in Russia joining the Bologna Process gradually develop international contacts in the educational sphere by participating in different networks and associations and by activating participation in programmes that provide funding for academic mobility, and international educational and scientific research projects. The University of the Arctic (UArctic) can be considered as a basic network that in its structure formalizes the general tendency

for internationalization of higher education in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, the purpose of which is to develop higher education and promote scientific research in the North. Originally, the background for the idea of creating the University of the Arctic was the model of efficient regional interaction, aimed at supporting socio-economic development of the Arctic and the Arctic region on the whole. Naturally, alongside recognition of the wholeness of the Arctic and the necessity to overcome different political, geographical and social barriers between the countries, the significance of this model is the internationalization of higher schooling, which allows the realization of deep dialogical constructions in the field of education.

Today the University of the Arctic includes over 130 members from different countries. Russia is represented by 36 educational structures. Among the members of this network there are small and big universities, scientific research institutes, colleges, and different associations of indigenous peoples. The activities of the University of the Arctic involve about 74 000 students and 45 000 researchers and teachers from different countries. In May–June 2009 the strategic plan of UArctic development was approved for the period 2009–2013, defining the contours of development of all strategically significant zones of the structure, including thematic networks in social work, northern tourism, distance education, and the main Bachelor, Master and academic mobility programmes. (UArctic.)

Developing ideas of the new international partnership and approving new information

technologies of teaching, the University of the Arctic offers several academic programmes: the programme “Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies” (BCS), based on the principle of interdisciplinarity and aimed at the phenomenon of the North; different life-long learning programmes, reflecting the development of education outside traditional university culture; as well as a range of exchange programmes, such as “North 2 North”, “Go North” and others. It is noted that the realization of the “Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies” programme led to the development of a similar programme called “Bachelor of Northern Studies” (BNS). This programme is based on BCS core courses and Advanced Emphasis courses focused on the management of local and regional development. Thus, within the UArctic network, different Bachelor, Master and PhD Exchange programmes are realized and provide access to education based on the dialogue in the northern dimension. The whole spectrum of programmes reflects both real and virtual less traditional student academic mobility.

### Academic mobility of students at the University of Montenegro

Analysis of materials from the website of the University of Montenegro ([www.ucg.ac.me](http://www.ucg.ac.me)), a state higher education institution established in April 1974, allows us to affirm that countries of the Balkan region also develop academic mobility models following the main principles of the Bologna Declaration and taking into account the regional principle. The transition to



the ECTS system enables students to cross the borders and thus promotes increased academic mobility. The number of outgoing students in Montenegro is higher than the number of incoming students. This imbalance is also characteristic of the Russian higher education institutions in the Barents Region.

The University of Montenegro is a participant in the Tempus project, the programmes of which are geographically grouped according to region. In addition to the University of Montenegro the project involves higher education institutions from other Western Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Serbia and Kosovo. It is important for the University to participate in the international educational programme EMECW "Erasmus Mundus: external cooperation window" (2009–2013), which is directed at developing mutual understanding and cooperation in the sphere of higher education among the states of the European Union and their geographical partners. The key aspect of this programme is the development of student and teacher academic mobility, which includes different scientific exchanges, sharing knowledge and experience, and benchmarking trips to learn best practices. Within the "scholarship scheme for academic exchange between the EU and Western Balkan countries", the University of Montenegro participates in two large-scale projects: "Basileus" (Balkan Academic Scheme for Internationalization Learning together with EU Universities) ([www.basileus.ugent.be](http://www.basileus.ugent.be)) and "Join EU – SEE" ([www.joineusee.eu](http://www.joineusee.eu)). Within the first programme 101 students from

Montenegro applied and 12 students from abroad expressed an interest to spend a part of their studies in Montenegro. Within the second programme, 86 students from Montenegro applied and 18 students from abroad chose Montenegro as the first option. This tendency can be explained by the fact that the majority of programmes at different levels offered by the University of Montenegro are realized not in the English language but in Montenegrin, which makes it difficult for foreigners to study there. Nevertheless, interaction with teachers at the University showed that for Russian students studying in Montenegro, the linguistic barrier is not impassable due to the historic roots of the Russian and Montenegrin languages. Moreover, the University of Montenegro offers special courses of Montenegrin, oriented toward simplifying the adaptation of foreign students in the host country.

