



”Common Future for Baltic Tourism II”

Products –Practices –Promotion

European Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: Priority Area Tourism
Flagship project 12,7: Attract tourists to rural areas esp. coastal ones

Dear stakeholder, colleague and participant of the seminar,

Thank you for joining the Common Future for Baltic Tourism II -seminar, which took place on 14-15 Sept. in Herankukkaro, Naantali, Southwest Finland. Approximately 50 stakeholders from different sectors and Baltic Sea countries took part in exchanging experiences and discussing the perspectives and future of the rural and coastal tourism in the Baltic Sea Region.



It was enjoyable to see how dedicated the participants networked, discussed and exchanged new ideas, initiatives and know-how during the seminar and in the workshops. The aim of the second seminar was to continue discussing and sharing the best practices of the product development and of the joint promotion of rural and coastal tourism in the BSR. Good practices from the Baltic Coastal and Rural Tourism Network members were showcased.

The first day concentrated in a business development and how to improve the competitiveness (both products and services) of the rural tourism service providers and of tourism industry. It was also held a workshop of common story for Baltic Coastal and Rural Tourism.

During the second day was presented some successful joint rural and coastal tourism cross-border packages and their promotion in the BSR. In addition, during the second day the story workshop continued with service design method. Many practical tools for tourism projects and companies were shared such as Tourism Developer’s Handbook, Cultural Tourism Communication plan, Cultural Tourism Media and marketing plan, Benchmarking report, Product manual (for German markets), Marketing material , Info package of Hospitality programme for service providers. In addition many new ideas and contacts were made and new partners found for the future businesses and projects within the rural and coastal tourism in the BSR.



Welcome speakers

EU Project Planner *Petri Salmi* at Turku Science Park opened the event on behalf of the Lead Partners of the Flagship project (FP) 12,7: The Regional Council of Southwest Finland and Turku Touring / Centre of Expertise for Tourism and Experience Management. *Salmi* told about the Centres of Expertise programme in Finland, which has successfully managed to gather actors from the public sector, the academia and companies. This co-operation has opened new aspects to the tourism business. This kind of development that the BSR enables should be welcomed. Innovations for service sectors are known to be difficult to find and easy to copy. However, the needs, based on raising environmental awareness and shift in customers' values towards sustainability, innovations that improve the tourism businesses actions in environmental responsibility are soon required.

Turku Science Park submitted a project application for the 4th call under the BSR Programme at the end of March 2011, together with the Centre of Expertise for Tourism and Experience Management and Turku Touring and the FP 12,7. Unfortunately the project was rejected. However the project, BSR InnoNet, aimed to combine the best practises from partners and develop cooperation between countries, the project idea was to form a network that can easily share innovations, quickly adopt new ideas and share development responsibilities. By and large, the project was reflected from the basics of the Finnish CoE programme, but the focus was set on building an innovation environment that shared differences in cultural, educational, industrial and in customer background.

Despite the rejection of BSR InnoNet project, Turku Science Park has now sent a new project application, IISI, to the South Finland EARF programme. The aim is similar, to collect, analyse and gather development strategies from Southern Finland district (including six regional councils), filters the result through "alternative futures windows" and find partners from the Baltic Sea and Nordic countries area. This project has its focus on cross industrial development themes and smart specialisation among partners. One pilot sector is tourism. The application was due on 31 October and in a case of approval it is about to start in end of January 2012. This is also the way that FP 12,7 could continue its implementation in the future, directing its focus more to tourism innovation of SME's in the BSR.



For more information:

Päivi Lappalainen
Turku Touring
Tourism and Experience Management Competence Cluster in Southwest Finland
paivi.lappalainen(at)turku.fi
www.turkutouring.com
<http://www.oske.net/en/>



The EU-Strategy for Baltic Sea Region facilitating tourism cooperation in the BSR

Second welcome speaker was PA Coordinator of Tourism Mr. *Wolf Born* from the State Chancellery Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, who underlined that the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and flagship projects offers a good framework for cooperation, coordination and communication within the tourism field in the Baltic Sea Region and recommended the stakeholders to take advantage of it. He hinted at the ongoing verification of objectives stated in the EUSBSR Action Plan, the window of opportunity to involve more closely also Russian partners and his support for the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum as a possible platform for tourism cooperation. Interested stakeholders were encouraged to register on the priority area tourism website:

www.baltic-sea-strategy-tourism.eu. A conference for Priority Area Tourism

was announced to take place on 3-4 May 2012 (NEW DATE!) to Warnemünde, Germany.

Wolf Born

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

State Chancellery Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Coordinator(at)baltic-sea-strategy-tourism.eu

www.baltic-sea-strategy-tourism.eu



Meeting the market expectations of the customers

The president Ms. *Asnate Ziemele* at Latvian Country Tourism Association, Lauku celotajs presented the private sector and grass root level of rural tourism. She underlined that to meet the market expectations we have to be continuously in touch with the market itself. We must use every opportunity to ask, learn and observe, and we need to motivate rural visitors to talk to us and share their experiences, opinions and wishes. Their main information sources are customers, tour operators and service providers. Through a variety of methods – on-site and online surveys, collecting feedback and preferences, asking for tour operator specifications – they can get a wide overview of what the market expects. Observing trends, the association shall get the right vision and knowledge to design rural tourism products that are successful. And - what the market expects, is the same we would expect ourselves when travelling. There is no such an abstract category as “tourists”. Any rural tourism service provider becomes a “tourist” when he/she stays in a guest house in another country, remains Ziemele. It is beneficial to learn from

peers, at provider level as well as at organisational and institutional level. Considering common Baltic Sea Region strategy for rural and coastal tourism, let’s first look at each other – what we expect in terms of rural tourism products – their variety, authenticity, accessibility. Let’s look at the assets we all have and let’s develop products that are authentic and contemporary at the same time. Ziemele’s vision is that rural tourism in the Baltic Sea Region becomes a homogenous, reliable, but at the same time a diverse product, each country and region featuring unique values in the common setting.

