

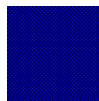


LEONARDO DA VINCI PROGRAMME

**ECO-ROUTE. – A ROUTE TO SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
THROUGH ECOTOURISM LABELLING**

**NATIONAL SURVEY REPORT  
SWEDEN**

*DRAFT*



September 2004



## CONTENTS

|   |  |           |
|---|--|-----------|
| <b>1.0</b>  | <b>Introduction</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>1.1</b>  | Aim of the report  | 3         |
| <b>1.2</b>  | Methodology  | 3         |
| <b>1.3</b>  | Structure of the report  | 4         |
| <b>Part A - Compilation of an inventory of the activities that are pursued in the pilot area, the resources available and the businesses involved</b> |  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>A.1</b>  | Inventory of existing ecotourism activities in the pilot area  | 4         |
| <b>A.2</b>  | Record of natural and cultural resources in the pilot area – designated protected areas                                      | 5         |
| <b>A.3</b>  | Record of businesses involved in the delivery and support of ecotourism activities   | 10        |
| <b>Part B - Results from the survey of businesses and individuals involved in ecotourism activities in the pilot area</b>                             |  | <b>12</b> |
| <b>B.1</b>  | Profile of businesses and individuals interviewed  | 12        |
| <b>B.2</b>  | Current demand for ecotourism activities   | 12        |
| <b>B.3</b>  | Infrastructure and service provision for ecotourism activities in the pilot area   | 13        |
| <b>B.4</b>  | Prospects  | 13        |
| <b>B.5</b>  | Perceived need for ecotourism certification - proposed criteria for ecotourism certification                                 | 13        |
| <b>B.6</b>  | Existing ecotourism certification systems in terms of:   |           |
|   | i. Skills  | 14        |
|   | ii. Facilities   | 14        |
|   | iii. Equipment   | 14        |
| <b>B.7</b>  | Interviewees recommendations for promoting the area as an ecotourism destination   | 14        |
| <b>Part C – Conclusions - items for consideration for the action plans</b>  |  | <b>15</b> |
| <b>C.1</b>  | Conclusions – assessment of the need for and feasibility of introducing an ecotourism certification system in the pilot area | 15        |
| <b>C.2</b>  | Items for consideration for the preparation of the action plans – SWOT Analysis  | 15        |
|   | <b>Annex</b>   | <b>17</b> |



## **1.0 Introduction**

### ***1.1 Aim of the report***

The aim of this report is to provide a record of the natural and cultural resources of the county of Norrbotten and present the results of the survey of ecotourism activities and businesses in the pilot region, to investigate and assess the perception and the use of labelling systems, such as Nature's best and other certifications, in the region for selected activities and services. The survey investigated the experiences, attitudes and aspirations of entrepreneurs involved in ecotourism activities, in order to draw an action plan for ecotourism labelling, so that a training package may be put together to help entrepreneurs appreciate and apply the criteria for ecotourism certification.

More specifically, the survey conducted in the pilot region aimed at providing the project team with the following information:

- a realistic record/inventory of natural and cultural resources and activities suitable for ecotourism development in the pilot area;
- a record of the businesses involved in their delivery;
- an assessment of current demand and practice of ecotourism in the pilot region as perceived by local businesses and individuals involved in ecotourism (i.e. tour operators, local tourist service providers, professional guides, representatives of NGOs and training organisations that advocate environmental protection and ecotourism development, etc);
- information on designated protected areas within pilot regions that require special environmental studies for the introduction of new (tourist) activities.

### ***1.2 Methodology***

The sources for the report of ecotourism activities and businesses/individuals involved in their delivery were: published material; face-to-face interviews with competent officials of the local authorities and competent government services and other key individuals involved in ecotourism; face-to-face, e-mail and telephone interviews with local entrepreneurs, professionals and individuals involved in ecotourism or with an interest in it, based on the questionnaire prepared for the survey of ECO-ROUTE Work Package 3 (see Annex).

In total, 19 interviews were conducted, involving:

- Discussion with three officials, the first from the ministry of the tourism and industry, the second from the Glesbygdsverket, and the third is the project leader of the County Administration project, "Naturreservatens år";
- Telephone interview with a specialised tour operator, who organise excursions in Norrbotten;

- Face-to-face interview with a WWF representative on nature tourism;
- Face-to-face interviews with an expert on nature preservation “One step ahead” and with a business developer in the Farmer’s union;
- Telephone interview with a member of a tourism business association in the county Norrbotten;
- Face-to-face interview with a member of a tourism business association in the municipality of Boden;
- Face-to-face interviews with ten local entrepreneurs and guides involved in ecotourism activities in the area.

Moreover, about 50 questionnaires were distributed via mail and e-mail to local tour operators in the pilot region with a very poor return rate.