### Factors influencing student mobility

Even a passing glance at the number of academic mobility programmes at present allows us to state that contemporary students have great opportunities for getting higher education based on dialogue and at the same time forming the "dialogical orientation of consciousness" of modern man, in general. Sociological research conducted by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (Senter for internasjonalsisering av utdanning, SIU), the results of which were published in April 2010, presented an interesting holistic view of factors influencing student mobil-

ity and showed the main barriers hindering study abroad. Of 24 781 surveys distributed to students after their first year of education in Bachelor's or Master's Programmes, 5 924 questionnaires were received. The respondents mentioned the following factors as their inspiration for studying abroad: opportunities for individual development; learning about another country; studying a foreign language – the language of the host country; and the opportunity to make an international career. Furthermore, the main factors hindering getting education abroad were: separation from family; fear of being far from friends with whom there is a feeling of psychological satisfaction and comfort; and the absence of adequate information about the programmes in this or that country or higher education institution. It is illustrative that the quality and availability of courses are less important than the factors representing psychological barriers. (Why study abroad.)

It is interesting to compare the data of Norwegian research with the results of the sociological survey "Assessment of efficiency of internationalization processes management and introduction of the Bologna process instruments in the Russian higher education institutions", carried out in September–October 2009 in five Russian higher education institutions in four federal districts of the Russian Federation, introducing the Bologna Process in the educational process. The analysis of data from the 213 students who participated in the survey shows that the Russian students consider the following directions of university

development as the most significant ones: introduction and realization of joint educational programmes; increase in student mobility and the introduction and realization of educational programmes abroad. Moreover, the main barrier limiting participation in academic mobility programmes is lack of finance. Additional difficulties occur in connection with content and linguistic barriers, but it is the linguistic barrier that is considered as the most easily surmountable, unlike the resource deficit, the negotiation of which is connected with maximum difficulties (Agranovich et.al. 2010).

### Conclusion – the Barents perspective

In conclusion, let us notice that higher education institutions with high rates in the educational sphere, realize, as a rule, potential from different academic mobility programmes. Naturally, the geography of international activities at a modern higher education institution is wider than the regional borders. The analysis of websites of higher education institutions in the Barents Region shows that international activities of northern universities, institutes and academies involve partners from the USA, France, Germany and many other countries but the dominance of the regional component is evident. The northern focus defines the content of the existing joint programmes and single courses offered to students within different forms of academic mobility. The project field of modern northern higher education institutions is built mainly on the regional component, taking into consideration the principle



*It is the North that becomes the basis of international educational cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and defines its content and directions of further development.*

of regionalization, which means constructing new educational environments in accordance with the specific regional character. It assumes researching an aspect of the northern phenomena.

“The actuality of the regionalization idea is defined by the worldwide tendencies of socio-cultural development of mankind, directed at recognition of inherent value, uniqueness of national and regional variants of cultures, wholeness and significance as the integral part of the universal culture” (Shabalin 2010). In view of the principle of regionalization, international student mobility can be considered as not only intercontinental but also a regional phenomenon, incorporating the northern cooperation in itself – one of the oldest traditions of regional cooperation in the world.

The model of the regional academic mobility in the Barents area, which is integrative and crosses borders, is not static as the experience of participation in different programmes shows. The national higher education institutions of the northern region efficiently use the

elements of the Finnish and Norwegian models of academic mobility, taking special efforts in increasing the flow of foreign students. The focus on the regional aspect in the content of study makes us comprehend the whole educational process in the Barents Region from a new angle. It is the North that becomes the basis of international educational cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and defines its content and directions of further development.

The academic mobility aspect of educational tourism should be considered as a priority for the innovative development of higher education. Educational tourism might be regarded as a powerful factor in increasing of the effectiveness of education in higher educational institutions. Therefore it is very important to apply comparative research in building up different models of educational tourism. The new experience including best practices in academic mobility taken from the University of Montenegro might be used effectively in constructing a model of regional academic mobility in the Barents Region.

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## 8. Student Perspective and Experiences of Participating in the Kolarctic Project BART

My Watz<sup>15</sup> & Josefin Enström<sup>15</sup>

### Two miners - who we are

This paper is about our experiences as students participating in an international collaborative research and development project, the Kolarctic project BART. We are both third-year students at Luleå University of Technology and we are studying for a Bachelor of Science in Experience Production. Our degree programme in Experience Production is the only one of its kind in Sweden and is located at the Acusticum campus in Piteå. The study programme allows us to determine our own knowledge content. Based on an entrepreneurial approach, we are encouraged to find our own interest area within the experience economy and the cultural and creative industries. The study programme is untraditional in its broad approach and the subjects it covers to give us a knowledge foundation for the future, and at the same time it provides us with the opportunity to specialize in an area that feels important for us. That is how we ended up in this tourism-oriented project with Josefin's interest in destination branding and My's interest in other cultures, as well as both of our endless curiosity and striving for knowledge.

