

# Maritime Tourism Co-operation in Bothnian Bay

Project update 6.3.2023



**POHJOIS-  
POHJANMAA**  
COUNCIL OF OULU REGION



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# GOALS AND PHASES OF THE WORK

# Project update – What have we done by far

Maritime Tourism Co-operation in Bothnian Bay -partnership theme was launched in spring 2022. Launching and strengthening the collaboration between various actors in tourism and identifying a desirable joint development path has been in the heart of the project by far and still continuing.

## The work has included:

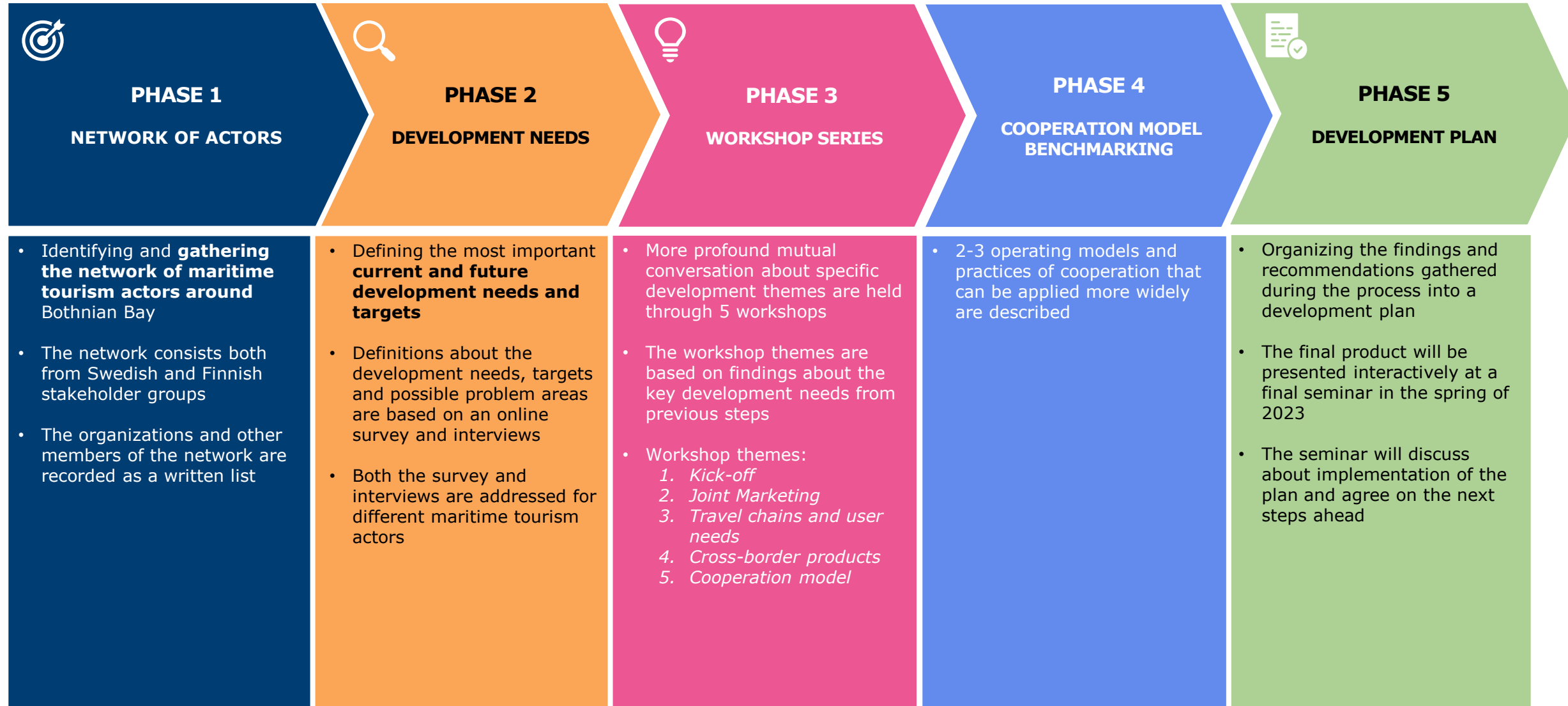
- Identifying area ´s network of tourism actors
- Online survey about cross-border cooperation
- Interviews for key actors
- 5 workshops in following topics:
  - *Kick off workshop (in Tornio/online) 2.6.2022*
  - *Joint Marketing (online) 7.9.2022*
  - *Travel chains and user needs (in Oulu/online together with transportation project) 21.9.2022*
  - *Cross-border products (online) 7.11.2022*
  - *Co-operation model (online) 29.11.2022*