### ***1.3 Structure of the report***

The report is divided in three parts, as follows:

1. Part A includes an inventory of the activities that are pursued in the county of Norrbotten, the resources available for these activities and the businesses involved in their servicing, drawn by secondary and primary sources from desk research and contacts with key individuals who have a good knowledge of ecotourism in the area.
2. Part B includes the analysis of the findings from the questionnaire survey of local businesses and individuals involved in ecotourism (tour operators, guides, accommodation providers etc) through face-to-face, mail, e-mail and telephone interviews. The questionnaire sought to record businesses profiles; current demand for ecotourism; practices of ecotourism that are met in the region and principles and standards applied in service provision; and the service providers’ evaluation of the prospects and potential problems with respect to the application of an ecotourism labelling system; their wish to be certified, the criteria the ecotourism label should include and the interviewees’ recommendations for promoting the area as an ecotourism destination.
3. Part C draws the conclusions of the report, including an assessment of the need for and feasibility of increasing the use of an ecotourism labelling system in the pilot region, in order to provide input for the synthesis report on the implementation of ecotourism labelling in each participating region.

**PART A. COMPILATION OF AN INVENTORY OF THE ACTIVITIES THAT ARE PURSUED IN THE PILOT AREA, THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND THE BUSINESSES INVOLVED**

**A.1 Inventory of existing ecotourism activities in the pilot area**

The ecotourism activities offered in the pilot region, at varying degrees of development. More specifically:

- The most popular activities along the coastal areas of Norrbotten are: bathing, a popular sea bath resort is Pite havsbad, cruises in the archipelago mainly Luleå and Haparanda. Haparanda archipelago is a national park and Sandskär is one of its popular islands with a rich birdlife.
- Examples of activities along the rivers are, visiting Storforsen in Pite River; the mightiest torrent in all of Sweden, river rafting, canoeing and kayaking also attracts many visitors as well as fishing. Norrbotten has a lot of rivers and most of them are unspoiled and run free.
- The mountain areas hold six of Norrbotten's eight national parks, one of them is Stora Sjöfallet, where hiking and bird-watching are common activities. Abisko, Björkliden, Dundret and Riksgränsen are appreciated destinations for alpine skiing hiking. Norrbotten has many hiking trails to choose from and the most famous one is "Kungsleden". Many visitors are attracted by the climbing possibilities in the large mountain area, Sweden's highest mountain Kebnekaise is found here. Hunting on the mountain sides and in the deep forests and horse riding are other popular activities.
- In Norrbotten's midland lies the famous Icehotel. A popular activity in the midland is also the winter market in Jokkmokk, a 400-year old tradition which attracts visitors from all over the world, reindeer sledge safaris and dog sledding tours are popular during early spring and winter.
- Norrbotten has some important archaeological and cultural monuments and museums. Vuollerim is a Stone Age dwelling place and in Jokkmokk lies a museum that tells the story about the prehistoric Lapland, the "Vuollerim 6,000 years". In Jokkmokk is also the Ájtte Mountain and Sami museum and in Luleå is the County museum. Norrbotten has two World heritage sites; Laponia and the church village of Gammelstad. Laponia are protected for both its unique nature and the Sami culture and in Gammelstad outside Luleå lies Sweden's largest and most well-preserved church town with a Medieval Stone church from the 1400s. Norrbotten has a very rich and beautiful flora and fauna, with rare plants and many birds and other wild animals. The large number of national parks, nature reserves and other protected areas are along with the northern light and Midnight sun and the cold and dark winter climate attract tourists to the area.

## **A.2 Record of natural and cultural resources in the pilot area – designated protected areas**

The natural assets of the pilot region include:

### ***A. Coastal areas***

The seacoast of Norrbotten is 300 kilometres long. The coastland and archipelago are easily reached and consists of long, sandy beaches and deep forests. The water is shallow and therefore warms up to nice bathing temperatures during summer. Tour boats go out to some islands where rental cottages and saunas are available for use. Along the coastline lie picturesque fishing villages, mixed with historic sites and rocky cliffs. Because of the last ice age 8,000 years ago Norrbotten is a unique environment with polished rock surfaces and giant blocks of stone. The land is still rising one centimetre per year because of the isostatic rebound. Fresh melt water from the glaciers run down five mighty rivers and mix with the salty seawater to create brackish water which create special conditions for many rare plants.

### ***B. River estuaries and fluvial systems***

Most of the rivers of the region still run free from the mountains down to the sea through channels that are cut by the inland ice. Misty wetlands are found inside the deep forests. People have lived here for thousands of years. As mentioned have 6,000-year-old Stone Age dwellings been found in Vuollerim. The huge forest areas are sparsely populated but several wild animals such as moose, bears and a variety of grouses dwell here. Also rare animals like the lynx and the wolverine live within this area.

The forests and the river valleys are a good place for hunting, fishing, hiking and berry-picking. In autumn the forests are filled with tasty mushrooms and berries, such as blueberries, lingonberries (mountain cranberries), arctic raspberries and cloudberries.

### ***C. Mountain region***

The mountain region of Norrbotten is sometimes called “the last wilderness of Europe” and offers indeed a very spectacular natural experience.