We were invited to join this project by our teachers, who aim to involve students as much as possible and integrate them in projects like this. Our journey within this project started in

September 2011 when we got introduced to the BART project during a tourism-oriented course. Back then we did not know much about the Barents Region and we felt very excited to be invited to participate in this BART project.

### Digging in - the first meeting with the project

The BART project, Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism, is a European Union EN-PI-funded project. The main objective for the project is to contribute to the development of tourism in the Barents Region. The project aims to involve Barents tourism stakeholders from different levels such as authorities, educational institutions, businesses, and business-supporting organizations. Altogether 13 partners from Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden are involved in the project.

The project consists of the following four main activities: 1) Background of tourism in the Barents Region, 2) Tourism knowledge pool, 3) Stakeholder needs and expectations, 4) Action plan. We got involved in the project in the activity *Stakeholder needs and expectations*. Our task was to interview both small and large tourism operators in Swedish Lapland. Before we went out on an interview trip through the whole of Swedish Lapland, we were invited to an educational seminar in

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15 Luleå University of Technology



Figure 1. My Watz and Josefin Enström in Gällivare, Sweden. Photo by My Watz and Josefin Enström.

Rovaniemi to learn the methodology of qualitative interviews. This seminar included students from the other partners in the Barents Region and involved lectures and discussions about interview techniques as well as a presentation of the Barents area and the BART project. It was only then that it dawned on us that the mission was for real, and in that moment it felt like a very difficult task for us, but also an exciting challenge. The seminar in Rovaniemi was a very important activity in the process for us because we felt very insecure about interviewing real companies. In Rovaniemi, we got to learn things such as the importance of staying objective as an interviewer. Also the importance of trust building and making a relation with the interviewer, and we really had to use what we learned when we were out in the field interviewing. Through the fieldwork of interviewing these companies, we got practical training by doing the interview as many as seven times each; we have become more confident in our role as interviewers today. We think this is something you truly have to learn

by doing, and doing many times, which we did.

In this interviewing part we got a greater understanding for the tourism industry and the companies' difficulties in the market. When we compiled the answers, it all became clear: the industry is facing a hard time implementing public visions such as the aims of BART. There is a big gap between the entrepreneurs and the public sector and how new visions and cross-border corporations should be implemented. This is shown in a quote from an entrepreneur: "How are we going to cooperate with another country when we can barely cooperate within Swedish Lapland?" The entrepreneur also said: "Sure I can work with Finnish Lapland, but I don't know any entrepreneurs there. It would be a great opportunity to get to know a similar business to my own, and learn from each other."

When we got back to Piteå we transcribed all the interviews. The transcribing was a good learning process because we got to hear the entrepreneurs' answers and arguments again. We then got an opportunity to reflect on the



Figure 2. All the participants of the seminar at the Arktikum, Rovaniemi, 2011. Photo by My Watz and Josefin Enström.

answers and compare the entrepreneurs' situation in the industry one more time. What surprised us was their approach to cooperation as shown in the quotation above. This is a good observation for our future in the industry.

### Digging deeper - more involvement in the project

We also got invited to participate in the activity *Action plan*. We then went together with our teachers to Murmansk to take part in a workshop. We were the only students there among those who took part in the interview workshop in Rovaniemi. In Murmansk we got to meet a lot of new participants from the project, which was pleasant. First we got to follow-up and hear all the other countries' results from the interviews, which was very interesting, inspiring and instructive – to see the differences and similarities in a changing industry. Then we got to take part in the workshop, which started with us being mixed up in groups with the

other participants from different countries. We then got to listen to each other's facts about our own country's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. With that written down, together with the results from the interviews, we could in the groups discuss which core tasks were necessary to work with to create an action plan.

To take part in a workshop like this is good for us as students because we have the opportunity to meet and learn from people with more experience than us and also listen to their point of view, as well as experiencing cultural differences. The Murmansk visit was also very exciting for us as we had never been in Russia before, and we got the chance to do some tourist visits in the town, as well as having a seminar on an atomic icebreaker. Experiencing this Russian town and the Russian culture we could never have learned through textbooks.

Back in Piteå we started to work on the action plan. In this part we used our previous knowledge from our tourism courses and we also got to learn more through searching for more information. Josefin also wrote an essay about the Barents Region in a course about business intelligence and trend scanning, which became useful in the process of developing the action plan.