Asnate Ziemele

Latvian Country Tourism Association "Lauku celotājs"

asnate(at)celotajs.lv

www.celotajs.lv



Baltic Sea Tourism Forum – An annual conference for information exchange and continuous cooperation in the sector of tourism around the Baltic Sea

Johannes Volkmar who is responsible for the international marketing at Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourist Board, Rostock, Germany reminded that The Baltic Sea is well known for its natural beauty, clean water and secure environment and invites to discover coastal strips with white sandy beaches, beautiful fishermen's villages and seaside

resorts and to explore the inner land with unspoiled nature, rich cultural heritage and colourful cities and villages. Nine countries adjoining the Baltic Sea, this makes the area to one of the most diversified and fascinating travel destinations worldwide.

The Baltic Sea region shows high potential in attracting international travellers and guests. However, the area also faces shortcomings especially concerning a joint and coherent image, a cross-national product development and promotional activities as well as transparency and visibility of tourism offers and services in foreign source markets.

To contribute to the development of those, the Ministry of Economics, Labour and Tourism and the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourist Board initialised the first Baltic Sea Tourism Forum in Rostock in 2008 and invited participants and specialists from tourism institutions around the Baltic Sea. The major objectives are to establish and consolidate a long term communication basis, to strengthen the cooperation of all Baltic Sea neighbouring countries, to ensure the concerns of tourism in the Baltic Sea region and to exploit the existing international development potentials more efficiently.

Following the meetings in Vilnius/Lithuania in 2009 and Kaliningrad/Russia in 2010, the fourth Baltic Sea Tourism Forum was successfully held in Sopot/Poland 2011. The identification and determination of areas for effective cooperation and the development and promotion of common products and services have been discussed just as the importance of national tourism organisations and the significance of more information exchange among them and thus between the Baltic Sea neighbouring countries.

The 5th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum - held in Germany and Denmark from 14 to 16 November 2012 - will provide a platform and give the opportunity to meet countries' officials of national and regional administration, representatives of Baltic Sea tourism institutions, private tourism providers and experts of the sector. The Forum focusses on two pillars: Firstly, on an official opening of the countries' representatives and experts of current Baltic Sea topics and secondly, on technical workshops under predefined topics. The Forum will be a perfect opportunity for exchanging knowledge and ideas between colleagues, specialists and decision makers of the tourism sector in the Baltic Sea region and should stimulate sustainable future cross-border activities among tourism institutions. The Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourist Board will organise a pre-meeting in May 2012, in order to prepare the Forum's activities.

The 5th edition of the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum will be also supported by the State Chancellery Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in its function as coordinator for the priority area tourism in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Johannes Volkmar
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourist Board
[j.volkmar\(at\)mecklenburg-vorpommern.travel](mailto:j.volkmar@mecklenburg-vorpommern.travel)
www.mecklenburg-vorpommern.travel



Tourism Developer's Handbook as a practical tool for developing products and packages

José-Carlos García-Rosell from the Lapland Institute for Tourism Research and Education, Rovaniemi presented the Tourism Product Developer's Handbook which works as practical tool for rural and coastal tourism development. The handbook has been developed for small businesses interested in differentiating their products and business operations, networking, conceptualizing their products and performance as part of their destination. The handbook works as an innovative way of thinking and concrete tools for helping firms to recognize and improve their own way of developing products. The handbook brings product development closer to the everyday life of Baltic tourism practitioners, encouraging them to explore it as a holistic process. It contributes to the differentiation of Baltic tourism companies, their products and the creation of new business opportunities and offers concrete tourism product development tools for promoting the sustainability of Baltic tourism products and the entire

destination. The handbook can be found on the website of the Lapland Institute for Tourism Research & Education: <http://matkailu.luc.fi/tuotekehitys>. It will be published in English in the year 2012 and it will be available for everyone, free of charge. For more detailed information about the handbook, please contact Mrs Päivi Kontiokoski +358 20 798 5695, paivi.kontiokoski(at)ramk.fi.

José-Carlos García-Rosell

Lapland Institute for Tourism Research and Education

jgarcia(at)ulapland.fi / jose.garcia-rosell(at)ramk.fi

www.luc.fi/tourism, www.ulapland.fi/?deptid=20017



Coordinated cooperation promotes competitiveness in tourism business networks

The cooperation in tourism business networks is a complex phenomenon with different types of actors and difficulties in controlling the coordination. The network structures, however, enable practical processes through which the actors may improve their competitiveness. This is shown in the doctoral dissertation of D.Sc., Senior Researcher *Arja Lemmetyinen* at University of Turku, School of Economics, entitled 'The coordination of cooperation in tourism business networks'. According to Lemmetyinen the tourism business networks represent both the public and private sectors, consisting of entrepreneurs and company employees, municipal representatives of the tourism business and, in particular, destination marketing or managing organisations (DMOs) taking care of the promotion of tourism. The fact that the tourism business networks often operate in a multi-layered fashion at local, national and international level increases complexity of the industry. *Lemmetyinen* was seeking key means for coordinating cooperation between

tourism business networks, through which the actors can improve the competitiveness of the networks and of the companies operating in them. *Lemmetyinen* concluded, that the joint network brand identity motivates the members of the network as well as the joint strategy, which contributes to the development of the local networks and strengthens the market position of individual destinations. Also a joint director with one voice, who represents the whole region and joint marketing, sales and PR are benefits for the members of the network, underlined *Lemmetyinen*.