Norrbotten holds eight of Sweden’s 26 national parks and with the exception of Muddus and the Haparanda archipelago they all lie within the mountain region.

Laponia is a unique world heritage site and is located within the districts of Jokkmokk and Gällivare. Here are four national parks (Stora Sjöfallet, Padjelanta, Sarek and Muddus) and two nature reserves (Sjaunja and Stubba). This is also the place where the indigenous people the Sami have there home. An important part of the Sami tradition and livelihood is reindeer herding. The Sami people have their own language, their own flag and their own national anthem. Joik is the name of a traditional Sami vocal song style.



The Laponia area includes two important wetlands: western Europe's largest; the Sjaunja marshes, and the Rapa delta. Laponia has been a world heritage site since 1996 because of its great cultural value and the ecological diversity within the region. It is the only combined cultural and natural world heritage area in northern Europe.

The mountain area of Norrbotten can provide many different kinds of activities such as mountain climbing, hiking, skiing, fishing, hunting, snowmobiling etc.

#### ***D. National parks in Norrbotten***

The oldest and largest national parks in Sweden are found in the Norrbotten area; eight national parks which cover more than 6,000 km<sup>2</sup>, that counts for 95 % of the total area of Sweden's national parks. Rare plants and protected bird species have found their sanctuary in these parks.

Abisko National Park is situated in Kiruna. The park is about 75 km<sup>2</sup> and has a very rich flora with numerous rare plants and has a beautiful deep canyon which is the park's biggest attraction.

Muddus National Park is Sweden's most exceptional virgin forest. The marsh areas have a very rich bird life.

Padjelanta National Park has rich vegetation with some interesting flowers and other plants.

Pieljekaise National Park is most known for its flourishing meadow birch forests.

Sarek National Park in Jokkmokk is Sweden's largest (1,970 km<sup>2</sup>) and most diversified mountain area. With its majestic mountains on both sides of deep eroded valleys and its large glaciers it resembles an alpine landscape. Six of the peaks in this area are more than 2,000 metres above sea level. Sarek has a rich wild life with animals like bears, wolverines, lynx and arctic foxes.

Stora Sjöfallet National Park in Jokkmokk is 1,278 km<sup>2</sup> and has a wide variety of flora and fauna. Large areas are without vegetation, and instead covered with boulders, snow and glaciers. The park includes a primeval pine forest.

Vadvetjåkka National Park has a varied flora in its meadows, forest and marsh areas.

Haparanda Archipelago consists of 60 km<sup>2</sup> of islands and skerries. The largest island Sandskär has a very rich bird life.

#### ***E. Nature reserves in Norrbotten***

There are 170 nature reserves in the county of Norrbotten. The nature reserves that are found in the municipals of Boden, Gällivare, Jokkmokk and Älvsbyn are presented below. A lot of them contain virgin primeval forests of pine, spruce and birch. There are also large marsh areas, lakes, tarns and streams. There's a rich flora and fauna in these

areas and plenty of rare species of insects, birds and other animals as well as rare plants and lichen are found here.

#### *Nature reserves in the municipality of Boden*

Rappomyran is a marsh area where waders and palmipeds nest and in the stream live beavers and otters.

Blåkölen has a primeval spruce forest that's the habitat for some rare beetle species.

Stabbtjärnsbäcken is a small reserve situated around a lush stream ravine.

Åkerby lies around a rippling stream and has several rare flowers like lady slippers and lily of the valley inside an old spruce forest.

Gjutberget is a mountain reserve with a variety of woodpecker species, owls and other birds.

#### *Nature reserves in the municipality of Gällivare*

Sjaunja is a part of Lapponia and contains large areas of coniferous forest, has the largest marsh area in the country, and is known for its rich bird life. Waders and palmipeds thrive here.

Kaitum fjällurskog has a virgin forest consisting of coniferous and birch mountain forest and wetlands.

Lina fjällurskog has a virgin forest consisting of coniferous and birch mountain forest. This vast nature reserve contains large marsh areas and lakes.

Puolva has a large area of interstitial ice with small tarns, numerous lakes and marshes surrounded by hills and moraine. Swans flourish in the tarns.

Stubba is together with Muddus and Sjaunja Sweden's largest marsh area and has a rich birdlife of waders and palmipeds. Stubba is a part of Lapponia.

Dundret is a mountain area that combines nature and sporty outdoor life. Dundret is easy accessible with roads, paths and ski lifts. About 30 species of mountain plants grow here and numerous animals and birds live here as well. From the top of Dundret at 820 metres is the midnight sun visible for a whole month.

Kuolpajärvi has a 300-400-year-old pine forest and lies south of the mountain Kuolpakorronen.

Ätnarova has a virgin pine forest with many traces of older Sami life.

Jerttalompolo is a reserve with some lush vegetation next to the stream that runs through the area and along the forest lake live a great deal of bird species.

Päivävuoma has a great marsh area known for its rich bird life of swans, cranes and geese.

