



BART – Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism

Action Plan – Roadmap to Tourism Development in the Barents Region

Background

- The Barents Euro Arctic Region's portfolio is as diverse and filled with contrasts as it is geographically dispersed. The arctic climate, tough winters and the seasonal darkness of the Northern hemisphere, rich natural and cultural resources as well as an eventful history are amalgamated in this geopolitical area.
- The characteristic features of the Barents region are its heterogeneity, its sparse population of 5,5 million, amongst them indigenous people like Saami, Nenets, Vepsians and Komi, scattered on an area of 1755 800 sq km and its abundance of resources, which offer great opportunities but at the same time they are challenging ecological, social and political systems.(2.).
- This post-cold war construct ties together parts of the European Union, the Russian Federation and Norway (1). The official inauguration for the Barents region is the Kirkenes Declaration from 1993, ensuring cooperation, security, integration and prosperity in all its four member countries.
- The Kirkenes Declaration states that tourism holds the potential to play a major role in the Barents region, not only because of the industry's multiplier economical effect but also for its strengths to bring people together and to encourage human contacts (1).
- Cross-border EU funded projects support and stimulate the tourism development at international, national, regional and local levels in the Barents region.
- The BART project is one example for establishing cross-border tourism cooperation.
- One of the project's major tasks was the creation of this Roadmap for Tourism development in the Barents region based on extensive research among tourism entrepreneurs in Finnish Lapland, Swedish Lapland, Northern Norway, Arkhangelsk and Murmansk. The roadmap presents the five focus areas detected in the analysis of the conducted interviews, the needs of the industry and recommendations for implementation.
- Until now, the Barents region is a non-concept in international tourism. However, the area has much to offer for tourism with the inherent diversity in terms of peoples and culture together with its rich natural and historical heritage. In return, tourism business is, as the Kirkenes declaration states, a promising industry for economic- as well as socio-cultural development (2).

Objectives

- This Roadmap to Tourism development in the Barents region is not a detailed action plan, nor is it a comprehensive list of initiatives with a preassigned budget which will be implemented in a certain period. The overall intention of the Roadmap to Tourism Development in the Barents region is to demonstrate the current state of tourism and to articulate the perceptions, needs and interests of

the entrepreneurs in the area to encourage policy makers in national ministries, government agencies and EU institutions to provide the prerequisites for joint tourism development.

- This roadmap is divided into five thematic focus areas, which depict the strategic key development areas and the recommendations for implementation provide guidelines and suggestions for courses of action to facilitate tourism across the Barents region. These focus areas, namely cooperation, infrastructure, knowledge, product development and branding are deeply intertwined.
- Once the preconditions for tourism cooperation are established, an action plan for guiding, visioning and directing tourism development in the Barents region can be launched.
- A possible vision for the Barents region as a tourism destination could be: a collaborative setting with key tourism actors from research, educational institutions, public authorities, the private sector and other related stakeholders. The multiplier effect of tourism will bring benefits to the region and the tourism infrastructure will expand with the continuing globalization process.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- (1) Barentsinfo 2012. The Kirkenes Declaration. Address:
http://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/459_doc_KirkenesDeclaration.pdf. Accessed: 5 November 2012.
- (2) BEAC 2012. Surface area of the Barents region and inhabitants. Address:
http://www.beac.st/in_English/Barents_Euro-Arctic_Council/Facts_and_maps.iw3. Accessed: 4 November 2012.

DRAFT