 The end result of the project will be a **road map** for the joint development of marine tourism in Bothnian Bay.

- Creating an accepted operating model between various tourism actors is important for continuous co-operation.
- Concrete aims are to create conditions for joint thematic products based on sea and northern aspects.
- The project also develops prerequisites for common visibility of the area, better accessibility and discovery of key unique selling points in Bothnian Bay.



# Work phases



## DIALOGUE DURING THE PHASES

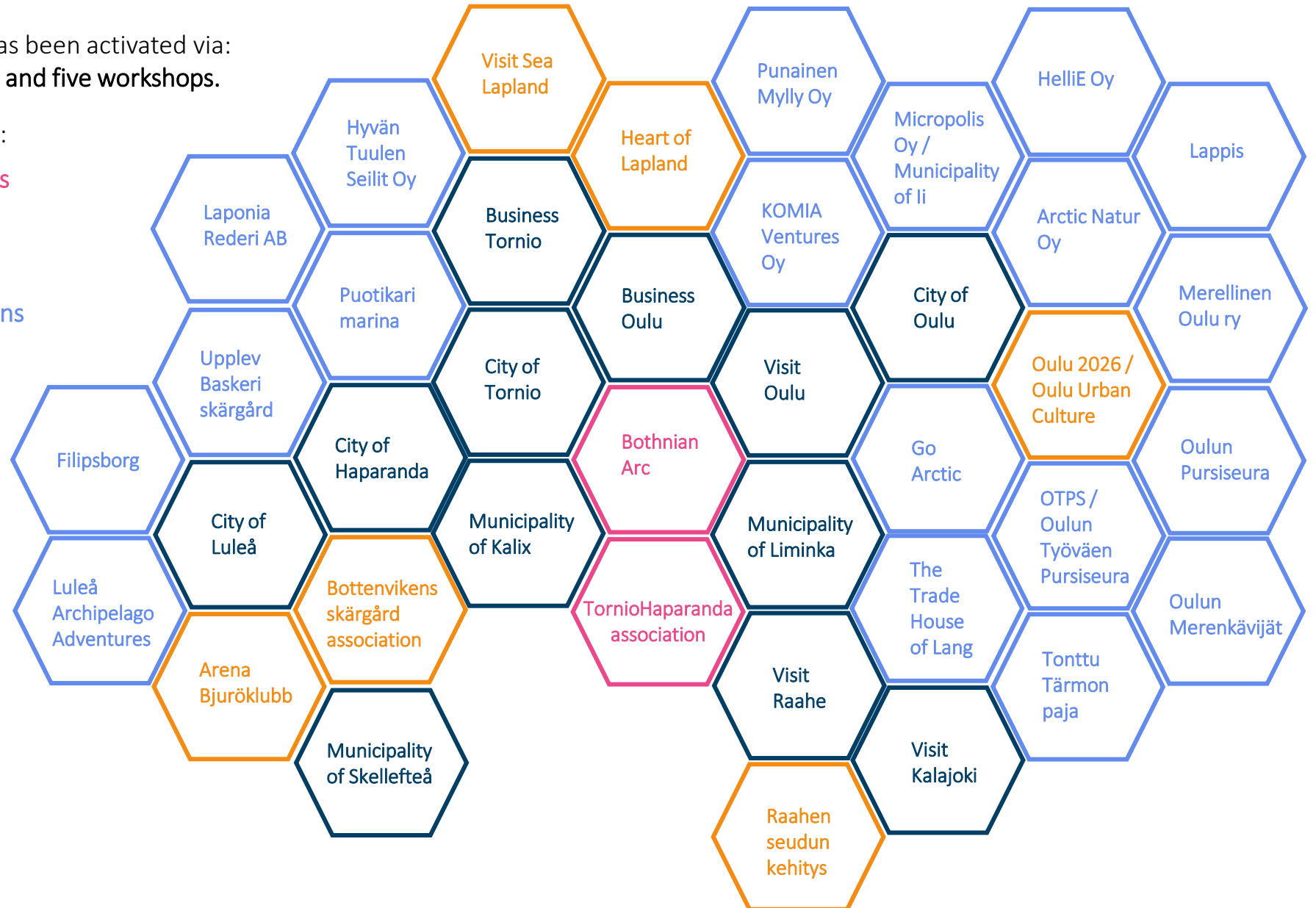
- 1 st work group meeting
- Online survey
- Interviews
- 2nd work group meeting
- 5 workshops
- Site visits (2)
- 3rd & 4th work group meeting
- Findings about different cooperation models has been learnt during the workshop speeches
- Final work group meeting
- Final seminar

