

## Meeting for the Joint Working Group in Tourism

Date: Meeting: March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Dinner: March 17<sup>th</sup>  
Venue: Hotel Bristol, Oslo

### Participants:

Nina Vesterinen	Ministry of Employment and Economy
Kairi Pääsuke	County Administrative Board of Norrbotten
Arne Trengereid	Northern Norway Tourist Board
John-Steve Linløkken	Northern Norway Tourist Board
Satu Lairo	Regional Council of Lapland

### Experts:

Anne Sofie Bjelland	Director of the High North Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Per Arne Tuftin	Visit Norway/Innovasjon Norge
Terhi Hook	Visit Finland
Bjørn-Erik Lønn,	Senior Adviser, Nordic Ecolabel – Svanen

### **Opening of the Meeting**

Chairman Nina Vesterinen welcomed the participants. The meeting agenda was approved.

#### **1. Minutes from Last Meeting in Stockholm**

The minutes of the last meeting was accepted with few changes.

#### **2. Short reports on current issues**

ENI process: The Programme Committee meeting will be held 25.3. The JWGT will give some comments to the programme text related to tourism. Now the text is too detailed; it will be written more general level and highlighting the opportunities and development of tourism. In future, the JWGT can comment the project applications and thus influence the tourism development. ENI programme will start in 2016 at the earliest, but most likely in 2017.

Interreg: First call for applications has ended and it produced 42 applications, which are now in the process.

Barents co-operation: Russia is preparing for the chairmanship. Indigenous people will be the main emphasis. Barents own funding mechanism is under preparation, the decision will be made in June.

Kirkenes Conference: Kairi Pääsuke and Arne Trengereid had participated to the CSO conference in Kirkenes. The significance of tourism in growing in the political decision making and the conference offered a great opportunity for lobbying.

### 3. Dissemination of infographics

Some corrections or changes were proposed to the infographics. The global, national and Barents levels will be separated more clearly and the Barents registered overnight stays will be presented as a whole number. Satu will collect the data from the Northern Ostrobothnia region. Everyone should also send information about regional goals for tourism development, if such goals have been set. One source for statistics could be Barents Observer.

Kairi will make the changes with the consultant and send the infographic to the working group for comments. The dissemination of the infographics' should not be started until the JWGT has proved the paper.

### 4. Information related to the Accessibility

The Barents Transport Plan is currently under re-evaluation and it will be re-written soon. It was decided that the working group members will go through the current report from tourism point of view, and make suggestions for the new report in the next meeting.

The Barents Transport Plan can be found from the link:

[http://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/Joint\\_Barents\\_Transport\\_Plan\\_2013.pdf](http://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/Joint_Barents_Transport_Plan_2013.pdf)

The Arctic Airlink has started the flights between Oulu- Luleå- Troms. So far the demand on the route has not been very good. The group stated that we should all promote the route in order to make it more popular.

### 5. Rotation of National Chairmanship

Finland's national chairmanship in the working group is ending and Norway will continue as a regional co-chair. Nina Vesterinen had contacted national ministries about the matter, but didn't get any response. The working group was worried about the situation where the national chairmanship is lacking. This will make the work more difficult.

The representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommended that the ministries will be contacted again. Arne Trengereid will do that in Norway and Nina Vesterinen will contact the Russians and Swedes. It was also discussed that Thomas Hallberg, new head of the IBS, should be informed about the situation.

### 6. Actions in 2015

The JWGT discussed the future actions:

- The infographics will be finished as soon as possible. More data will be delivered to Kairi.
- The JWGT members will read the current Barents Transport Plan and make comments for the new one.



- “The High North – Cool place for the future growth” seminar will be arranged in Oslo on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of November. The group will find out is it possible to give a presentation there (Jon-Steve and Arne).
- The Nordic Council of Ministers funding will be available for working groups and applications should be done by 4<sup>th</sup> of May.
- Co-operation with other working groups:  
JWG on Culture has published a project “Barents Culture Incubator”. Information on it will be delivered to the JWGT (Nina).  
Co-operation with the WG’s on Environment will be improved, especially in the matter of sustainability labels.