Arja Lemmetyinen

University of Turku, School of Economics, Pori Unit

arja.lemmetyinen(at)tse.fi

http://info.tse.fi/julkaisut/vk/Ae4_2010.pdf



What can we learn from Finnish Model to Develop Rural Tourism

One good example of coordinated cooperation network is Finnish Working Group on Rural Tourism, which General Secretary *Nina Vesterinen* presented in the seminar. Main objective of rural policy in Finland is to improve the living conditions in the countryside. Working Group on Rural Tourism has a strong role within the changing field of tourism in integrating national, regional and local development work and resources, and safeguarding continuity in the development processes. It also functions as the national point of contact of communication within rural tourism. The main tasks are: co-ordinating the development of rural tourism, yielding and communicating information, supporting the production of information for the industry, promoting the availability of tourist products, and supporting service competence and the renewal of rural tourist products. One of the examples of co-ordination is the national development

programme for activities OutdoorsFinland. *Vesterinen* brought out some good recommendations for the future development of the Baltic Sea Rural Tourism Co-operation. She encouraged to work together to enhance its (area) importance on the EU-level. *Vesterinen* said that all the countries should concentrate on their own strengths and challenges. We should exchange best practices. In addition if common theme based products such as roundtrips are to be developed as well common product, we should have a quality criteria or at least a common understanding, reminded *Vesterinen*.

Nina Vesterinen

Tourism Working Group of Rural Policy Committee

nina.vesterinen(at)lomalaidun.fi

www.maaseutupolitiikka.fi/matkailu



Russian customers in social media

Project Manager *Mariya Loginova* from Centre of Expertise Tourism and Experience Management Cluster Programme / Savonlinna Region, showed to the audience some curious number of the Russian customers in social media. There are 60 000 000 Internet users in Russia, from which 42 000 000 use internet every day. Every seventh reads blogs and 4 200 000 use Facebook. A total of 70% of Internet users shop on-line, 41% purchase items based on friends` opinions and 15% of products are based on culture and tourism. These numbers truly show the importance of electronic commerce and the utility of social media when marketing and selling the products today, underlined *Loginova*.

Mariya Loginova

Tourism and Experience Management Cluster Programme / Savonlinna Region Centre of Expertise

mariya.loginova(at)savonlinnaseutu.fi

twitter.com/MariyaL



www.soske.fi

www.experiencebusiness.fi



Baltic Coastal and Rural Tourism Network members presented their best practices in tourism development

Managing Director *Oliver Loode* at Consumetric, Tallinn presented sustainable tourism development in Hiiumaa which has been actively participating in international projects eg. “Lighthouse tourism in the Archipelagos of South-West Finland and Estonia”, Interreg IIIA, 2006-2008. The partner of the project from Hiiumaa was Kõrgessaare Municipality. There are three historical lighthouses open for visitors. The municipality has developed and encouraged several new and innovative applications of lighthouse tourism, e.g., concerts, theatre, extreme / adventure tourism (rappelling) and thematic routes and tours. Regular events as tourism magnets are one option for extending the tourism season. What should be done is to clarify positioning on the tourism market - what does Hiiumaa as a destination stand for? What does it offer (and *not* offer) its visitors? It should improve destination brand awareness, esp. for incoming visitors. Also, seasonality effect should be reduced by developing year-round tourism attractions and infrastructure. Tourist flows can be increased by creating more reasons to visit - both on and off-season - while following principles of sustainable development.

In addition, Kõrgessaare Municipality is a developing project, Baltic Sea Knowledge Centre, which is an elaboration of the original concept of a “Baltic Sea Lighthouse Theme Park” – primarily outdoor attraction with small-scale models of Baltic lighthouses. The original project built on success in developing lighthouse tourism. However, it did not address seasonality reduction goals as there are limited job creation opportunities and it that way concerns about economic viability. In 2010, lighthouse theme park concept transformed into broader, more ambitious “Baltic Sea Knowledge Centre” project, going beyond lighthouses and even beyond tourism. The project captures and builds on the *genius loci* of Hiiumaa – the sea. Objectives are to build Baltic Sea Knowledge Centre as Estonia’s first marine education centre. Mission is to raise awareness of Baltic Sea among Estonia’s general public and to stimulate interest in Baltic Sea related professions and activities, especially among Estonian youth. It will be a modern, high-quality learning, training and research environment for organizations involved in marine education, science and environmental protection in Estonia and other Baltic Sea countries. Centre should also serve as a tourist attraction, bring more visitors to Kõrgessaare Municipality, lengthen stay and increase spending. Kõrgessaare municipality from Hiiumaa is looking for some sustainable ways to become more integrated with other regions around the Baltic Sea, for joint tourism product development, exchange of good practices and creation of a Baltic Sea network of marine education centres. If interested on that, please contact Deputy Head of Municipality Katrin Sarapuu (kati@korgessaare.hiiumaa.ee), encouraged *Oliver Loode*.

Oliver Loode
Consumetric
[oliver\(at\)consumetric.ee](mailto:oliver(at)consumetric.ee)
www.consumetric.ee



Baltic Museums - eGuides in Tourism Innovation

Prof. Dr. *Michael Klotz* at SIMAT, Stralsund, Germany, introduced eGuides in tourism - digital, mobile information systems, that use different media (text, speech, pictures, videos, animation, sounds, music, graphics) and offer possibilities of location based visitor guidance and orientation services by integrated localisation technologies (Bluetooth, GPS, RFID, WLAN, Infrared etc.). In general, different appliances like PDA/XDA, navigation systems, smartphones or special systems can potentially be used outdoors if they have an integrated localisation technology. To qualify for an outdoor eGuide the essential questions are e.g. battery lifetime, robustness, water protection. Important is also how to best reach the target group. There are ca. 20-25% of Smartphone-Users (differs per country) who could use their own device. On the other hand rental appliances would enable all visitors to use an eGuide.

