



KVARKENRÅDET
MERENKURKUN
NEUVOSTO



Ålsterbottens förbund
Pohjanmaan liitto



REGION
VÄSTERBOTTEN

NSB CoRe KVARKEN - Making NSB more attractive, enlarging labour pool, better connected, wealthier

Summary
21 May 2018



Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



Kvarken and NSB CoRe

The most important linkages in the Kvarken region studied in this work are, first of all, internal sea routes through the Midway Alignment, which is a shortcut (A-line) within the Bothnian Corridor and a trunk line E12 to Mo i Rana in Norway. In Finland, the most important link is attachment to the city of Seinäjoki, and even forming of the twin city of Vaasa-Seinäjoki. Through Seinäjoki, Kvarken is linked to the Growth Corridor Finland, which currently reaches from Helsinki to Seinäjoki via Tampere. The northern direction of the Bothnia Corridor, whereupon Vaasa connects closely to Kokkola should also be remembered. Seinäjoki-Vaasa-Kokkola forms a growth triangle in Ostrobothnia. On a larger scale, the Kvarken could become a crossroad for two European corridors. On the one hand, it connects via Finland's growth path to NSB and SCANMED in Sweden. On the Swedish side, this also highlights the importance of North-South direction, namely Umeå connections to the south of Sundsvall and north to Luleå.