## 7. Any Other Business

Anne Sofie Bjelland visited in the meeting. She works as a director of the High North Section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway.

Oven presented the report “Tillväxt från norr”, done by the expert group and published in January. The report makes recommendations about how Norway, Sweden and Finland could create sustainable growth in the Arctic. The report can be found here:

[http://valtioneuvosto.fi/sv/artikeln/-/asset\\_publisher/-kasvua-pohjoisesta-raportti-julkaistu-tromssas-1](http://valtioneuvosto.fi/sv/artikeln/-/asset_publisher/-kasvua-pohjoisesta-raportti-julkaistu-tromssas-1)

Oven also told about Norway’s goals in High North politics and the integrated eco-system based regime that has been adopted in Norway. It combines the economic growth more closely with the environmental issues and sustainability.

## 8. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

The next JWGT meeting will be arranged in August 2015 in Helsinki.

The memo was written by:

Satu Luiro  
Senior Adviser in Tourism  
Regional Council of Lapland

## Meeting together with Visit Organizations and JWGT

Date: Meeting: March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Venue: Hotel Bristol, Oslo

### Participants:

Nina Vesterinen	Ministry of Employment and Economy
Kairi Pääsuke	County Administrative Board of Norbotten
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Satu Luuro	Regional Council of Lapland

### Experts:

Terhi Hook	Visit Finland
Per-Arne Tuftin	Innovation Norway
Björn-Erik Lönn	Nordic Eco Label

### 1. Opening of the Meeting

Chairman Nina Vesterinen welcomed the participants. The meeting agenda was approved.

### 2. Mandate of JWGT

Kairi Pääsuke presented the mandate of the JWGT and told about current work.

### 3. Current status for Strategic Development of Tourism in each country/region

The year 2014 has been difficult in tourism business, but there are signs about the better development this year.

Nina Vesterinen gave a presentation about Tourism policy in Finland (presentation attached).

In 2016 Norway's new tourism strategy/policy will be published. There are some organizations changes in Innovation Norway.

In Sweden there's a new tourism strategy, Kairi will send a link. In Northern Norway tourism strategy is about to be updated and will be ready by May.



New tourism strategy has just been published also in Lapland; check the link below (summary available in English): <http://www.lappi.fi/lapinliitto/lapin-matkailu>

#### **4. Tourism quality programs and export criteria in each country**

Terhi Hook from Visit Finland presented the current quality and environmental certifications in Finland. Per Arne Tuftin presented the identical certifications in Norway and Kairi mentioned about various quality and environmental certifications in Sweden. It is notable that there are quite a variety of quality, and environmental standards in all three countries. Many of them are very detailed. National and branch organizations have done a lot to work to find out systems to develop quality and environmental standards on tourism. The common labels on all three countries are the Swan (s. b.) and the green Key.

Certification of entrepreneurs usually lead to various benefits for the national branch organizations but certifications cannot be forced.

Bjorn Erik Lönn presented the Nordic eco -label certifications system- (Svanemerke- Svanen-Joutsenmerkki). The Nordic eco label started 1989 and it was the initiative from consumers. The Nordic Eco label is very well known label, more than 60 % of people in the Nordic countries point out the Nordic eco label as the first eco label in Nordic. For example the Joutsenmerkki in Finland is one of the first five most trusted brands, among the Fazer, for example. There are more than 400 hotels which are certified by Nordic eco label (In the Nordic and Baltic countries).

Companies can obtain the right to use the Nordic Ecolabel on their product via a licensing process. Licences will be granted to products that fulfill the criteria for the specific product group. There are 63 product groups with valid criteria and the criteria are quite high. The Nordic eco label system has also an own control system. The application fee is 2000 euros and there are strict requirements to get the license. The label includes product groups such as hotels, new conference facilities, and the new product group is events.

#### **5. Initiative of sustainable tourism label**

Nordic Council of Ministers' initiative on sustainable tourism includes: conduct a study on the current situation on sustainable tourism (destinations, labels) and to form a forum of various actors around the theme. JWGT will follow the initiative.

#### **6. Summary and future actions**

As a conclusion it was discussed if we need a new eco label. Deeper information on the issue is required before the decision is made. Financial instruments for the study will we searched.