In the EU funded project BalticMuseums 2.0 investigations proved that next to the appliance the content is the crucial point for introducing an eGuide. The international project team found that content creation requires a lot of resources. A solution could be an integrated system for all appliances (Multiplatform). It enables the efficient multiple use of content. Such Content Management Systems (CMS) could serve as a database for e.g. different mobile appliances (eGuides and Smartphones), website, information terminals, intranet or printing materials. Additionally, the database could be shared with several partners who could all contribute to it by providing text, graphics photos, translations etc. This system is now being tested in the project BalticMuseums 2.0 Plus, led by the Stralsund University of Applied Sciences.

One of the best practices presented are eGuides for a German nature park. These appliances use GPS for navigation and information. The system is flexible for different platforms of technology (CRUSO special appliance, Smartphone-App, navigation systems). eGuides are especially beneficial for tourism marketing, as the content can be designed for different target groups e.g. active or specialists. Furthermore sustainability is fostered by promoting participation of local citizens, by positive effects for environmental protection and economic sustainability. Further benefits of an eGuide originate from integration of shop modules e.g. ticketing-systems of museums, public transport or other related online shops. The electronic guides can offer more language options than with personal guides. The quality of the visitor information is independent from staff when using an eGuide. Customer orientation can be realized by tailored information for different target groups e.g. level of activity, age, education, interests, time. By integrating touristic companies like restaurants, hotels, souvenir shops the local value is created. The joint development of content by the different participating organisations can reduce the costs for each partner. For the future there are some development areas such as more precise localisation technology, better indoor-navigation options, augmented reality, interactivity: quiz, search games, feedback by integrating web-communities (e.g. twitter, facebook, flickr) remains Prof. Dr. *Michael Klotz*.

Prof. Dr. Michael Klotz

SIMAT (Stralsund Information Management Team)

michael.klotz(at)fh-stralsund.de

<http://twitter.com/ProfKlotz> / <http://simat-stralsund.de/>



Story Telling - Using Stories to create better customer experiences – how to find the common story identity for BSR?

In the end of the first day Story Designer, *Anne Kalliomäki* at Tarinakone (StoryEngine) told how to take advantage of storytelling creating common story identity for BSR Tourism. Story-based service design uses narrative structures to tie together the various elements of the service. A story-based service concept gives customers a memorable service experience that makes your service stand out from the crowd. Stories create emotions, and emotions yield results.

Before starting to design a company's customer experience, it's essential to establish the company's story identity. One of the main aspects of the story identity is company's core story. The story identity is used as the foundation for all company's story design.

In the Story Workshop it was used the StoryTree method developed by Anne Kalliomäki of Tarinakone (Story Engine) to create stories for BSR tourism. StoryTree is a simple approach to discovering the essence and the core of a company - or a geographical region.

In the StoryTree method, three mind-maps are created into a shape of a tree. The mind-map in the roots of the tree is the diamond: the core message of the area. The trunk of the tree depicts the services and special places of the area. The branches of the tree carry the story elements, details, themes, characters, historical frames etc. The StoryTree is a process and a tool for brainstorming and collecting ideas together.

The method helps to define the unique elements of the experience is offered to tourists exploring certain area. What is the story line that will merge the customer experience into one common theme? A theme, which will grow into a full story and keep sprouting new shoots in the all tourism services that are provided.

The Baltic sea, its nature and history are like a canvas, onto which the common story can be painted. We are its painters, said *Anne Kalliomaki* at Tarinakone (StoryEngine).

Tarinakone (2008) helps companies and organization on the tourism industry to find effective ways to use stories and dramaturgy in producing better and more memorable experiences. Tarinakone specialises in using story design to commercialize experiences. More info: www.tarinakone.fi/en

Anne Kalliomäki
Tarinakone (StoryEngine)
anne(at)tarinakone.fi
www.tarinakone.fi



How to create and promote a competitive tourist offer

During the second day many good practices for joint product development and promotion were presented around the Baltic Sea Region. Director *Martin Ahlberg* at FIN-S Marknad & Kommunikationion presented current tourism trends and tourism cooperation in the BSR. FIN-S is a PR and marketing agency specialized in travel and tourism within Sweden, the other Nordic Countries and the Baltic region. The agency was founded in 1995 by Martin Ahlberg. Today, there are three persons at the agency. During the past ten years, FIN-S have co-operated with more than 200 companies related to travelling. The agency has a solid network of partners and co-operating



companies in the travel and tourism industry. In addition, they keep an extensive register of tourism and travel/business trade media and constantly observe the travel trends in the Nordic countries.

Martin Ahlberg
FIN-S Marknad & Kommunikation
[martin.ahlberg\(at\)fin-s.a.se](mailto:martin.ahlberg@fin-s.a.se)
www.fin-s.a.se, www.traveltrends.se



Tourists planning the travel destination around food -theme

Mr *Ain Hinsberg*, Head of R&D Unit at Estonian School of Hotel and Tourism Management, Tallinn – the moderator of the two-day seminar - presented the possibilities that the Baltic Sea Region Culinary Heritage has to offer to tourists. More and more tourists around the world want to plan their travel destination around one theme – food. Although a relatively new phenomenon, culinary travel is a growing industry. Food is something that unites people. The majority of Baltic Sea Region food is very simple, and for a long time, grain and bread were in the first place, with potatoes being added considerably later.

Dairy products, salted fish, and pork have also been part of the daily menu for centuries. Traditional Baltic Sea Region dishes are known for the simplicity of their preparation. The same food could vary somewhat from country to country or place to place with a very large territory – The Northern Europe, Baltic states and neighbouring countries as well. Today, dark bread is still loved in the Baltic Sea Region and it has been an everyday food since the 12th century. Dishes from oats and hempseed were prepared to a lesser extent, and wheat products did not reach the table until the end of the 19th century.