Later we got to participate in a BART seminar in Kirkenes and at the same time take part in the Stoltenberg conference with the theme: The Barents Region as a tourism destination. During the conference we listened to researchers and entrepreneurs working in the Barents



*Along the way everything became clearer and now the development of the Barents Region is something that we feel for and want to work for.*

Region share their interesting stories about the Region. We experienced the conference as a valuable knowledge exchange between all the people there. We got to learn more about cross-border tourism during the conference and our visit in the town of Kirkenes really illustrated such tourism.

During our stay in Kirkenes we felt that we were in the centre of the Barents Region and that the project truly was valuable. Our lack of knowledge about the Barents Region in the beginning of the project felt now far away as we had learned so much about the area. Our visit in Kirkenes made a good end to the project for us as it wrapped up our whole experience of the project. On the last day in Kirkenes we got the request to write this article and we could not be happier to share our part of the experience in the project through an article.

### **Finding the gold – earning knowledge from the project**

Through our participation at the meetings in Rovaniemi, Murmansk, Piteå and Kirkenes we have learned more about the cultural differences between the countries, how countries with such similar landscapes can be so different in traditions, business and governmental work and laws. The cultural differences are important to learn, especially today when it is easier to travel between countries where you are meeting a lot of different cultures. That is exactly what we have done within this project. We have not only been students and researchers, we have also been tourists. We have had

the opportunity to experience all these different cities and countries as tourists. We have experienced strict visa applications, big hotel complexes, beautiful nature, interesting food and hostmanship.

Through our participation in the seminars and meetings we have gained an insight into how various entrepreneurs from the different countries feel about the industry and, for example, cross-border cooperation. This is good for us and our future within the tourism industry. We have a head start in our own career through this project. That is why we are very grateful to have had this opportunity to take part in the BART project.

We also got to know a lot of people from other countries through this project – students, researchers, entrepreneurs and others. By talking with the students in the project we gained an understanding of the differences and similarities in the academic world. It was encouraging to be able to talk to the other students in the beginning of the BART project when we felt a bit thrown into the project. Back then the hardest part was to understand the purpose of the project when we did not know the background of it and we had not been involved in the whole preceding process of the project. Along the way everything became clearer and now the development of the Barents Region is something that we feel for and want to work for.

Sometimes during the project, language problems made it a challenge to work with the other participants. The language problem was repeatedly an issue, which we also experienced





Figure 3. A map of the Barents Region from the atomic icebreaker and the workshop in Murmansk. Photo by My Watz and Josefin Enström.

during our interviews. A limited knowledge of English in some parts of the Barents Region makes cooperation a challenge, not only in this project, but also for business cooperation.

Through our participation in the seminars and meetings we have gained an insight into how a project like this is developed. It has been very interesting to see how the structure is built in the organization of the project and the fact that it is an EU-funded project has taught us a lot. Furthermore, it has been interesting to watch the cooperation between the countries within this project.

We have been involved to a greater extent in the different parts of the project than other students from the other partner countries. This has made us come a long way in our learning process and we have been able to bring examples from our experience within this project into other courses and therefore we have also got a broader understanding of the area. That is why we feel it is important to involve students in projects like this, as our teachers do. Not only for the students but also for the projects in general. An exchange of knowledge and professionalism occurs between all the stakeholders: the students, the project and the participants in it. We think students can bring a lot of energy and ideas to a project like BART.

From our point of view as students, we think that we can bring the project characteristics that are uniquely from our generation.

Students from our generation often have a stronger technical knowledge that can contribute to finding new ways in areas that are important for the project. We know how to use new technology and the Internet in a smart and fast way that could be beneficial for the project.

Students often have their own critical eye and can offer new perspectives on things that could be useful in projects. We also have a strong drive to solve problems and make a change. To give us students a real opportunity to be involved in projects and real cases where we feel that we can make a difference and solve a problem, will contribute to us becoming more confident in our way of working and result in better study outcomes. This is important for the industry as well as for the students. The organizations get to establish relations with the students early and this could develop into a lifelong relationship. Cooperation between different stakeholders would be facilitated in the future if students get more involved in the industry through projects such as this.

Finally we want to thank our teachers Hans Gelter and Elisabeth Hellmér who gave us the chance to be involved in this project that has given us so much that we never could have imagined.

Thank you!

# 9. Dreaming along the High Road to the Barents Region: Challenges of Peripheral Cross-border Tourism Development and a Potential Response

*Dorothee Bohn<sup>16</sup> & Petra Paloniemi<sup>16</sup>*

## Introduction

Building upon our experiences in the BART project and the vision of the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation (BEARC), the paper aims to illustrate the ambivalent nature of peripheral cross-border tourism development and in so doing, envisions the integration of Barents Region tourism development within an extended strategy framework. Instead of pursuing the low road of unrestrained tourism, which gives rise to serial reproduction of touristic infrastructure, tourism development in the Barents Region should be incorporated into general development strategies with the objective to reach the high road as a superstructure for establishing territorial immobile assets and a knowledge-based economy.