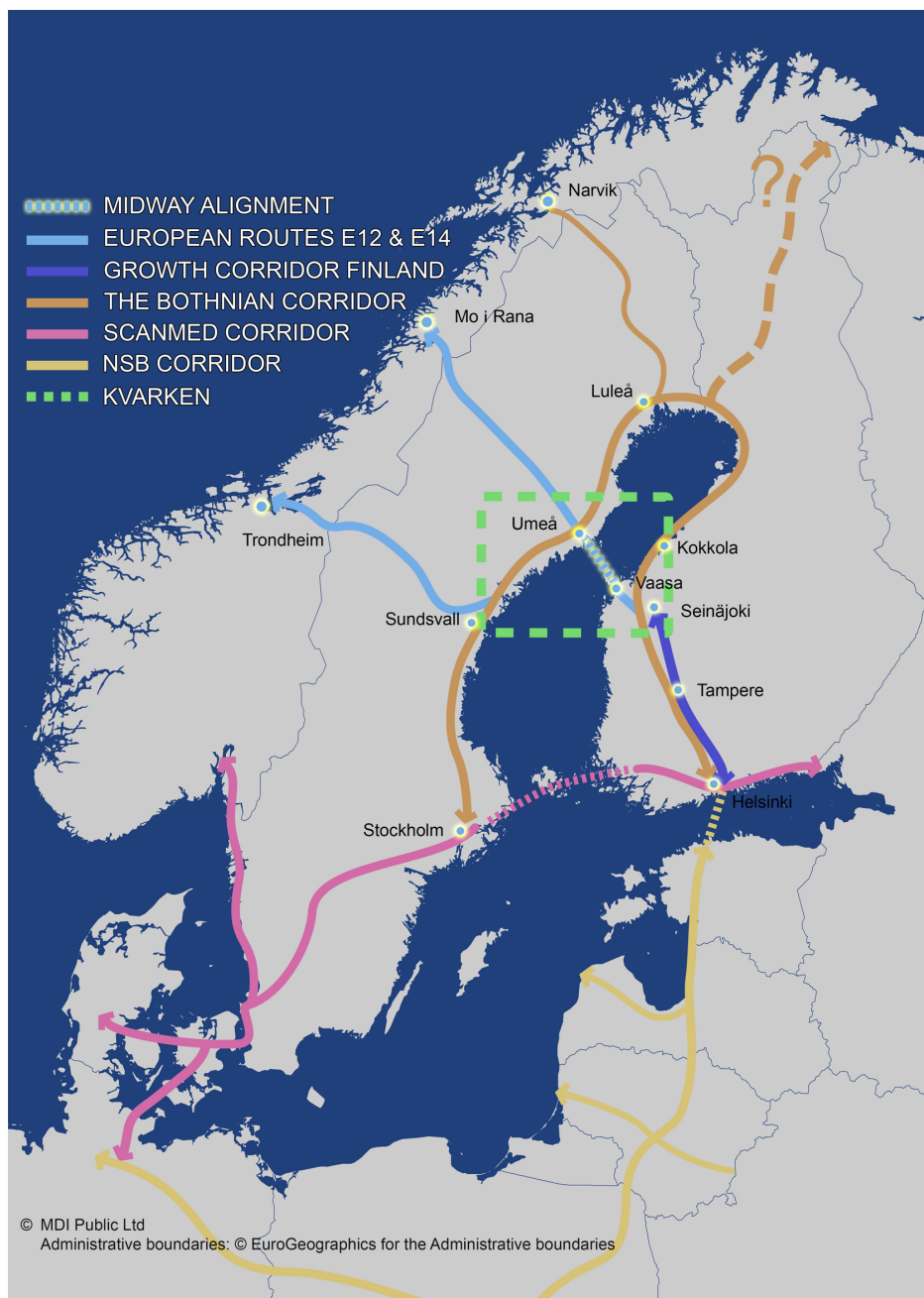


Figure 1. Kvarken area and the most important linkages.

Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long and successful history in cross-border development and governance, cultural assimilation • Collaborative and coordinated transport development both in Vaasa and Umeå • Electrified railway and direct connection from Helsinki to Vaasa 	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEN-T core networks bypass Vaasa • Slow and only once or twice a day each direction ferry link between Vaasa - Umeå • Poor rail linkage from Umeå to Norway
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arctic issues and Northern Dimension is interesting again for EU, transportation of goods, sustainability (low carbon) • Growing interest of building twin city between Seinäjoki and Vaasa - eg. Vaasa airport services also Seinäjoki • Knowledge and competence hub, exchanging students and experts create common pool of expertise across the border and along NSB • Increased integration between Vaasa/Seinäjoki and Umeå • Prolonging of the corridors creates additional opportunities 	Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ferry (midway alignment) will be severely delayed • Nordic countries thinly represented on TEN-T maps, losing position on money allocation • Non-urban areas in Kvarken do not benefit from NSB CoRe (only benefits major cities)

Summarising SWOT of KVARKEN in NSB CoRe

Future vision for freight transport

Kvarken forms the "Northern Dimension of NSB CoRe". Main nodes are Seinäjoki, Vaasa and Umeå. There is outspoken need for improved connection between Seinäjoki and Vaasa. Export and energy-oriented Vaasa and life-science oriented Umeå are good pieces of puzzle to Growth Corridor Finland and to NSB.

Duration	Vision
Short	Faster travel between Vaasa-Seinäjoki. Decrease number of rail level crossing
Mid-term	Reliable, innovative, environmental friendly ferry connection 3 hr connection
Long	1 hr transport between Vaasa and Umeå.

Vaasa region is among the most competitive in Finland, and it is recognized broadly as innovative and dynamic center and is well known of its energy sector. More broadly cities like Vaasa, Seinäjoki and

Kokkola have displayed impressive strides in competitiveness and vitality. One fourth of all energy sector jobs in Finland are situated in Vaasa, and the city is one of the most prominent sources of exports nationally.

Vaasa and Seinäjoki are an interesting addition to Growth Corridor Finland. They alone remain medium-sized but separate parts. But together, they are great and their weight is high. Cities have complementarity with each other in both the economic and expertise profiles, and together they have even more complementarity with Growth Corridor Finland and more broadly with NSB CoRe. Vaasa can especially bring energy expertise and Seinäjoki food know-how. The economic weight is made visible through the review of the potential increase in regional GDP.