The Baltic Sea Culinary Route Project aims to promote especially the above - offering to tourists the Baltic Sea Region Culinary Heritage. The main goal of the project was to develop a joint Baltic Sea Region Culinary Route and develop culinary tourism products based on regional food heritage in order to empower the BSR identity, the status of BSR cuisine and rural service economy (using clean and healthy regional food) as provider of regional employment and products. As results of the Baltic Sea Culinary Route Project were expected well-focused BSR identity, BSR cuisine established among international culinary traditions, cross-sector and regional stakeholders involved in policy-making and strategic planning, rural service economy acknowledged as a regional development priority, a compiled Pan-BSR culinary tourism strategic development framework, new BSR culinary tourism supply using clean and healthy regional food and established and launched Pan-BSR tourism route as a network of cross-sector stakeholders, reminded *Hinsberg*.

Ain Hinsberg
Estonian School of Hotel and Tourism Management EHTE
[ain.hinsberg\(at\)ehte.ee](mailto:ain.hinsberg@ehte.ee)
www.ehte.ee



Attracting tourists towards Baltic Sea Region from Japan

Malla Paajanen and Piia Hanhirova at Aalto University presented how to brand a Macro region: the case of the BSR and as a case of BaltmetPromo cross-border product: “Live like locals”. The BaltMet Promo – Creating promotional Baltic Sea Region products for tourists, talents and investors in the global markets is based on the cooperation of Baltic Metropolises Network and the Baltic Development Forum. The BaltMet Promo project aims to join forces in promoting the Baltic Sea Region on a global scale - promoting the entire Baltic Sea Region globally and strengthening the BSR identity both at home and abroad. The project wants to attract tourists from other continents, talents from the creative sector as well as major international investment projects to the Baltic Sea Region.



The Baltic Sea Region branding is based on concrete BSR products which are built on wide transnational stakeholder cooperation: synergies with existing actors and frameworks in BSR. Strengthening the feeling of regional identity is the keyword when strengthening the BSR brand and setting the BSR on global agenda of place branding.

But how to do regional branding? In the BaltMetPromo Project, BSR product building is based on core strengths of BSR and on thorough research and expert opinions. There are three fields of excellence and one of them is tourism. One of the most demanding target groups is Japanese tourist. Branding is based on intensive product building of BSR products. Product building is based on thorough research in 11 metropolises of the region. The interest of Japanese tourists towards a life style experience in BSR was

mapped in the Tourism pilot. In addition, the existing supply of services targeted to Japanese tourists was mapped. In marketing and communications, the idea was to package the services and products into an attractive form. Tourism demand research was made to find out public trend towards “Lifestyle experience in Baltic Sea Region”.

As a result, it was found that individuals, especially Japanese young women are seen as trend setters in traveling. Specific cities are well-known, e.g. Berlin, Copenhagen and Scandinavian cities, but there is generally very little information on the lifestyles of the Baltic Sea Region countries. The conception of the Baltic Sea Region according to three sub-themes was found out: Nature, design → Scandinavian Cities. The Historic Centre (World Heritage) → Three Baltic Cities. History (e.g. war, architects) → Berlin and Warsaw. In addition it was found out the existing supply of services under ‘Live like locals’ theme in the Baltic Sea Region by means of the tourism supply research.

Information about 12 categories of lifestyles in each of 11 cities was found such as general information, nature, food/cuisine, culture, trends/fashion, urban/city/rural life, other leisure activities, main tourist sites, tourist services, eco e.t.c. There were a lot of traditional tourism services, but very few services in particular for Japanese tourists. Three ten-day trips to: Helsinki + St.Petersburg, Riga + Vilnius + Tallin: ‘Baltic Cities’, Berlin + Warsaw: ‘Culture Power Spots’ were made. Product: ‘Live like locals’ travel experienced to the Metropolitan areas of the Baltic Sea Region. A competition for individual Japanese bloggers was created: Win a trip to Baltic Sea Region area, travel under “Live like locals theme”.

Paajanen and Nikula believe that nation branding and city-branding still prevail in place branding. There is still a lot of added value of widening the scope into regional place branding. Therefore, we should see that the cooperation comes first and competition second, underlined *Paajanen* and *Hanhirova* together.



Malla Paajanen
Aalto University School of Economics
Center for Markets in Transition (CEMAT)
malla.paajanen(at)aalto.fi
www.aalto.fi
www.hse.fi/cemat

Piia Hanhirova
Aalto University School of Economics
Center for Markets in Transition (CEMAT)
piia.hanhirova(at)aalto.fi
www.aalto.fi
www.hse.fi/cemat



Through challenges to successful networking and sale

Project Director *Maritta Hiltunen* at Turku Touring presented Cultural Tourism 2011 -project and theme based joint products with Tallinn and Turku. The aim of the Cultural tourism 2011 project is to unite the operators of culture and tourism in Turku and Tallinn and create new and more customer friendly services and product combinations. The main partner of the project is Turku Touring/city of Turku, additional partners are Turku 2011 – foundation, Tallinn 2011 – foundation and the

culture organizations of the city of Tallinn. The project started at the beginning of 2010 and will end the 30.8.2012 and it is funded by EU, Central Baltic Interrg IV A programme 2007-2013.

The project enhances collaboration and the creation of new culture-based quality tourism products and, in this way, tries to increase the number of foreign tourists in Turku and Tallinn regions. Project includes a study of the experiences of the visitors and organizing training for the service providers. Through a joint product development, the project creates an attractive and interesting product combination for the European market to join the two cities. There are also other cooperation activities like service chain mapping, innovative marketing e.g. product development. Through different actions the pricing and finding out best combination were found most difficult. There were a number of ideas but much less concretes.