Pellokeilas has an ancient forest with several lichen species that are food for the reindeer.

Granlandet has a large untouched virgin spruce forest including large marsh areas.

*Nature reserves in the municipality of Jokkmokk*

Kallovaratjeh contains some mountain lakes at a high altitude.

Kvikkjokk-Kabla fjällurskog has a virgin coniferous forest with large marshes, birch forests and bare mountain region. The area has a rich flora with many rare and beautiful plants.

Ultevis fjällurskog is a large virgin forest that lies next to Sarek national park in the west and Stora sjöfallet in the north-west.

Pärlälvens fjällurskog is a large primeval forest. The reserve is well-attended by hikers and by villagers who use the area for fishing, hunting and scooter trips.

Udtja has a primeval forest area with vast marshes and low mountains. Restricted area since the reserve is a big part of the RFN rocket launch field.

Ligga is a reserve dominated by pine forests, some trees are as old as 400 years.

Kaltisbäcken has some lush vegetation by a stream, where 150 red listed species have been found. The reserve includes areas with pine and spruce, wetlands and watercourses.

Serri has a virgin forest and great marshes, lakes and streams. This reserve is partially handicap adapted.

Suobbatåive-Jutsavare fjällurskog lies in a pine tree dominated mountain area at 350-570 metres above sea level. Many threatened species are found within the area.

Vuodnaberget has a steep virgin pine forest with a lot of traces from forest fires.

Luottåive is a mountain area with a virgin forest and many rare fungi and lichen.

Kronogårds fjällurskog is a diversified forest landscape with tarns and lakes, hills and moraine and is a part of a large interstitial ice area. The reserve is a popular recreational area for fishing and hunting.

Rappomyran has a marsh with a lot of waders and palmipeds. Beavers and otters live in the stream.

Tollikheden-Karkberget has old pine forest with some spruce and coarse aspen trees. A large number of primeval species worth saving can be found in this area.

Storspikberget is a dramatic landscape created by the ice and the rivers of the Ice Age 9000 years ago.

Suorke is a small old forest reserve with lush vegetation and some very large aspen trees.

Svanträsk has a variety of forest, marshes and water courses. The three-toed woodpecker and the black woodpecker lives in the forest and the arctic tern and the whooper swan can be found in the lakes.

Solberget is a mountain area with a forest that is practically unaffected by forestry and has many traces of forest fires.

Vitberget is a mountain reserve. A path through an old forest lead up to the mountain top, where you'll find a rest cabin with a nice view over the landscape.

#### *Nature reserves in the municipality of Älvsbyn*

Vitberget is a mountain area with virgin forest of both pine and spruce. The reserve has tarns, springs and marshes where you can find the Heath spotted-orchid. This is also one of four places in the county where you can find the beautiful lichen Methuselah's beard.

Långträskberget is a primeval coniferous forest.

Storforsen is a river landscape with the largest torrent in Scandinavia. The reserve also includes a delta where the water runs still. The river is surrounded by a giant forest with a rich flora and fauna. Even today you can see constructions in the river that was built to facilitate the log-driving. The old torrent was then drained and in this dried-out waterfall can you find potholes and water grinded rocks.

Åträsk is a primeval pine forest on coarse moraine.

Storberget has a small virgin pine forest on the south slope of the mountain.

Nakteberget is a mountain wilderness area with mostly old spruce forest. Here are also marshes and two tarns with planted fish. The mountain reaches 350-560 metres above sea level.

Rackberget is a 254 metres high mountain with a fine view of the river valley. Plants like baneberry, mezereon and lily of the valley are found on the southern slope.

The cultural resources include:

#### ***A. Museums***

Norrbotten has museums that appeal to most interests.

The Ájtte Swedish Mountain and Sami museum in Jokkmokk features exhibits and seminars that relate the story of the lives of the Sami and settlers in the high country of Swedish Lapland.

The Silver Museum in Arvidsjaur present interesting exhibits on the Sami culture.

In Jokkmokk lies an archaeological museum, Vuollerim 6,000 Years. This museum illustrates the prehistory of Lapland. Vuollerim is a Stone Age dwelling place.

The Norrbotten County Museum in Luleå features permanent and temporary exhibits on everything to do with the county's culture and history.

Murjek's School Museum in Jokkmokk. The state's Sami small school seminar was moved from Mattisudden to Murjek in 1904. The activity stopped in 1934. The unique history of the seminar, well maintained material and material that students have made are shown in the old school. You can also look at the photo exhibition "Bygd i Förvandling". The well maintained building and the school are today host for the local homestead organization dining room and a coffee shop and a library.

"Piteå Sparkmuseum" is a museum about the special Swedish "kick-sled", a type of sledge.

In Luleå lies the railway museum of Norrbotten.

Rosfors Iron Works in Piteå was licensed in 1832, and a blast furnace and an iron-works forge operated during the latter part of the 19th century.

### ***B. World Heritage areas***

Norrbotten has two of Sweden's twelve UNESCO World Heritage sites, which are protected and preserved for future generations.

