

MICE tourism development in Swedish Lapland and the Barents Region – perspectives from tourism actors in Swedish Lapland.

Gelter, H., Hellmér, E., & Gelter, J., Department of Arts, Communication and Education, Luleå University of Technology.

Swedish authorities have launched the goal to double the revenue from tourism in Sweden to 2020. This national tourism development plan has also been implemented by regional and local tourism management organizations. The Swedish Lapland development plan involves a strategy to avoid developing mass tourism in large tourist resorts. To reach the national goal without doubling the number of leisure tourists and associated investments in new hotels and resorts, Swedish Lapland aim to focus on increasing the MICE sector, and its extension “technical visits”. The tourism development in the northern Barents countries has led to competitive regional destinations brands based on the common USP – “Lapland”, *i.e.*, the brands Norwegian-, Swedish-, Finnish-, and Russian Lapland. In an attempt increase inter-regional cooperation and even potentially launch the Barents region as one destination brand, an Kolartic ENPI CBC project “BART – Public – Private cooperation in Barents tourism development” was launched in 2011. Within this project 14 tourism enterprises were interviewed in Swedish Lapland about their view of MICE in the Barents region, as well as what potential and problems the development of Barents cooperation and a common destination branding could have. This presentation will present the result of this study. *200 words*

Swedish authorities have launched the goal to double the revenue from tourism in Sweden to 2020. This national tourism development plan has been adapted into development plans in many regional and local destination management organizations. This is the cases of Swedish Lapland, where the development plan based on the core values of the destination; “Authenticity, Contrast, Hospitality & Hostmanship”, and the basic values of “Natural, Considerate, Informal, Untamed, Limitless, Developer” involves a strategy to avoid developing mass tourism in large tourist resorts of the kind that has characterized tourism development in Finnish Lapland. To be able to double the tourism revenue without investing in a doubled number of leisure tourists and its consequences of constructions of new hotels and resorts, Swedish Lapland as well as several of its local destinations aim to implement the national plan in tourism development plans that involves increasing the MICE sector of tourism, and to develop “technical visits” as an extension of MICE. The argument being that this enables both a prolongation of the tourism season as well having the potential of doubling the revenue without the need of too large investments. The tourism development in the northern Barents countries (northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia) have led to competitive regional destinations brands based on a common unique regional selling point – “Lapland”, *ie*, the four destination brands Norwegian Lapland, Swedish Lapland, Finnish Russian Lapland. In an attempt increase inter-regional cooperation and even potentially launch this Barents region as one destination brand, an Kolartic ENPI CBC project “BART – Public – Private cooperation in Barents tourism development” was launched in 2011. Within this project 14 tourism enterprises were interviewed in Swedish Lapland about public – private partnership in Barents tourism development, their view of MICE development locally, regionally and in the Barents region. In addition we asked what potential and problems the development of Barents cooperation and a common destination branding could have. This presentation will present the result of this study, and discuss the results bearing on the national and regional tourism development strategy with the focus on the MICE sector. *385 words*