Four main themes were created in the product development. First one was design & architecture. Aimed at lovers and enthusiasts of art/design/architecture. This track will feature themed city tours with visits to various creative places and includes participation into an art workshops etc. Second theme was facing the sea. Tallinn and Turku are bound by the sea and both cities are greatly influence by their waterside location – this theme is naturally based on Turku archipelago & Aura River, Tallinn Bay. The third theme was food culture. This theme places Estonian and Finnish cuisine into spotlight, introducing and teaching about food traditions and modern cuisine, regional drinks, locally grown food. And the last fourth theme was modern life in historical cities. Building on one of the main themes of Tallinn 2011, this theme will encompass experiences in the Old Towns of both Tallinn and Turku, searching for similarities and differences among the two and offering attractive options for various target groups.

Thought the fascinating products there were still challenges in the project implementation. Regulations and approach of doing actions differs in countries. EU bureaucracy is growing and sometimes it is far away from common sense. Clients and public have had difficulties to find information from partners sites, because there are no own www-pages only net platform for partners. Partner companies which were found via open call, resulted to that the companies were not homogeneous in size, field or in know-how. This made it more difficult to find a right level in training because there were different needs in both sides. It was difficult to also a challenge



combine the products to same packages and find the right price.

In addition challenges there were many successful examples of the implementation. The cooperation started with basic researches needed in implementation. Involvement of professionals and experts were the key-elements in product development as well as sellers involvement already in product development process. Use of existing know-how and results of previous projects and best practices was crucial. As well as directing the resources to expert work and cooperation with tourism business. Commitment of the partners and interest groups was essential.

Successful examples of networking were done through product development – tour operators as experts. Sellers from both countries were included. Marketing experts: Nordic Marketing for German markets and E-learning entities were done by experts of different business fields. Service chain mapping made by Pöyry Finland and focus groups from both countries have tested the products.

For other projects there are now many services on use as a result such as the researches and other expert works: Cultural Tourism 2011 Communication plan, Cultural Tourism Media and marketing plan, Benchmarking report, Product manual (only for German markets), Marketing material, Info package of Hospitality programme for service providers (coming soon) are available on the project's own net platform and E-learning entities are available at www.Kulmat.fi reminded *Hiltunen*.

Joint packages and films presenting the products available: <https://www.facebook.com/Cultourism2011> or at <http://www.turkutouring.fi>

Maritta Hiltunen

Turku Touring / Tourism and Experience Management Competence Cluster in Southwest Finland

Cultural Tourism 2011

maritta.hiltunen(at)turku.fi

www.turkutouring.com



Enjoy South Baltic

South Baltic tourism joint product development and joint promotion was presented by Director *Marta Chelkowska* at the Department of Tourism, Office of the Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodeship, which is also one of the Lead Partners of the tourism Flagship projects FP 12,9 within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. *Chelkowska* reminded some key issues when building a coherent image and identity of the Baltic Sea Region, to get common and unique brand based on the key competitive differentiators. What's important? Strengthening of networks for marine and land transport to discover attractive places, is crucial and in addition increasing the financial resources for investments in tourism. Increasing revenues from tourism by: MICE sector support and development. In addition, efficient use of natural and cultural resources within cross-border products development is essential.

Chelkowska told about the ESB! Enjoy South Baltic –project, which has started at the beginning of August 2011 and will last until the end of July 2014. The total eligible budget is 1 180 540 Euro and it is funded by EU, South Baltic Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007 – 2013. Objectives of the project are increasing the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region by developing and improving the quality of tourist offer and services based on cultural and natural environment qualities, which are well-adjusted to the trends observed in the tourism industry and which satisfy customers' needs and preferences. In addition to improve and enhance the image of the region, considered to be a rising star among other international tourist



destinations. Expected results are creating and launching a new cross-border tourist offer based on natural and cultural heritage distinct features. In addition to increase the awareness of tourist attractiveness of the South Baltic region among tour operators doing their business on the developing trade markets defined in the project. As one of the result it is expected to establish long-term cross-border inter-institutional relations and develop a cross-border tourist offer sales system.

Within the framework of the flagship project (FP) 12.9 the Department of Tourism, Office of the Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodeship provided a monitoring analysis of the ongoing projects in the whole Baltic Region focused on tourism. What was found out? The projects are mostly related to infrastructure, analysis and research, new product creation, etc but no-one cooperates directly to the SME's that implement tourist products into the market and provide the incoming tourism service.

Offer without client does not exist. ESB ! will be a second step of FP 12.9 implementation strongly related to BSR offer promotion on the commercial market. ESB! is a new and innovatory cross-border project focused on strengthening the image and competitiveness of the South Baltic region as an attractive tourist destination.

The first stage of the project implementation will be focused on creation new tourist product and packages on the base of available resources and observed trends in tourism in cooperation to our domestic (lithuanian, polish, german) branch. The second will be dedicated to launch the new products on the market in perspective target countries. To that end it will be vital to connect South Baltic tour operators and tourist agencies with the tourist industry in the perspective destination countries which communicate with the final customer, i.e. the tourist for whom the offer has been developed.

Finally Good practice - it is a chance to find good solutions for the SME. To develop new contacts and to re-search new tourist markets. Good idea is also to check the functioning of the solutions on the example of cooperation of tree countries. And finally all these experience will be gained and will be used for the entire Baltic Sea Region, described *Marta Chełkowska*.