#### *Laponia*

Laponia consists of four national parks and two nature reserves, with mountains, deltas, old-growth forests, about one hundred glaciers and Western Europe's most extensive wetlands. It is also a living Sami cultural landscape, and as such, will be protected and preserved. This is the home of the Sami, which inhabited the area not long after the Ice Age. Today, the traditionally nomadic Sami are permanently settled, but still follow their herds on the long seasonal drives between the woodlands and fells. Based on reindeer herding, and with its traditional craftsmanship and folk music, the Sami culture is still very much alive. Many reserves offer visitors insights into the Sami culture. Lasso throwing and reindeer rides in brilliant winter landscapes are examples of activities that can be arranged. In the traditional Sami cot, tasty meals prepared over an open fire are served. Here, history, heritage and old traditions are always present.

#### *Gammelstad Church Village*

World Heritage Gammelstads Kyrkby is a unique church village consisting of more than 400 well-preserved church cottages and northern Sweden's largest late-medieval stone church. Parishioners who lived too far away to return home after Sunday services and major festivals used the church cottages. The tradition lives on. The church, built in the 1400s, has a beautifully preserved and richly detailed interior.

### **A.3 Record of businesses involved in the delivery and support of ecotourism activities**

The area is very rich in natural resources and has some cultural resources that are suitable for the development of ecotourism. There are many small companies with seasonal products with an ecotourism approach, a lot of them have a potential to be labelled with Nature's best but only a small number (7) are labelled today.

#### *Nature's best*

NATURE'S BEST is a quality label for Swedish Ecotourism, launched during the UN International Year of Ecotourism 2002. The label has been tailored to guarantee a very high quality of tour products, combined with contributions to nature conservation, environmentally friendlier ways of travelling and care for the cultural heritage of the destination. Examples of activities are:

- Hiking, skiing, horse-back riding or reindeer sledging through impressive mountain ranges.
- Dog sledging through silent winter forests under the shimmering Northern lights.
- Gently rafting down meandering rivers, or more adrenalin-filled white-water.
- Close encounters with bears, moose, and other forest big game.
- Bird-watching bonanzas like capercaillie leks, cranes, eagles, owls or the intense spring and fall migrations.
- Slowly kayaking through archipelagos, or canoeing down silent creeks.
- Hiking with pack-reindeer in close contact with the age-old Sami culture.
- Sustainable hunting for moose, roe deer, ptarmigan and other fine game.
- Natural fishing for salmon, grayling, arctic char, trout, pike and other exclusive fish species in clean and clear waters.

#### *Approved Swedish ecotourism operators in Norrbotten (Nature's Best)*

*These are the approved Swedish ecotourism operators in Norrbotten.*

- The company Bosmina offers archipelago cruises to the Haparanda-Sandskär National park
- Jokkmokk is the starting point for many mountain adventures. Jokkmokkguiderna ("The Jokkmokk guides") is one of the area's most knowledgeable operators, who among other things also organise dog sledge tours through the area's mountain forests and over the wide mountain ranges of Lapponia.
- Saltoluokta Fjällstation STF combines old traditions with new ways of thinking. "Single in Salto", family weeks, gourmet-food days, painting and mountain courses are some of their approved tours.
- Experience old Sami traditions with Vägvisaren-Samiska Upplevelser in Gällivare ("The Pathfinder-Sami experiences in Gällivare"), which during summer organise

several days of mountain hiking with pack reindeer, and during winter organise exciting tours in reindeer sledges. The activity “Springtime migration with the reindeers” gives you a chance to live like a reindeer herdsman for a week and follow a reindeer herding family on their work with getting the reindeers up to the mountains.

- Go down the untamed currents of Kalix and Torne River with Guide B-O. Or try the dog sledge tours with grouse hunting and trapping.
- Ofelas islandshästar och guideservice (“Ofela’s Icelandic horses and guide service”) offers you adventurous tours with Icelandic horses, local food specialities like game and fish, and an insight to the Sami culture.
- Experience reindeer sledge safaris in Jukkasjärvi-Soppero, with your own Sami guide together with Nutti Sámi Siida. Or go on shorter reindeer sledge tours, filled with Sami culture and food, close to the Icehotel.

### ***Icehotel***

The renowned Icehotel in Jukkasjärvi outside Kiruna is the world’s largest hotel made of ice and the rooms, suites, church, sauna and bar are carved from blocks of pure, solid ice from the Torne River.

### ***Jokkmokk's winter market***

Norrbotten has a variety of winter games, festivals and markets, of which the largest is the Jokkmokk market, attracting visitors from around the world. For nearly 400 years, visitors have come to Jokkmokk, near the Arctic Circle, to visit the winter market there, the world's oldest annual event of its kind. The royal proclamation was issued in 1605 and the first market was held in February of the following year. Since then, the event has taken place 398 times. There are more than 500 market stands and the Sami cultural events attract between 30,000 and 35,000 visitors each year. The market has a huge assortment of Sami art and artefacts, high-class contemporary art and handicrafts in silver, pewter and leather goods.