Regionalization on different spatial scales is reshaping global cartography, and future scenarios advocate the replacement of individual nation-state dominance by regions, incorporating novel types of governance (Van Langenhove 2011, 1), emphasizing co-operation and regional competitiveness (Prokkola 2008, 123).

Cross-border regions, such as the Barents, are defined as “a territorial unit that comprises contiguous sub-national units from two or more nation states” (Perkmann & Sum 2002, 3). Characteristically, coexisting horizontal and vertical networks and public-private part-

nerships (Prokkola 2008, 123) amend the nation-state monopoly of political regulation in such areas.

Beside the geopolitical aspect of the Barents Region, we draw attention to its peripheral status, which reflects a stigma of being distant to main financial, social, power and industrial centres but at the same time the Barents Regions' remote location can be taken as a major asset as a space outside of consensus-driven forces. This might bear the chance to nurture new endeavours in many areas of society and produce unexpected solutions with global relevance. (Northern Experiments 2009.) However, the centre-periphery dichotomy also exists within the Barents Region because the majority of the population and economic activities are situated in a few scantily connected clusters (Barentsinfo 2013).

In the aftermath of economic and political restructuring, new means are being sought to retain occupations for peripheral inhabitants and to impede out-migration and economic decline. Tourism is seen as a prospective industry from the cross-border and peripheral points of view. The Kirkenes Declaration points out tourism explicitly as a field for development because of the industry's potential economic multiplier effect and its intrinsic nature of being a socio-cultural activity, fostering human contacts (Barentsinfo 2012.) Furthermore, the industry is

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16 Multidimensional Tourism Institute (MTI), Rovaniemi

praised as a driver for economic growth within peripheries (Hall 2008, 157) and as a possible substitute for declining traditional livelihoods, thus providing employment and maintaining rural communities in the future (Lane 1994).

However, tourism development is a double-edged sword. Beside the mentioned possibilities of the industry, the actual role of tourism in regional development is usually insufficiently understood (Hall 2007a, 19) and tourism is commonly associated with being a policy for low-road competition (Cooper & Hall 2008, 209). Natural and social memorials for short-sighted, capital-oriented tourism development are paving the globe as research shows, for example, in Spain, Balearic Islands (see Palmer & Riera 2003), in the Spanish mainland (Urtasun & Gutiérrez 2006), in Cyprus (Akis et al. 1996), in Samos (Haralambopoulos & Pizam 1996) and in Belize (Diedrich & García-Buades 2009). We argue that the awareness of this duality is fundamental for tourism practitioners and planners in the Barents Region since joint tourism is still in its infancy and is in a good position to learn from the mistakes of other regions.

During our participation in the BART project, as a trainee and as a teacher, we had the chance to get an insight into the reality, the discussion around and the perceptions of cross-border tourism development in the Barents Region. Especially the work on the BART action plan, demonstrated the dissimilar conceptions and expectations of the actors as well as the heterogeneity of the region.

Building upon these experiences, the paper illuminates the idea of establishing tourism in cross-border and peripheral areas, the chal-

lenges of tourism development from the periphery and from the cross-border perspective and emphasizes the exigency to integrate Barents tourism within the region's general development agenda. Throughout our involvement in the BART project, we could feel the need for profound cooperation because tangible and intangible requirements for the establishment of a joint tourism industry are missing but can only be realized within a framework exceeding tourism constraints.

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that there is no universal recipe or path for "good tourism development"; progress should derive from the emic spheres of the local environments, incorporating natural and human systems. One possibility is the high-road approach (Cooper & Hall 2008), where tourism is incorporated in the region's overall development with the aspiration to establish territorial immobile assets and a knowledge-based economy. We believe that the high road might lead to a realization of the vision of the Barents Cooperation "to improve living conditions, to encourage sustainable economic and social development and thus contribute to stability, environmental progress and peaceful development in northernmost Europe" (BarentsObserver 2012).