Marta Chełkowska

Department of Tourism Office of the Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodeship.

m.chelkowska(at)pomorskie.eu

www.pomorskie.eu / www.prot.gda.pl



Experiences in cross-border product development and in joint tourism promotion activities in Branding Scandinavian Islands -project

Matilda Åberg at the City of Väståboland presented the Branding Scandinavian Islands – the project. The work is supported by the European Union through its Regional Development Fund. One of the aim of the project is to increase the number of visitors to Scandinavian Islands from abroad by 10 % from 2008 to 2013. This is to be achieved by unified product development, joint marketing and enhancing the competence and quality among the service producers throughout the Scandinavian Islands.

Scandinavian Islands as a destination has the archipelago area between Stockholm in Sweden over the Åland Islands to Turku and the Turku Archipelago in Southwest Finland. The landscape is a mosaic of 60 000 islands. Scandinavian

Islands is the home of 400 000 people, 70 000 live on islands. A life close to nature and water has created a special culture in the small but vibrant archipelago communities. Scandinavian Islands are easy to access from Stockholm, Mariehamn, Turku and Helsinki - cruise ships and ferries pass through the area.



In international marketing the target markets are: Germany with WHOP (Wealthy Healthy Older People). In international marketing actions they take a part to fairs like ITB, workshops, press visits and FAM trips. Another target group is The Netherlands with Active Family in different Vakationbeurs, workshops, press visits and FAM trips. Third target group is Great Britain DINKs (Double Income No Kids) and fourth WTM, workshops, press visits, FAM Trips. The destination has good visibility through Visit Finland and Visit Sweden but also visibility through partners of the project.

In joint product development the trademark Scandinavian Islands is a quality guarantee for the visitor as it is used only by certified enterprises in the area. In addition sustainable values, high level in service including service in at least English preferably also German and availability year round are important values. Cooperation between areas is learning from other regions. There are challenges but also good practices are shared. There is a aim in Cross Border Products and challenges are found by geographical cross-border products which are expensive (long distances, scattered area to name a few). Now new focus is instead in theme folders.

There were found many challenges of Cross Border Product packaging. One of them was seasonal climate changes around the Baltic Sea. No co-organized Infrastructure for the whole region. Keeping the touch with the ground level service providers is essential for reliable product partners to remain. Minding the brand towards reality and including the values of the brand the whole way in the marketing process is a challenge. As well as keeping in mind the targetgroup-focus is important. What was crucial was networking with decisionmakers, locals, producers, resellers and reliable product partners. Deal of reasonable price was once again found difficult for such a vast destination e.g. cycle package. *Matilda Åberg* reminded that what is the most important is the fact that the package must be real and sellable in all aspects.

Matilda Åberg
matilda.aberg(at)scandinavianislands.com
www.scandinavianislands.com

www.twitter.com/purearchipelago
www.facebook.com/purearchipelago
www.twitter.com/nagubon
www.facebook.com/nagubon



Bike the Baltic cross-border product

Office Director *Czeslaw Zdrojewski* at Association of Communes and Districts of Middle Pomerania, Poland presented the Bike the Baltic -South Baltic cross-border activity product. The main idea of the project was to support the sustainable development and promotion of the South Baltic Area, by creating a joint cross-border bicycle thematic route. The project was implemented within the South Baltic Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007 – 2013. Total Project Budget – 1 mln Euro. Project started in the beginning of the August 2008 and 1st until the end of October 2010. There were four partners and five different components. As an innovative character was created – GPS information system which was connected with a web site. Learn more about

theBike the Baltic: <http://bikethebaltic.com>

Czeslaw Zdrojewski
Association of Communes and Districts of Middle Pomerania
dyrektor(at)ko-pomerania.pl / www.ko-pomerania.pl



Conclusions of the Common Future for Baltic Tourism Seminars

During the two “Common Future for Baltic Tourism” seminars, over 100 stakeholders from different sectors and regions of the BSR took part in exchanging experiences and discussing the perspectives and the future of the rural and coastal tourism in the BSR. The key elements that came up during these two seminars were the need for tourism innovation in tourism businesses especially towards innovations that improve the tourism businesses actions in environmental and cultural responsibility. The significance of storytelling and the

utility of electronic commerce, such as social media as an important development sector in the common mar-

keting and the accessibility of the BSR Tourism. In *Maria Loginova*’s presentation the number of social media and blog users in Russia was a direct sign for that. In addition, Prof. Dr. *Michael Klotz* presented the eGuide system which was developed for the Baltic Museums. These kind of innovations should be utilized more e.g. among rural and activity tourism and in national parks. One example of an electronic tool was “Bike the Baltic” approach presented by *Czeslaw Zdrojewski*. These services can still be improved, areas such as more precise localisation technology, better indoor-navigation options, augmented reality, interactivity: quiz, search games, feedback by integrating web-communities (e.g. twitter, facebook, flickr).

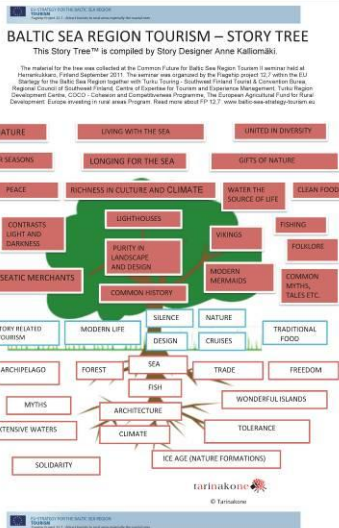


When considering about common future for the Baltic Sea Tourism, we should first look at each other – what we expect e.g. in terms of rural tourism products – their variety, authenticity, accessibility. We should look at the assets we all have and develop products that are authentic and contemporary at the same time. *Asnate Ziemele* drew a vision that rural tourism in the Baltic Sea Region should become a homogenous, reliable, but at the same time a diverse product, each country and region featuring unique values in the common setting.

