



BARENTS MONITOR

TOURISM SECTOR PROGRAMME

3:1 - 2006

Arctic Europe - Barents Tourism Marketing in Central Europe

UNKNOWN IN THE TOURISM MARKETS

Barents region is unknown as a tourism destination in Central Europe. Lapland, North Cape, Fjords of Norway, Arctic Ocean and the Lofoten Islands are fairly well known but the northern parts of Russia are still unexplored area for tourism even though the name and location of Murmansk are somewhat familiar.

APPEAL EXISTS – COMMON ATTRACTION

Tour operators are interested in new destinations. Travellers want new experiences when most of the European destinations have already been experienced. The North is interesting because it sounds exciting, exotic and different. From the European angle attractions are things to do with ice and snow, Arctic and special nature with all its phenomena and services. Also the man and his habits in the arctic region are interesting.

There are different development stages in tourism in the Barents region. Winter in Finnish Lapland is a hit product whereas in Finnmark, Norway, summer is the high season especially due to North Cape and the Hurtigruten. In Swedish Lapland the IceHotel in Jukkasjärvi is the absolute highlight product in the export markets but otherwise the focus is similar to the one in Finnish Lapland. For the time being the Kola Peninsula or Murmansk are the destinations only for few individual travellers or groups.

DIFFICULTIES OF JOINT MARKETING

The problem that a vast marketing cooperation often meets is the collision of interests. The borders of states are an obstacle to a sensible marketing but to a traveller they don't mean much. The national tourist boards concentrate in promoting and driving the best interest of their own country. Transportation companies have their own "territories" that make selling the trips difficult from both the customer's and entrepreneur's point of view in the Barents region. Also the companies are often only looking for their own interest without seeing the bigger picture.

There have been and still are many good co-operations in progress. Generally the focuses of these projects are in education, product development and in creating regional co-operation where as export marketing and sales have been neglected.

ASSIGNMENT AND ITS GOALS

The goal of the marketing plan is to map the outlines for the co-operation in Barents' region tourism for the next few years. The plan has been made by order of Lapin liitto, as a connection to Barents 2010 –project. The plan has been pulled together by NordicMarketing GmbH from Germany, with the principal responsibility on Heleena Luusua and Juha Haapanen. During the project a cooperation seminar was held, in which participated tourism professionals from Finland and Russia. Addition to this, discussions have been made with several companies and tour operators. In the planning phase written comments have



been asked from ten companies in Finland, Sweden, and Russia. Also tour operators' opinions were collected from Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, UK and France.

The objective of the orderer is to start a project in which the Barents region will be launched to the European tourism markets as an entirety, to create and reinforce the image of the Barents region in the markets and also to intensify the sales. The goal is to gather good, already existing products, projects and processes together and from thereon start developing the marketing and sales co-operation. Marketing plan will be used as a basis to plan the further measures.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Barents region – the name Arctic Europe is used as an image working title – has a chance to become the "new star" in the travel markets. But that requires well planned and coordinated collaboration in the region and also good contacts and actions in the markets.

STRATEGIC OUTLINES

Operating concept is based on the perspective of the European export markets (tour operators, travel agencies, travellers). The starting point of the co-operation in the Barents region is the already existing and known themes and the combinations of them in markets. The following outlines will be followed in the marketing:

Market orientation

Market trends and customers' needs are the driving force

Image strategy

Defining the joint factors of the image, the marketing name and competitiveness of the Barents region. Working title ARCTIC EUROPE.

Differentiation

Invincible attractions arctic nature and special cultures

Product strategy

Focus on products and themes following the ARCTIC EUROPE –image. Launching to the markets.

Distribution channels

Co-operation with tour operators. Using suitable tour operators and their distribution channels for sales.

Communication and marketing strategy

Most important is working with the press and long-term collaboration with tour operators. Innovative and cost effective “grass-roots level” measures. Events and customer evenings together with tour operators. E-marketing.

Co-operation strategy

Functioning cooperation model between the region and the key partners. Operative leader in the markets.

Contacts to other elements that interest the markets such as northern lights research, cold and car testing, aboriginals, clean groceries etc. Exploiting the travel know-how of educational institutes.

Transport companies: SAS, Finnair, Aeroflot, low fare airlines, Cruises

Allying in the markets, cross marketing.

GOALS OF JOINT MARKETING

A goal is to create practical joint marketing co-operation between the key partners and get more tourists in the Barents region.

In the first phase of the co-operation (2006-2008) the goal is to launch the ARCTIC EUROPE –concept and product entities to the markets, getting the products to tour operators and seeing the first sales results. In the second phase (2009-2010) the goal is to stabilize the ARCTIC EUROPE products in the markets, enhance the familiarity and increase sales considerably.

One goal is to create longstanding collaboration with tour operators and form active and functional tour operator network. Marketing will be done measure by measure together with those tour operators that do get interested in Barents region. Travel agents will be trained to increase sales. Communication focuses on press and innovative events.

Project's on object is also the help entrepreneurs to reach the markets by giving practical market information about customers' needs and distribution channels.

TARGET MARKETS

ARCTIC EUROPE joint marketing will be focused in the earlier stage to the most potential European markets. Target countries are: Germany, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands and Great Britain. Second target group countries such as Italy and Spain will be considered case-by-case.

UMBRELLA CONCEPT AND TARGET GROUPS

Today's trendy word and concept in Europe is arctic. This is why the recommended theme name for the area is Arctic Europe. Products will be gathered under the umbrella concept “Arctic Europe” and will mainly be targeted to groups:

a) adventurers, pioneers b) nature-oriented active travellers, “soft”.

CORE ACTIVITIES IN THE MARKETS

1. Product development and new products:

- Product entities for different segments according to the ideology
- Competing the news product ideas, pricing between the entrepreneurs and partners in the area
- Preparing the product cards for product testing and sales negotiations
- Product / sales manual
- 2. Image study – certifying the umbrella theme and name
- 3. Tour operator co-operation – KEY PARTNERS
 - Sales calls, sales events
 - Tour operator/ -producer workshops, customer events, special events
 - Flyers, direct marketing of novelties and offers
 - Publications, reward trips
- 4. Fam trips to Arctic Europe themes
- 5. Distribution channels (travel agencies) training
- 6. Communication
 - Multi-Show, picture bank
 - Internet, e-Newsletter
 - Contacts to press, press releases, readymade article topics
 - press trips, TV-groups
 - Information service



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