

General information	
Projekt title	Spotlight High-Low Coast
Reference ID	20200506
Project dates	201510 - 201805
Priority	Environment
Specific objective	<b>Sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage</b>
Project management	Kvarken Council, 2148670-8
Other partners	Umeå municipality, 212000-2627 Vaasa Region Development Company (VASEK), 1850796-9 Höga Kusten Destinationsutveckling AB, 556961-4067
Norwegian partners	N/A

## SUMMARY

The activities and measures implemented during the course of this project are based on the specific objective ***Sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage***, and it is supported by the results achieved through our efforts to promote the joint world heritage and its surrounding regions.

***Spotlight's main target*** has involved the development of tourism products and companies, based on the geographical programme area and the surrounding regions where their participation is deemed to give a surplus to the project. This means increasing the attractiveness of the region by providing information so that more and more visitors get to know the natural world heritage. The development is to take place in a manner which promotes sustainable tourism.

Each project activity has been geared towards, promoted and supported the main target of creating new joint product packages. **In addition to the concrete product packages, we have applied the same method of working following the same packaging principles also in other activities, as manifested in the film production and the world heritage menu.** The films are structured with the same profile for all the three sub regions, highlighting the reasons for visit in a way which visualizes the joint packaging and is, first and foremost, aimed at persuading the tourists to visit all the three sub regions during the same trip. We followed the same structure in the world heritage menu, by packaging ingredients which are characteristic for our three regions and presenting them on the same plate.

To begin with, the project developed a graphic image and the slogan Two Countries – One World Natural Heritage, which has served as the marketing name by which we present our joint geographical region. As a result, it has become our distinctive brand, together with the map where our three sub

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VASEK

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regions are defined, as well as a symbol for the cross-border world heritage and Umeå region. The slogan and the map are found on the permanent marketing pages set up by the project at the websites of the regional tourism enterprises of Visit Vaasa, High Coast and Visit Umeå. The websites are important marketing channels for our product packages and joint region.

<http://www.visitvaasa.fi/en/spotlight/Pages/default.aspx>

The information wall onboard m/s Wasa Express is another permanent result, at least as long as the ferry is running, and it was set up to highlight the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the world heritage High Coast/ Kvarken Archipelago in 2016. The films produced by the project are shown on the embedded screen.

The project has produced a thorough film material showing reasons to visit the region. The films contribute to the project results as they increase the attractiveness of the region by providing information and encourage to visit the region during different seasons. They contribute to the possibility of more and more people getting familiar with the world heritage in a sustainable way, both digitally and through visiting the region in person. The films are structured so that the three sub regions are packaged together in different seasons and the destinations are all tied up into one whole. The film material is a permanent product which can be used by the regional tourism enterprises, project partners and financiers also after the project has ended. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKJJwMXUI-Q>

An expected result consisted of developing joint and innovative marketing, communication and information solutions and materials under the theme of world heritage. Solutions that all the project partners can use in their existing channels/platforms. This was achieved through the unique film production, information wall onboard the ferry and marketing material on the websites of the regional tourism enterprises. Before this, there was no similar material available in the region in this characteristic package form. The material is distributed far and wide via the project partners' existing channels, websites, Facebook and YouTube. Further, the material is available for use by the regional tourism enterprises as well as the World Heritage Gateway (Kvarken Archipelago) and Naturum (High Coast).

The project was tasked with developing models as a foundation for product packaging in the future. The expected result was at least six product packages but the project achieved ten packages (incl. two ordered specifically by a Nordic travel agency/wholesaler). The marketability of the packages has been tested by presenting them for tour operators at fairs, workshops and events.

Our models led to a partly unexpected result when a couple of German travel agencies decided to test our concept and packaged travels on the basis of material presented by us. They serve as good examples of new product packages. Likewise it shows that we have achieved the expected result of the project as a whole contributing to increase the amount of tourists in the region, in collaboration with other measures and activities.