Nina Vesterinen encouraged to work together to enhance the BSR importance on the EU-level and said that all the countries should concentrate on their own strenghts and challenges. But at the same time, we should exchange best practices. In addition, we should have quality criteria or at least a common understanding of the quality in common theme based products such as round trips or in a common products and packages.

As a conclusion, there are some key issues to be remembered, when thinking about the whole Baltic Sea Region in the cross-border product development of the presented projects. Director *Merja Hart* mentioned at the first Common Future for Baltic Sea Tourism seminar that there has to be clearly defined mission – what is the main aim of the project and how it can be reached. Project life span should be long enough to do a follow up and an action plan for future should be designed. Participants should be committed to develop something new and enough time should be dedicated. *Maritta Hiltunen* of the Cultural Tourism 2011 – project reminded, the products have to be made together with suppliers and sales channels. In addition *Matilda Åberg* underlined that the package must be real and sellable in all aspects.





Anne Kalliomäki from the Tarinakone (StroyEngine) run the story workshop and collected the core elements for the common story for the Baltic Sea Region Tourism. The roots, the core message of the area, the trunk of the tree, the services and special places of the area were discussed. The branches of the tree carry the story elements, details, themes, characters, historical frames etc.

Some core elements were found by means of the StoryTree methods: such as 4 seasons - 9 countries – united diversity with sea, nature and people. The StoryTree for the Baltic Sea Tourism was created and it can now be taken advantage of by different actors and tourism professionals in BSR to further develop and use it in common marketing and product development.

During these two seminars it was clearly seen that despite of challenges concerning a joint and coherent image, a cross-national product development

and promotional activities as well as transparency and visibility of tourism offers and services in foreign source markets, The Baltic Sea region shows high potential in attracting international tourists. Especially deeper co-operation between all the actors and organizations in the BSR was seen crucial development. The actors should know each other better and create trust between one another as well as the common stories around the BSR need to be further developed. We must work together and see the co-operation as a strength and resource. As a result, only by working together, can we create a bigger and more attractive tourism destination.



Further information such as presentations and photos are available on this website: http://www.baltic-sea-strategy-tourism.eu/cms2/BSST_prod/BSST/en/fs/Flagship_Project_12.7_-_Rural_areas/Welcome_to_the_Common_Future_for_Baltic_Tourism_Seminar_II_/index.jsp



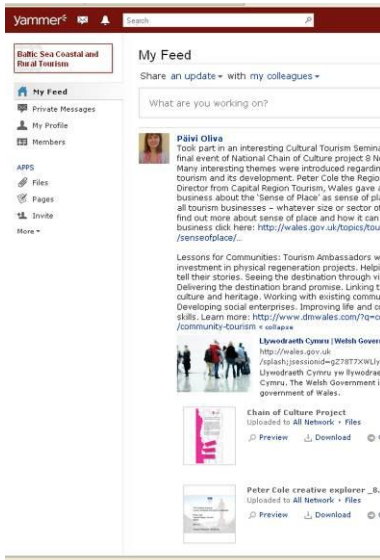
Register as a stakeholder and join the Network of Baltic Coastal and Rural Tourism

You can find information on all of the Flagship Projects of Tourism, presentations and news on the following website: www.baltic-sea-strategy-tourism.eu. We would like to encourage you to register as a stakeholder for this process by using the „get involved“ button which you can find in the menu bar on the left under the heading „service“. You will be added to a mailing list which we are using to send

information about activities and projects of PAC and all the tourism flagship projects. In case you have some interesting event or project that you would like to give a hint of, please pass on the information to the priority area coordinator of Tourism, Wolf Born, and he can add it to the news section of the website. Priority Area Coordinator "Tourism": Wolf Born, coordinator@baltic-sea-strategy-tourism.eu, +49 (0) 385 588 1740.

If you want to be a part of the network for developing the entity of coastal and rural tourism in BSR and sharing the know-how and the best practices with regard to products, services and their accessibility and promotion, please join the network of Baltic Coastal and Rural Tourism here:

https://www.lyyti.fi/ilmoittaudu/FlagshipNetwork_9346



Yammer -The Enterprise Social Network which has already over 170 members is one of the platforms that was created for the Network of Baltic Sea Coastal and Rural Tourism. It is a professional social network and the members are encouraged to use it as a channel for sharing and exchanging experiences and discussing about the rural and coastal tourism in the BSR. In addition the members are able to use this network as one of the channels to disseminate about the events, tools, results and to find new partners among BSR Tourism professionals. You are also able to send invitations to your own networks and contacts who might be interested to join this platform. Please send an e-mail to paivi.oliva@turku.fi to get an invitation to join the network.

Keep in contact

On behalf of the Turku Touring, The Regional Council of Southwest Finland - the Flagship project 12,7 and all the seminar organisers, we would like to express our great appreciation of your participation and cooperation regarding the seminar and flagship project 12,7. The environmentally friendly costal and rural tourism in the BSR will be further developed within the framework of the Flagship project 12,7. However the current shape of the flagship project will terminate in the end of the year 2011. The decisions of the continuation of the project, will be taken in January 2012. We are looking forward to your communication, initiatives and to seeing you again at the latest in the Priority Area Tourism Conference 3-4 May 2012 in Warnemünde, Germany.

In the meantime, should you need any information, please contact us.

Coordinator: Päivi Oliva

paivi.oliva@turku.fi, +358 (0)40 8315 041

Turku Touring / EUSBSR Flagship Project 12.7 "Attract tourists to rural areas esp. coastal ones"

The seminar was organized by

- EUSBSR, Priority Area Tourism, Flagship Project 12,7
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- Turku Region Development Centre
- COCO - Cohesion and Competitiveness Programme
- The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas Programme
- Centre of Expertise for Tourism and Experience Management



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