### The idea of tourism development in the (cross-border) periphery

The term *periphery* is contested, context dependent and associated with the idea of marginality, describing a state of unfavourable disadvantage (Hall 2007a, 21). Furthermore,

peripheries are subject to relativity and time, thus, there are core-periphery dynamics (Hall 2007a, 19). Peripheries were traditionally inhabited by indigenous groups, then the extraction of natural resources, like wood, minerals and fish, demanded a permanent labour force settlement, and especially in the case of the Barents Region during the Cold War, the military usage increased drastically (Müller & Jansson 2007, 5; Käkönen 1996, 16). Economic and social restructuring processes plus de-industrialization, partly due to the effects of globalization, the end of the Cold War and the political credo of lessening regulatory systems led to a search for new income generators in peripheries (Hall 2007a, 20).

Tourism and its mantra of being the world's fastest growing industry (WTTC 2012) along with the general notion of the positive effects of the leisure industry are omnipresent and appear to offer prompt solutions for the regional policy agenda in peripheries. The entrance barriers in tourism are low, a seemingly wide labour force can be deployed plus the industry is attractive for young people, who out-migrate by trend. Moreover, expectations of a high yield with low impacts, such as ecotourism, are frequent. (Müller & Jansson 2007, 3–13.) Historically, tourism studies have emphasized the role of the periphery for holidays; e.g., Turner and Ash (1975) coined *pleasure periphery*, where people from metropolitan areas seek vacation enjoyment. As Müller and Jansson (2007, 6) state: “perceptual images of the peripheries are often positively loaded (...) [with] ideas and stories of frontier, pioneer life and adventures in the great outdoors”. The pristine

nature and somewhat exotic cultures provide the basis for recreation and leisure activities.

From the cross-border point of view, the political motivations for creating joint destinations are ambitious. Opened borders provide the chance to erect a cooperative tourist destination, and in the case of Europe, the EU facilitates such efforts by granting funds. (Prokkola 2008, 68–69.) Cross-border cooperation in tourism is promoted as a way of regional competitiveness, sustainability and of endorsing *functional* and *imaginary regionalization* with the overall goal of regional self-sufficiency. Functional regionalization emphasizes networking, cross-border connectivity, infrastructural upgrades and knowledge transfer while imaginary regionalization embodies regional construction in socio-cultural terms. It is argued that both are mutually dependent and reinforcing. (Prokkola 2008, 68–69.)

Indeed, tourism is forecasted to become the future industry and the mainspring for regional development in European peripheries, which often consist of cross-border regions (Prokkola 2008, 124). The Barents Region amalgamates the cross-border aspect and the peripheral location in the far North. The area has much to offer for tourism with the inherent multi-layered diversity in terms of peoples and cultures together with its rich natural and historical heritage. In return, tourism business is upheld as a promising industry, an economic main pillar beside the growing mining industry. Impeding out-migration and gradual socio-cultural coalescence are supplementing the political agenda.

To sum up, the formation of joint tourism is seen to serve as a competitive as well as a maintenance strategy with which to encounter the tide of globalization. However, tourism development is not a panacea without negative spill-over effects, which is the topic of the next section along with the specific challenges in the context of the cross-border periphery.

### Reflections on the dispute over cross-border, peripheral tourism development

As Müller and Jansson (2007, 3) strikingly argue, tourism has not succeeded to deliver the desired development effects in the periphery. Hall (2007a, 27–30) finds the reasons for failure mainly in overestimated growth expectations and political misjudgements. Governmental initiatives for introducing tourism on local and regional levels may collide with national restructuring policies in peripheries, such as a cut down in infrastructural support. Furthermore, policy-makers are often not aware of the peculiarities of the local milieu and other small-scale industries that, if supported, could contribute to economic diversification and thereby upgrade the general conditions. A solid local economy facilitates tourism development. As mentioned, the revenue expectations of tourism as a means of regional development, especially in the form of nature-based tourism, are set far too high along with the anticipation of jobs. (Hall 2007a, 27–30.) The high seasonality prevents full-time employment of locals (Saarinen 2007, 47). Furthermore, micro-sized lifestyle firms

rarely hire people outside the family, plus their general growth intentions are moderate, tourism usually operates at a low-wage level and a competent workforce with experiences in international tourism is often not available (Müller & Jansson 2007, 10–11).

Besides, touristic intensification is often seen as the end in itself and long-term strategies of how tourism can contribute best to the overall local development are not passed. (Hall 2007a, 27–30.) Resort development, for example, leads to socio-economic growth in the particular place while the surrounding areas remain unchanged and the adjoining municipalities face the regular economic and demographic decline (Kauppila et. al. 2009). Moreover, there are various challenges and conflicts concerning peripheries that need to be considered for successful tourism development. First, the geographical location as such sets limits in accessibility; harsh climatic conditions in the northern fringe edge the touristic season, and the pristine landscape, which is an asset for peripheral tourism, is very vulnerable to human interactions. Even ecotourism has its impacts and trade-offs are inevitable. (Müller & Jansson 2007, 4–12).