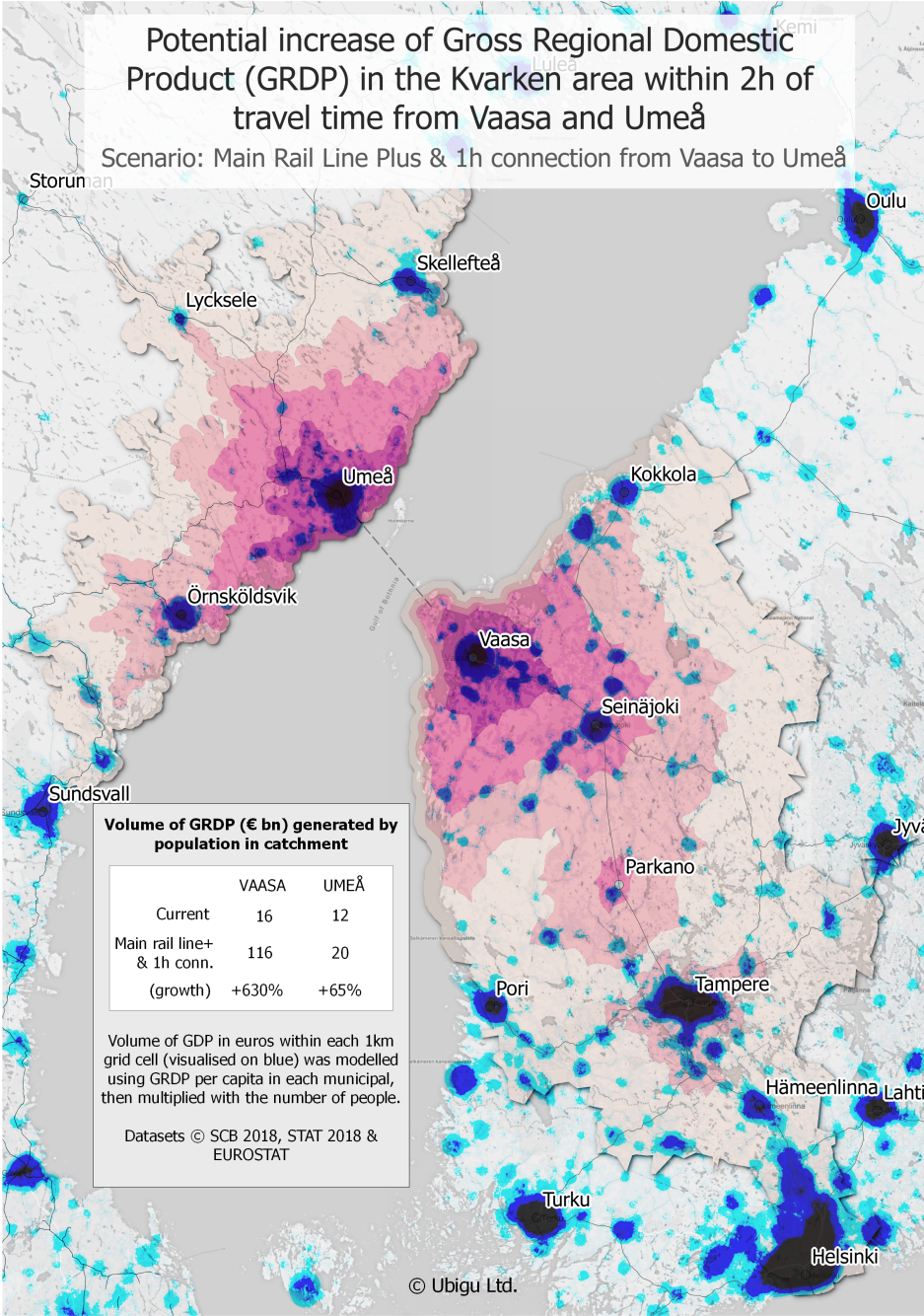


Figure 2. Potential increase in regional GDP.