We have been represented in national and international contexts, e.g. twice at Swedish Workshop (Visit Sweden) and Matka Nordic Travel Fair, the biggest travel fair in Northern Europe, and in the associated workshops. Further, we got the opportunity to take part in a sales event in the western part of Germany, arranged by Visit Finland. In these occasions, contacts with travel agencies have been established (and forwarded to the regional tourism enterprises) and already provided good results. Further, national organizations has, to some extent, opened up to cross-border cooperation through the events where we

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were given the opportunity to participate, which is quite unique and something that we had not counted on.

One expected result was to increase the level of awareness and knowledge about world heritage and sustainable tourism in more than 120 individuals in the region. We have achieved this in the seminars and information meetings that we have arranged, and through communication. If we also take into account the fairs and workshops, we have reached a much larger audience.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of High Coast/ Kvarken Archipelago in 2016, one expected result was for the project to arrange an event to highlight this cross-border world heritage. This was achieved by composing a specific world heritage menu out of locally produced and unique ingredients. The menu was created by the distinguished and well-known chef Michael Björklund. It was served in the best possible cross-border fashion, onboard the ferry plying the route between Vaasa in Finland and Umeå in Sweden, in the autumn of 2016. The shipping company in question has also indicated its interest to again include the menu in its supply. Further, through the menu, the project has contributed in laying the ground for continued wider cooperation between the creative chef and the shipping company, to boost the quality of the restaurant supply onboard the ferry.

The world heritage menu attracted a lot of attention and was given a lot of space in the press. Further, the menu was made available for the general public and restaurants in a publication, both printed and digital, in three languages. The menu was presented with photos and recipes, and with information about the menu background, world heritage and our region as well as about the project and its financiers. The book was printed on paper with environmental certification, in keeping with the project's sustainability principle. The basic idea behind the world heritage menu was to bind our region together in a combination of local ingredients which together form a whole where flavours are united on the same place, a little like a package as such.

[https://issuu.com/bocksoffice/docs/kvarken\\_receptbok](https://issuu.com/bocksoffice/docs/kvarken_receptbok)

Two seminars and training events were arranged for the project's target group consisting of tourist enterprises, to give them the opportunity for networking and collaboration, to hear expert lectures on sustainability, hosting, internationalization and product packaging, with workshops. These events support the expected result of the participating companies being able to exhibit wider knowledge of hosting and internationalization, which brings a surplus for their business.

The project, among other stake holders, has contributed to Birka Cruises' world heritage cruise, which has earlier called at High Coast during some seasons, but now in the summer of 2018 will also call at Vaasa where excursions will be arranged to the Kvarken archipelago. This cruise has sold extremely well and is expected to bring 1,500 visitors to the region. This would hardly have been possible without collaboration with High Coast. At the same time, it is an unexpected result and a good example of cross-border cooperation.

One expected result is that the solutions developed in the project are meant to have natural owners after the project has ended. With the film material as well as the models for product packages and the marketing pages, the regional tourism companies become the natural owners which has been agreed upon.

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The activities and measures described in the above indicate that the project has successfully reached most of its expected results. One that was not fully reached was to implement new sustainable solutions in at least five companies and destinations. It was revealed during the course of this project that there was no big need for these measures on the Swedish side as they had already had a good chance to benefit from these resources in another project with this specific orientation. When Spotlight was being planned, this project was not known. According to the plan, the participating organizations/companies were free to choose the activities that would benefit them the most and, therefore, the Finnish participants were offered an introduction in sustainability through an expert lecture.

As to the programme's indicators for companies, we have not reached the targets set in the planning. However, a large number of companies have been involved in our product packages but it is not sufficient to fulfil the definition for a programme's indicator, according to Botnia-Atlantica.

The last of the project's outward activities was to present its results and working methods for the general public at the Ostrobothnian Fair in early April 2018.

Material of the project is stored and archived by the project partners.

For further information about the project: <http://www.kvarken.org/projects/spotlight>

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