### ***Fishing***

6,000 kilometres of rivers, 135,000 kilometres of streams, ten thousand lakes and 300 kilometres of coast makes Norrbotten a perfect place for fishing experiences. Tranquil fishing on inland lakes, exciting trout and salmon fishing in pristine rivers, fly fishing for arctic char on high-alpine lakes, wonderful ice-fishing in the spring and spinning along the beautiful coast give anglers unparalleled experiences of nature, silence and the special Nordic light. There are several companies in the area that offer various kinds of fishing adventures. One example is Arctic Fishing in Boden that offers for example a snowmobile safari where you go ice-fishing for pike, and fishing for sea trout and salmon on the renowned Lule River.

**PART B - RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY OF BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES IN THE PILOT AREA**

**B.1 Profile of businesses and individuals interviewed**

In the survey conducted in the pilot region, 2 tour operators, 8 accommodation providers, 1 guides and 9 other (restaurant/café owners, activity entrepreneurs) were interviewed. The majority of the businesses, were small, family-run (95 %) and operating throughout the whole year (67 %), although it must be pointed out that when its not tourist season, many are only open during weekends and/or depending on demand.

All of the interviewees (100 %) use computers for filing, management and accountancy, and use the Internet as well to market their activities (100 %).

67 % of the interviewees are members of collective bodies, 22 % didn't reply and 11 % were not a member of any collective body.

**B.2 Current demand for ecotourism activities**

78 % of the interviewees replied a straight “yes” on the question whether there is ecotourism demand in the area as shown in the pie chart below. 22 % was not sure. 45 % thinks that the infrastructure and the service provision in the area are satisfactory for ecotouristic activities. 10 % thinks that the infrastructure and the service provision are poor and 45 % of the interviewees had no opinion.

Most entrepreneurs reported that their customers are mainly national Swedes, followed by international customers and then local customers. Most of the interviewees have customers in all three categories.

**B.3 Infrastructure and service provision for ecotourism activities in the pilot area**

22 % was not sure. 45 % thinks that the infrastructure and the service provision in the area are satisfactory for ecotouristic activities. 10 % thinks that the infrastructure and the service provision are poor and 45 % of the interviewees had no opinion.

The entrepreneurs thinks that it needs to be adjusted to the tourists, the long distances can be facilitated by airplanes and fast trains. Withdrawal of the health care can be a danger for some activities rescue teams are very important. The security must be prioritised.

**B.4 Prospects**

Almost all of the entrepreneurs would like to increase their business with more ecotourism products. The eight largest types of activities today are canoeing/kayaking, fishing, winter sports, dog sledging, hiking, horseback riding, hunting and cultural tours,



followed by cultural tours, climbing, bird and animal watching and ecotourism for disabled.

### **B.5 Perceived need for ecotourism certification - wish to be certified and trained - proposed criteria for ecotourism certification**

Only one of the interviewees were not for the moment interested in training for certification in ecotourism labelling. The others expressed great interest in certification training.

The questionnaire (question 10) included a list of the criteria that are used for the ecotourism label “Nature’s best” granted by the Swedish Ecotourism Association. These criteria are:

- 1 Respect the limitation of the destination-minimize negative impact on nature and culture;
- 2 Support the local economy;
- 3 Make all business’s operations environmentally sustainable;
- 4 Contribute actively to conservation;
- 5 Promote the joy of discovery, knowledge and respect;
- 6 Quality and safety all the way through.

Interviewees were asked to classify these criteria as either “very important” or “of less importance” criterion and/or suggest others not included in the list. The results obtained were analysed and tabulated in the following table.

**Table : Proposed criteria for an ecotourism label**

| <b>Criterion</b>  | <b>“Very Important”<br/>No of responses</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>“Of less importance”<br/>No of responses</b> | <b>%</b> |
|---|---|----------|---|----------|
| 1. Respect the limitation of the destination – minimize negative impact on nature and culture | 19  | 95       | 1   | 5        |
| 2. Support the local economy  | 20  | 100      | 0   | 0        |
| 3. Make all business’s operations environmentally sustainable                                 | 7   | 33       | 13  | 67       |
| 4. Contribute actively to conservation  | 12  | 60       | 8   | 40       |
| 5. Promote the joy of discovery, knowledge and respect  | 20  | 100      | 0   | 0        |
| 6. Quality and safety all the way through   | 20  | 100      | 0   | 0        |

The most important criterions are supporting the local economy and promote joy of discovery, knowledge and respect and Quality and safety all the way through. The first criterion “Respect the limitation of the destination – minimize negative impact on nature and culture” was selected by 95%. The less important criterion was “make all business’s operations environmentally sustainable”.

## **B.6 Existing ecotourism certification systems in terms of:**

### *i. Skills*

Almost half of the entrepreneurs (45%) had knowledge of about certification systems for guiding.