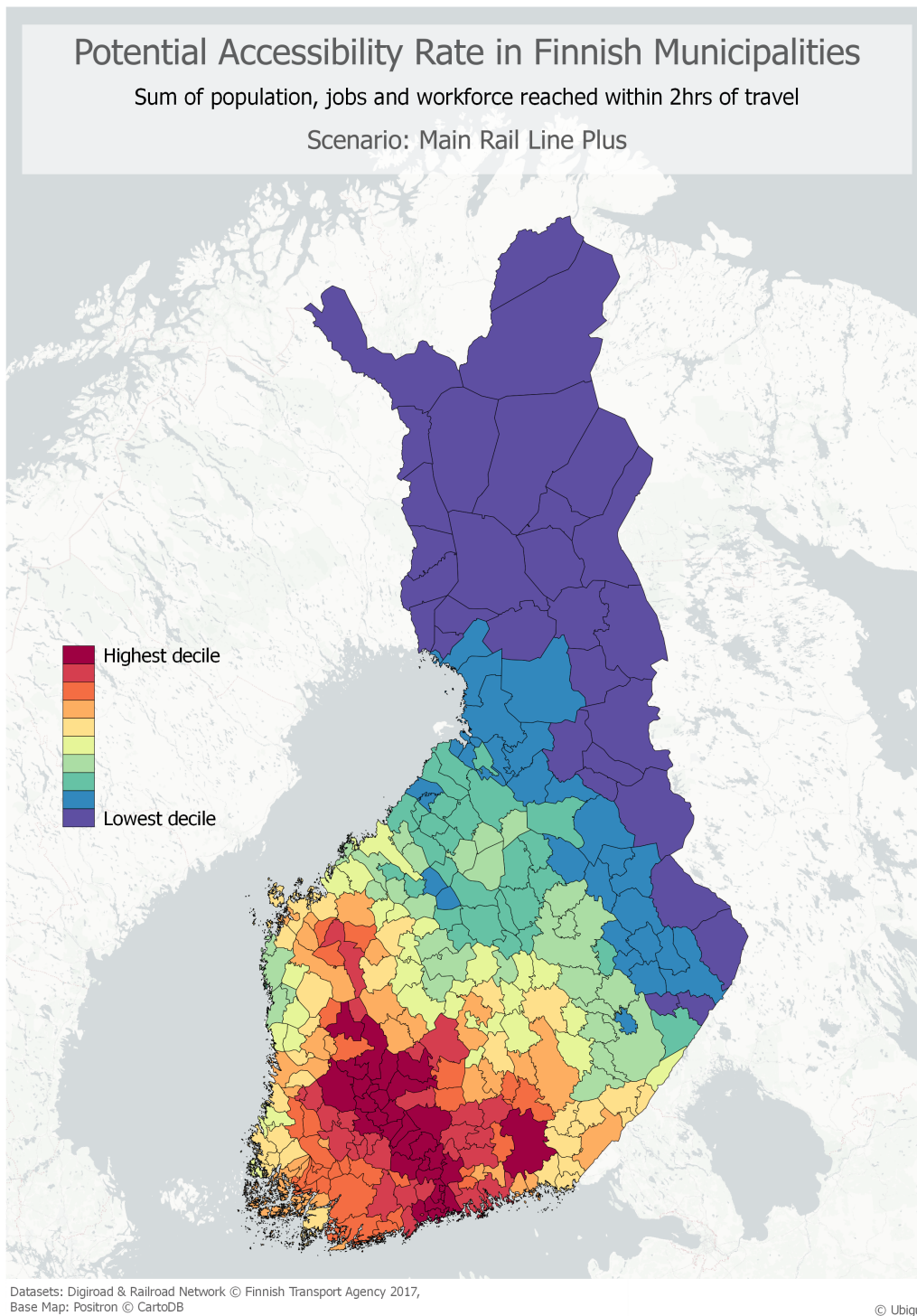


Figure 3. The scenario analysis of potential accessibility changes clearly brings out the potential of the Main Rail Line Plus development plan and its potential in increasing the significance of Ostrobothnia in the Growth Corridor Finland.

Vision for passenger transport

Main bottleneck in Ostrobothnia and Kvarken's passenger traffic is connection between Seinäjoki and Vaasa. Fast ship of fixed connection (1 hr) between Vaasa and Umeå is needed in long term (in mid-range more environmental friendly vessel is required). Internal integration is needed.