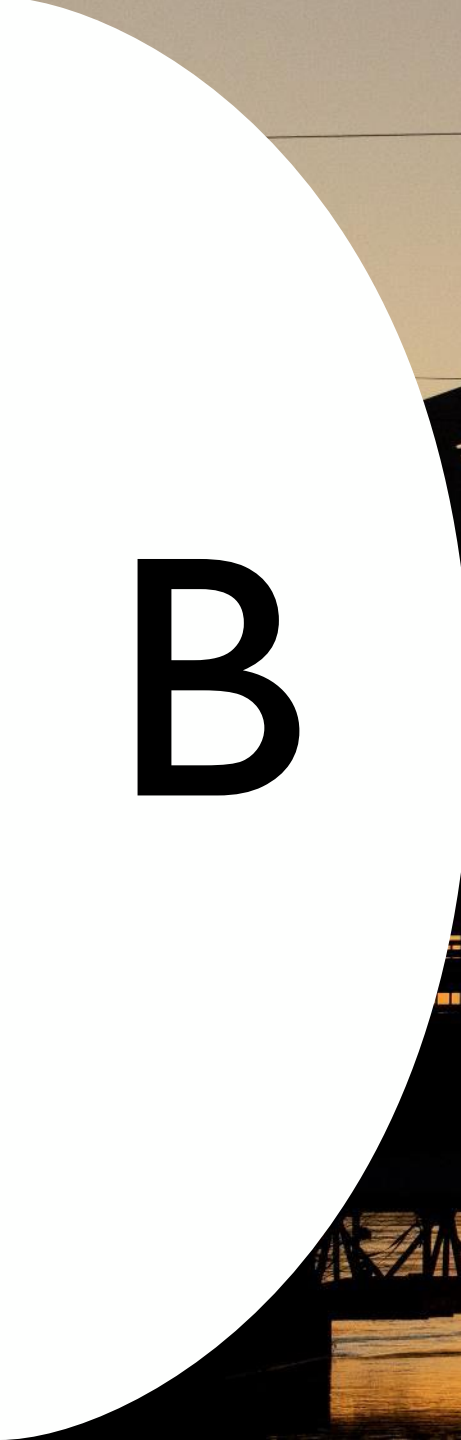
# Stakeholders involved

Dialogue during the project has been activated via: stakeholder survey, interviews and five workshops.