### *ii. Facilities*

45% of the entrepreneurs had knowledge about certification for facilities.

### *iii. Equipment*

Certification of Equipment was known by 33%.

## **B.7 Interviewees recommendations for promoting the area as an ecotourism destination**

Interviewees were invited to offer recommendations for the promotion of their area as an ecotourism destination. A list of suggestions was presented to them (question 11), including:

- 1 Promotion of an integrated tourist product of the area;
- 2 Better cooperation with tour operators;
- 3 More information to customers of ecotourism;
- 4 Increase of certification of ecotourism businesses and products ;
- 5 Training offered to businesses and their staff on ecotourism labelling.

Interviewees were asked to recommend which of the above they believe are more significant for the promotion of their area as an ecotourism destination, considering the local circumstances, and offer their own suggestions. The results obtained were analysed and tabulated in the following table.

**Table – Recommendations for the promotion of the area as an ecotourism destination**

| <b>Recommendation</b>   | <b>% of interviewees</b> |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Promotion of an integrated tourist product of the area                 | 44                       |
| 2. Better cooperation with tour operators                                 | 78                       |
| 3. More information to customers of ecotourism                            | 44                       |
| 4. Increase of certification of ecotourism businesses and products        | 44                       |
| 5. Training offered to businesses and their staff on ecotourism labelling | 44                       |

It must be noted that 33% of the interviewees commented that all the above recommendations should be met to make an effective promotion of their area as an ecotourism destination. The most popular recommendations were the “Better cooperation with tour operators” (78%).

## **PART C. CONCLUSIONS AND ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR THE ACTION PLANS**

### **C.1 Conclusions - assessment of the need for and feasibility of introducing an ecotourism certification system in the pilot area**

This report aimed to provide a record of the natural and cultural resources of the County of Norrbotten and to present the results of the survey of ecotourism activities and businesses in the pilot region. Furthermore was the aim to investigate and assess the perception and the use of labelling systems, such as Nature's best and other certifications, in the region for selected activities and services.

### **C.2 Items for consideration for the preparation of the action plans**

Based on the findings from this report a better understanding of the ecotourism market in the county of Norrbotten has been gained. According to the ECO-ROUTE proposal, the national reports on the surveys conducted in each participating region will be presented in the synthesis report. The synthesis report will sketch the guidelines for the production of action plans for ecotourism labelling in each pilot area, specifying the activities that can be included in the certification system and the targeted companies and/or individuals that need to receive training to that effect. In this section a provisional list of items for consideration for the preparation of the action plans is included.

One of the major obstacles in developing and increase the use of ecotourism labels will be to persuade entrepreneurs and individuals involved in ecotourism of the added value from the adoption and implementation of the ecotourism label. Another major issue that must be carefully considered by the project team is how effective monitoring mechanisms would be determined, in order to safeguard that entrepreneurs would not be "secured" behind the label and would continue to maintain and enhance quality after having been granted the quality label.

Thus, there is a strong feeling that the ECO-ROUTE training package will be very welcomed by the target beneficiaries in the participating countries and the feasibility of introducing a European ecotourism label can be evaluated from its pilot run.

**SWOT analysis of the eco-tourism sector in Norrbotten**

| <b>Strength</b>  | <b>Opportunities</b>   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A quite new but existing ecotourism label “Nature’s best” with several labelled and successful entrepreneurs in the region</li> <li>• rich natural and cultural heritage of which many are unique</li> <li>• low population in a huge area</li> <li>• easy accessibility, a lot of good roads and good technical infrastructure</li> <li>• numerous protected areas of excellent quality with rich flora and fauna</li> <li>• high use of computers and internet among entrepreneurs</li> <li>• growing strength in some civil organisations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspires labelling among other entrepreneurs in the region</li> <li>• Boost marketing</li> <li>• initiate labelling system in eco-tourism</li> <li>• reorganise institutional system</li> <li>• offer unique services</li> <li>• find out niche markets with high added value</li> <li>• entrepreneurs start to use the protected areas for ecotourism</li> <li>• more effective use of the internet for marketing and selling ecotourism products in the region</li> </ul> |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  | <b>Threats</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undeveloped marketing of the region as a tourist destination to both national and international markets</li> <li>• Few service providers are innovative and well equipped</li> <li>• High transportation costs both to and within the region</li> <li>• Few entrepreneurs realize the importance of training and ecotourism labelling systems</li> <li>• Some lack of knowledge about the nature and cultural resources</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• entrepreneurs let pass opportunities in several issues regarding eco-tourism</li> <li>• distrust between entrepreneurs in the region</li> <li>• misuse of natural resources</li> <li>• stagnating market</li> <li>• weak partnership with similar and neighbouring areas</li> <li>• Ecotourism stays too exclusive with a decreasing market share as a result</li> <li>• Increase the knowledge gap</li> <li>• Increase of the transportation cost</li> </ul>               |

## ANNEX

### Enkät om Ekoturistiska aktiviteter I Norrbotten som efterfrågas i pilotområdet och de affärsverksamheter/företag som är involverade i Ekoturistisk produktion

Namn.....