Second, once the vicious circle of out-migration from the periphery to the core has started, it is difficult to stop such a process, since it has a profound impact on the region's profile. In some cases, retirement migration and second-home tourism may turn the trend. (Hall 2007a, 26.) Thirdly, while it is noted that tourism can cause controversies and development visions might be not shared among the local

population and external practitioners, it is further argued that locals often do not participate in planning and are dependent on the central government's decisions and funding. (Müller & Jansson 2007, 4–12.) When large-scale firms enter the scene, the risk of losing economic control and additional periphery-core leakages are at hand (Hall 2007a, 25) along with the threat of unfavourable development for profit's sake. A clash of interests might occur when the tourism industry competes with residents in land-use issues, such as the establishment of a national park versus local terrain usage (Hall 2007a, 27) or wind turbine energy production versus landscape aesthetics.

Cross-border tourism development entails major intricacies as well, which became apparent during the compilation process of the BART action plan, in which the authors were involved. There are vast gaps between the interests of the local actors regarding their expectations and their understanding of the Barents Region and of the tourism industry itself. Reasons for these differences might be rooted in the region's economic, political and socio-cultural heterogeneity.

Interviews of tourism stakeholders, which were conducted in the BART project, revealed the perceived need to resolve some collective problems, including the lack of sufficient infrastructure, visa formalities with Russian-European border crossing, and the absence of effective cross-border cooperation in business, culture and policy. The latter is the most challenging matter since cooperation is fundamental for all joint development activities

while also being an abstract term, open to personal designation. Several tourism practitioners addressed their concern about serial reproduction of the same tourism product throughout the Barents Region. In this scenario, the intended cooperation inevitably turns into competition that represents the end of successful regional tourism development.

Regarding the peripheral status, it was pointed out that there is a clear need for far-sighted and realistic policymaking, otherwise tourism development does not yield fruits. In the case of cross-border tourism development in the Barents Region, the heterogeneity and the absence of a common regional image inflict challenges. However, in both cases the inappropriateness of top-down decision making processes are apparent.

### The low road and the high road

Tourism development in the periphery is perceived as the last chance for sustaining rural and sparsely populated areas; moreover, the cross-border aspect of joint tourism development is seen to serve as a competitive strategy to face the tide of globalization. Still, tourism is conventionally a part of an imitative *low-road* strategy within regional development, focusing on location-based entities, such as land, labour and capital for fostering property-oriented growth, media attention and packaging the place product. Hence, the usual tendency leads towards serial replication of urban tourism infrastructure, as MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions), shopping,

sport centres plus entertainment and the pursuit of large capital investments. (see Cooper & Hall 2008, 209–211; Hall 2007b, 223; Malecki 2004, 1106.)

The overall result, to make a particular place more attractive for consumption by mere facility investments, is not resilient since quick imitations elsewhere in the world might take place (Harvey 1989, 12). Globally homogenized and monotonous destinations are directed to the same markets that cultivate the risk of being caught in the vicious cycle of constant attraction and facility upgrading (see Cooper & Hall 2008, 209–211; Hall 2007b, 223) Moreover, the over-accumulation of cultural capital implies a threat of devaluation (Swyngedouw 1992, 58) because too many touristic sights in one place have a propensity to become a meaningless assemblage, characterized by quantity instead of quality.

Simplistically put, a low-road strategy emphasizes the competition for production of goods and services, consumption and government subsidies (Harvey 1989, 7–8), leading to serial reproduction and as Harvey (1989, 11) states: “the search to procure investment capital confines innovation to a very narrow path”. Obviously, sustainable regional development, especially regarding peripheries, cannot be reached by those means.

In contrast, the *high-road* approach emphasizes the importance of having both hard infrastructure (communications, transportation, finance) and soft infrastructure (knowledge, intellectual capital, mentoring, worker-welfare

orientation) for promoting regional innovations instead of assimilation. Intangible values, like culture and community together with intelligent educational institutions, proximity capital, integrated innovations and associative governance, like public-private partnerships, form the backbone of sustainable integrated planning. The aim is to establish territorial immobile assets and a knowledge-based economy. Further important aspects are the international connectedness and communication linkages of the region and thus people and ideas. Cultural diversity is highly valued. (see Cooper & Hall 2008, 209–211; Hall 2007b, 224–225; Malecki 2004) As Malecki (2004) states, this approach is harder to follow, investment returns appear much later and the soft infrastructure of education, knowledge and interaction is difficult to quantify.