The stakeholders involved are:

- Cross-border organizations
- Regional organizations
- Local organizations
- Companies and associations





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# DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Findings from stakeholder survey, interviews & workshops

# Current state of cross-border tourism cooperation

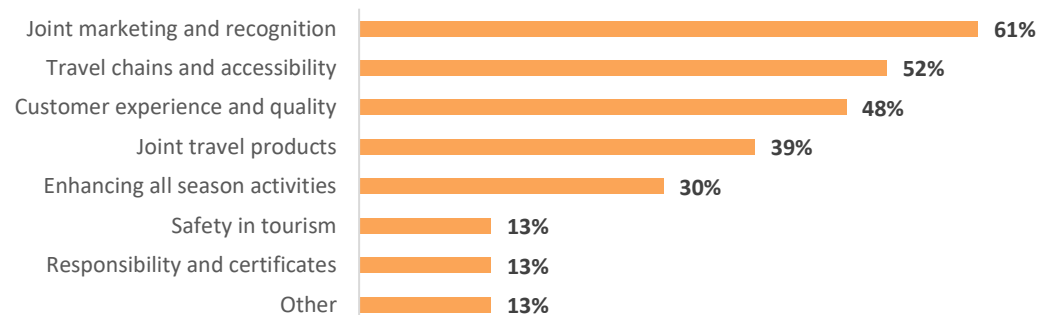
An online survey (in summer 2022\*) for different stakeholders in tourism around Bothnian Bay was conducted during the project.

Key findings about the current state of cooperation:

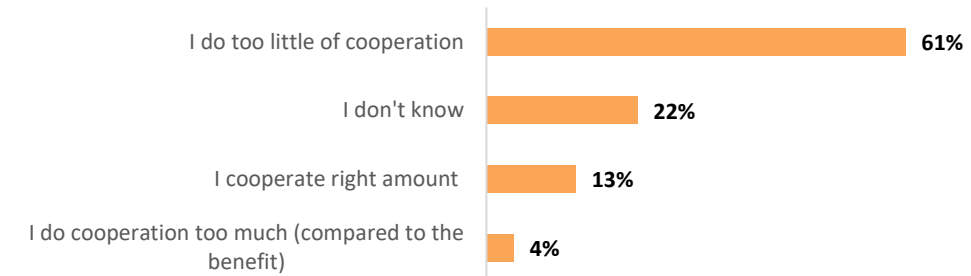
- 61 % of respondents see the need for more cooperation
- Big portion of respondents participated somehow in cross-border cooperation, majority of which participating in workshops
- Joint marketing activities have already been carried out, but **not so much direct selling**

As a summary of the answers, a relatively large amount of joint marketing has been carried out, but the sale of joint tourism services alias more concrete actions, has been carried out clearly less. **However, cooperation is seen to be important.**

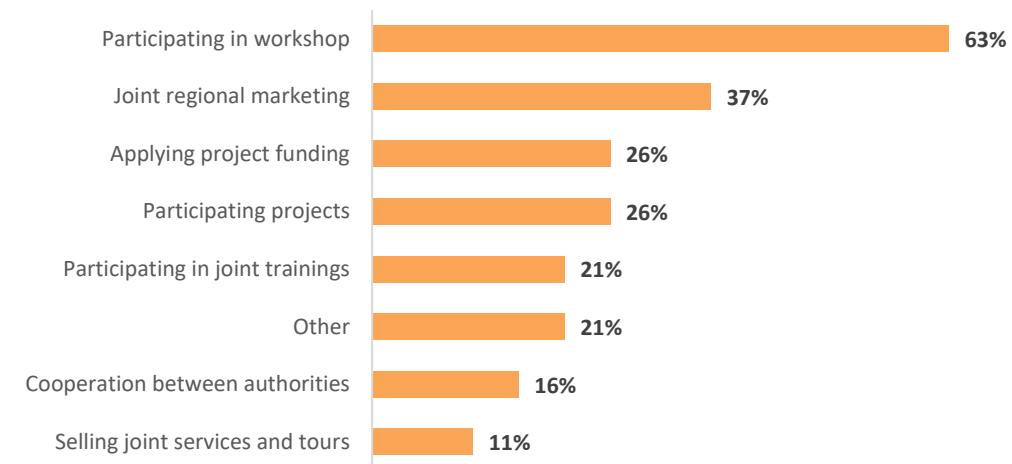
## Most important topics to develop together in cross-border cooperation



## Current state of cross-border cooperation in tourism from your point of view. (n=23)



## In which ways you have been doing cross-border cooperation? (n=19)



\* In total 23 persons answered the survey. 57 % of respondents were from Finland , 48 % from Sweden. However it was possible to choose 2 regions to represent itself. The whole survey summary is to found in the appendix.