Vi försäkras Er om att Era svar behandlas strikt konfidentiellt. Resultatet av denna enkätundersökning kommer att möjliggöra för partners i projektet ECO-ROUTE att precisera aktiviteter och kriterier för att utveckla certifieringsystem för ekoturism så att turismutvecklingen i Ert område kan få bättre planeringsförutsättningar.

#### 1. Hur är Ert företag engagerat i turismverksamhet?

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Erbjuder boende   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Researrangör  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Organiserar ekoturism eller andra aktiviteter som är relaterade till alternative former av turism | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Annat ( <i>var vänlig och förklara</i> )  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| .....   |                          |

#### 2. Vilka aktiviteter kan Ert företag erbjuda?

.....

#### 3. Var vänlig och markera de ekoturismaktiviteter Ni organiserar och/eller vilka ni kan erbjuda i listan nedan .

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Växt- eller djurskådning inkl fågelskådning   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Grott turer                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cykel turer                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Segling                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Deltagande i lantbruks/renskötselsaktiviteter | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Kanotfärder                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Kajakfärder                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fiske   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Jakt  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ridning                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vintersport                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vandringsturer                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bergsbestigning                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forsränning                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vattensporter                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dykning                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hängglidning                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ballongfärder                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- Arkeologiska utfärder
- Kulturella turer
- Ekoturism för funktionshindrade
- Målnings-, traditionellahantverks-, överlevnadskurser
- Annat (*Var vänlig och beskriv*)

**3a. Vilka tjänster erbjuder Ni Er kund?**

- Organiserar utflykter/turer
- Tillhandahåller utrustning
- Tillhandahåller guide
- Utbildning
- Annat (*Var vänlig beskriv*)

**4. Finns det en efterfrågan på ekoturistiska aktiviteter i Norrbotten?**

.....  
**Om ja, vilka?**  
 .....

**5. Finns det en tillfredställande infrastruktur och serviceutbud för ekoturistiska aktiviteter?**

.....  
**Om ja, vem tillhandahåller detta?**  
 .....

**6. Skulle Ni vara intresserad av att utöka Er affärsverksamhet med ytterligare ekoturismaktiviteter?**

.....

**7. De aktiviteter som Ni erbjuder är de riktade till den lokala, nationella eller utländska marknaden (om Ni vänder Er till flera v g ange andel?)**

- I huvudsak till den lokala marknaden (andel.....)
- I huvudsak till den nationella marknaden (andel.....)
- I huvudsak till den internationella marknaden (andel.....)

**8. Finns det kvalificerade guider för ekoturismaktiviteter i Er region?**

.....

**9. Känner Ni till om ekoturismaktiviteter kan certifieras när det gäller;**

- Skicklighet och erfarenhet
- Faciliteter (t ex. boende)
- Utrustning

*Var vänlig förklara, .....*

**10 Hur viktiga anser Ni följande kriterier för ekoturism vara (1-mycket viktigt, 2-inte så viktigt)**

|   | <b>1</b>                 | <b>2</b>                 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Respektera natur och kultur i området                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Stödja den lokala ekonomin                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Göra alla affärsaktiviteter miljömässigt hållbara                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Aktivt bidra till bevarandet av den naturliga omgivningen        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Uppmuntra utbildning av personal och känsla för naturvärden”     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Uppmuntra kvalitet och säkerhet I alla ekoturistiska aktiviteter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Annat (Var vänlig och förklara)                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**11. För att utveckla Ert område till en ekoturistisk destination vilken av följande punkter anser Ni vara viktigast (Om Ni väljer flera alternativ var vänlig och rangordna) ?**

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Marknadsföring av en integrerad turistprodukt I området                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Bättre samarbete med researrangörer  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Mera information till ekoturismkunder  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Introducera certifiering av företag och individer som är involverade i ekoturism | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Utbildningsinsatser om ekoturismmärkning till företag och dess personal          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Annat (Var vänlig förklara)   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**12. Skulle Ni eller någon I Er personal var intresserad av kurser för certifiering av ekoturism**

Ja   
Nej

**13. Var vänlig och ange fritt Era synpunkter och kommentarer när det gäller marknadsföring av ekoturism i Ert område**

### Företagsdata

**1a. Har Ni anställda I Ert företag?**

Ja

Nej

**1b. Hur många? .....**

**2. Bedrivs Er verksamhet:**

|            | from | tom |
|------------|------|-----|
| Säsongsvis |      |     |
| Helårsvis  |      |     |

**3. Är Ni medlem i någon professionell eller annan gemensam icke-offentlig organisation(NGO)?**

Ja  *Vilken, vilka.....*

Nej

**4. Använder Ni dator i Er verksamhet?**

Ja

Nej

**5. Annonserar Ni Era aktiviteter på internet;**

Ja

Nej

*Om Ja var vänlig precisera(egen websida, annonser på regionens web-sida, etc).....*