The high-road approach targets the formation of a superstructure envisioning sustainability, embedding people, industries, policies and networks. Regional peripheral tourism is more likely to succeed when integrated into superior development strategies. Tourism is therefore only one aspect in the overall development efforts and entrenched within other businesses for economic development (Hall 2007a, 34; Saarinen 2007, 47). Nevertheless, tourism has a role to play in the high-road approach because of the industry’s nature of requiring international connectedness through various networks, communication linkages and cultural exchange along with service co-creation (Cooper & Hall 2008, 209–21).

Low Road	Middle Road	High Road
<i>Long-term contribution to sustainable regional development</i>		
Marginal	Moderate	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place promotion</li> <li>• Capturing mobile investment</li> <li>• Firms and capital</li> <li>• Focus on visitors on a number basis</li> <li>• Subsidized investment and means of production (e.g. sites and premises)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Fostering entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Assisting and mentoring new firms and entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Coordination</li> <li>• Business advice</li> <li>• Reducing uncertainty</li> <li>• Investment in infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal networks</li> <li>• External (non-local) networks</li> <li>• Benchmarking assessment</li> <li>• Investing in superstructure</li> <li>• Transport links (airlines)</li> <li>• Scanning globally for new knowledge</li> <li>• Information and communication skills</li> </ul>

Table 1. Low-, middle- and high-road strategies (after Cooper & Hall 2008, 210; Malecki 2004).

### Concluding remarks: a polar night's dream of the Barents Region taking the high road

Until now, the Barents as a regional entity is a non-concept in international tourism, from both the supply and demand sides (Kohllechner-Autto 2011; Konovalenko 2012). However, fragmented development efforts are made in the form of EU-funded cross-border projects, small-scale business cooperation, a joint working group on tourism (JWTG) with public actor representatives from all four member countries of the Euro-Arctic Regional Council and the growth of international demand, e.g., in cruise tourism demands for extended cross-border products. Flows of money, ideas, commodities and people related to tourism business are circulating within the Barents Region, however, without a systematic approach.

For tourism to be a profitable business in the Barents Region, the industry has to be incorporated within the general collaboration areas of the Barents-Euro Arctic Cooperation which are: culture, secondary education and student exchange, knowledge transfer, indigenous peoples, agriculture and reindeer husbandry, industry and economics, research and development, environmental issues, health

and communications (Monsma 1995, 5 citing the Declaration of Cooperation).

One way to address the special challenges and conflicts – whether they are social, cultural, ecological or economic – of cross-border areas and peripheries is the high-road approach. The benefits for the Barents Region of pursuing this direction are the introduction of sustainable development, well-being of the local population, and innovations, thus leading to the creation of immobile assets along with engendering cultural communication as a foundation for fruitful co-operation. Decentralized governance, the avail of regionalization, and the innovation potential of peripheries are of central importance in this approach.

Small rural areas cannot even afford high infrastructural investments, and the development of soft value plus retaining local knowledge pays off better (Cooper & Hall 2008, 211). The Barents Region should therefore celebrate its heterogeneity as an advantage and the design of regional-specific and complementing products, derived from the multilayered diversity and the natural and cultural wealth, should be promoted.





*Public-private partnerships are an inherent part of cross-border governance and networking by transferring power from the central government to regions and peripheries.*

With respect to the Barents Region and the knowledge-based economy, the educational institutions hold the power for being a major determinant in paving the way for the high road. In our dream, an interdisciplinary approach with a philosophical underpinning and problem-based research is the basis for regional planning. It is (or should be) the intrinsic nature of the educational sector to create and communicate new knowledge that strives to improve socio-cultural, ecological and economic conditions. Concerning the long-term orientation, the educational sector is the key to shaping future generations and creating proactive, socially responsible members of society and business leaders. Furthermore, joint cross-border teaching and learning can trigger cooperation and exchange of intellectual capital as a cornerstone of the high-road approach.

Public-private partnerships are an inherent part of cross-border governance and networking by transferring power from the central government to regions and peripheries. Policy-making should be escorted by expert-knowledge as well as spatial, socio-cultural and grassroots knowledge. In the future, public-private partnerships can support functional and imaginary regionalization in the Barents. Concisely, tourism as an industry, as a social web, as a profession and as a passion, functions at its best when integrated in the region and in the high-road approach, bearing the chance of “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland report 1987).

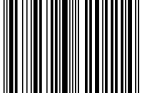
In this sense, let the BART action plan lead on to the high road.

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