Duration	Vision
Short	Developing MaaS and development of station areas
Mid-term	Reliable, innovative, environmental friendly 3h ferry connection
Long	2hr connection from Vaasa to Helsinki (3hrs from Umeå)

Piloting MaaS should take place in 2018 wider pilot should be launched between Seinäjoki-Vaasa-Umeå. In mid-term vision ferry connection should be speeded up. New vessel should be in traffic in 2021. In long term there should be super-fast boat connection or fixed link. This would take place in about 30 years' time.

General Vision:

Kvarken is the Northern Dimension of NSB CoRe – Kvarken connects the extensions of ScanMed and NSB – Doorstep to arctic areas.

Key target: from Vaasa to Tampere in an hour, and another hour to Helsinki

In vision, the journey from Vaasa via Seinäjoki to Tampere will be done in an hour, like a trip from Tampere to Helsinki. The Growth Corridor Finland has most potential growth potential in Finland, Kvarken region can boost it. Kvarken connects the extensions of ScanMed and NSB and function as a doorstep to Arctic areas.

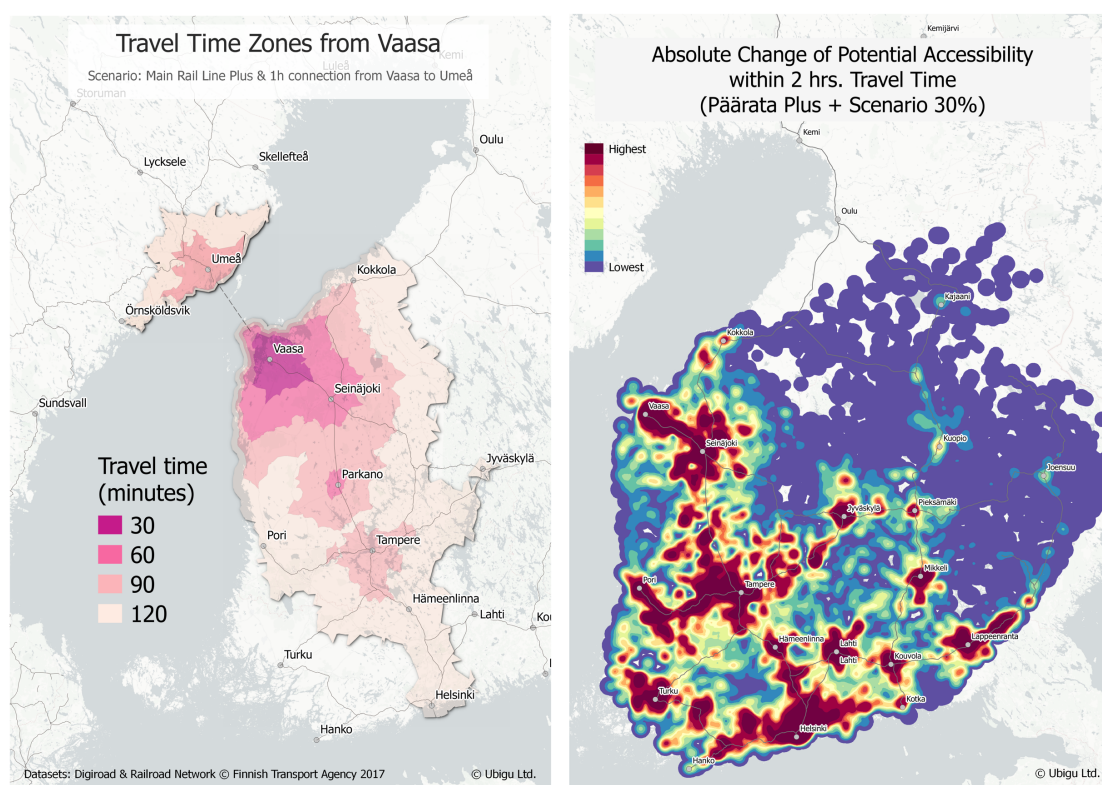


Figure 4. Travel time zones with major improvements in Main Rail Line and absolute change of potential accessibility with major improvements in Main Rail Line.

Bigger picture - key arguments

For making NSB more attractive, better connected, wealthier and to enlarge its labour pool, key need is to connect to the Growth Corridor Finland, by interlinking Seinäjoki – Vaasa - Umeå logistics, competence, labour force and deepening cross-border cooperation. Advocacy is needed on regional level between cities and counties, on national level both in Sweden and Finland and in EU level.

More attractive

This corridor is about people not bulk – this should be profiled as resilient and development oriented part of NSB CoRe. It gives 750 000 more people and 50 000 students to connected NSB Core, and about 2,5 million more people connected to Northern Sweden. Kvarken is attractive and indispensable in east – west connections. Attractiveness foster positive net migration. Arctic areas have hundreds of billions of potential – Kvarken is a short cut and a doorstep to Arctic areas. Kvarken is the Northern Dimension of NSB CoRe, building connections to Norway, Arctic and Russia, and in establishing stronger regional links in Barents region in total. Kvarken region needs to grow as attractive in the eyes of both residents and employers, so that new transportation solutions make commuting easier into Kvarken without pronounced outward movement.

Enlarging labour pool

Strong competence and knowledge basis – this area is powerhouse to competence-driven regional development. The Kvarken region is exceptionally strong in the energy and life sciences, adding value and competence in these fields. Kvarken is agile, with close connection between education and business. Enlarging labour market area makes it possible to commute easily between major cities both to experts and other professionals.

Better connected

Reliable, efficient and sustainable transportation network is the premise for transnational cooperation and for consolidating Kvarkens role as connector of ScanMed and the NSB CoRe. Internal transportation needs developing for strengthening regions' competitive advantage, and external routes need to unite Västerbotten and Ostrobothnia more intensely into greater growth regions and into global networks. Kvarken Region has the possibility to develop as inevitable connector between east and west. In the first place vessel is needed, in the second phase even quicker connection and fixed link in long term. Finance of the vessel has to be secured immediately. Quicker vessel by 2021 and fixed link by 2050.

Wealthier and healthier NSB

The triangle formed by Vaasa, Seinäjoki and Kokkola has met the regional development indicators very well in the 2010s, being top 10 performers among urban regions in Finland in early 2010 - Ostrobothnia's growth triangle is engine for growth. However, it should be noted that the development picture of recent years has been more challenging. Umeå has been the growth pole in Swedish side. Umeå is a strengthening hub in the Bothnia Corridor, NSB CoRe connects northern Sweden more closely to Finland and the Baltic. In order to be able to work on the Swedish side, it is important to note that Sweden is also involved in coastal alignment, especially south of Sundsvall. Joining NSB CoRe brings growth to North Sweden, also from the East. Kvarken makes NSB CoRe wealthier and healthier. In transport focus should be on freights value rather than on mere volumes. Western cost of Finland has substantially better health and well-being figures than rest of the country. Life Science and wellbeing is core competence of Umeå. Kvarken area could be test bed for new type of health services. New type of services should be piloted at the same time as pilot period for health and social services reform is running in Finland.

Act now

In Finland an immediate decision to join Growth Corridor Finland is needed. Key targets of advocacy are the Governmental Programs especially in Finland (new government expected to start in spring or summer 2019, but some potential also earlier due to pressure in government, health and social services reform), but also in Sweden (new government expected to start in 2018).

For both Finland and Sweden there exists a need for stronger advocacy on EU level to extend the NSB CNC to the north. Currently Vaasa lacks connection to TEN-T corridors. Finnish and Swedish governments decision to prolong Scan-Med and NSB projects and to include the Botnian corridor in the core corridor is great news for Kvarkens future and makes it possible for the region to truly grow as link between the two corridors. Now, action and advocacy is needed in every level, and regional actors are in the forefront in bringing these questions to the national agenda.

Even deeper cooperation between municipalities and regions is needed as well as between the two sides of the gulf, – perhaps time to establish first EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) around the Baltic Sea Region? Regional cooperation must include considerations of broader connection into Russia and onwards to China