# Development needs of cross-border tourism cooperation

The key development needs in Bothnian Bay tourism were clarified in the survey, workshops and one-on-one interviews.

Key themes and findings on how to develop cross-border cooperation in tourism:

## NETWORKING

- need for mutual projects and events to enhance the cooperation
- the need for an areal “driver”
- decisions about the continuity of cooperation is key (across different projects)
- active participation in events despite the possible language barriers
- concrete actions: *“picking up the low-hanging fruits”*

## KEY TARGET GROUPS, JOINT MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

- need for in-depth analysis of the area’s target groups  
→ clarification of marketing channels etc.
- developing joint products would ease marketing
- need for developing a circular tour around Bothnian Bay
- need of gathering joint stories
- need for joint platform
- point out the unique selling points
- need for comparable data

## RESOURCES

- the seasons are short nowadays and the resources at their limit
- constant lack of resources slows down/kills cooperation
- economic profitability as an incentive for entrepreneurs to cooperate
- developing infrastructure and accessibility
- joint financing (f.ex. mutual projects)

*“Joint projects in the region would be a good way to initiate and promote cooperation. However, setting up projects requires finding the right partners. That’s why networking events and opportunities are of paramount importance.”*

*“Investing in communication.”*

*“Include as many entrepreneurs as possible!”*

*“Gathering the wooden towns string of pearls on both sides of the coasts. Already at the moment, a lot of people travel around the wooden towns on the coasts, but the route is not built, productized and marketed. Huge potential.”*

*“Let’s take concrete actions now, picking up those low-hanging fruits. Concreteness gets things started and credibility increases.”*

*“Let’s do more concrete things together and get to know the border neighbour and its actors.”*



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# STEPS TOWARDS COHERENCE

# Potential

The **cultural history** of the region is especially emphasized as a unifying factor and a special feature of the Bothnian Bay. **The history of seafaring and trade, fishing culture and small wooden towns and fishing villages** come up when stakeholders describe the culture and history of the region.

The Bothnian Bay **archipelago** and the surrounding **sea** make the area distinctive without forgetting its unique nature.

The **visibility of the seasons** in the area also make it unique, especially the nightless nights in summer and the snow and frozen sea in winter.

## RICH HISTORY

Towns, villages  
lighthouses & shipwrecks  
tar

## EXPERIENCEFUL

Sea, ice, northern lights &  
nightless night

## CULTURE

Events & lifestyle  
Museums

## SEA

Long beaches, archipelago  
calming & peaceful

*The coast of post-glacial rebound, history of tar export, sea that freezes in winter, sea of nightless night and light in summer, parts of the wooden towns in the coastal cities, UNESCO World Heritage sites (Struve chain, Luleå's old town and under planning hydropower plant construction), history of spirit bootlegging.*

*"The history of living from the sea, i.e. maritime history, trade, crafts, fishing. Small old wooden towns. International connections and traditions of cooperation across borders."*

*"Sea, islands, cities, post-glacial rebound as phenomenon, maritime history"*

*"The world's northernmost brackish water archipelago, frozen sea, one sea - two countries, two languages, changing coastal area and archipelago due to post-glacial rebound."*

*"Unbelievably many beautiful islands."*

*"Open, bright, uncrowded and versatile nature."*

*"A fine, clean and peaceful archipelago."*

*"Unique nature, clear summer nights versus dark winter nights, ice in winter, archipelago, fishing culture."*

*"Water element and cultural history."*

*"The brightness of summer and winter enables a lot. Sun in summer, snow and ice in winter."*



# Common interests and business benefits

The benefits of deeper cooperation identified in the Bothnian Bay

## Reaching new markets

the unique experience of Bothian Bay attracts new customer groups and boosts the international sales

## Representation of border region interests

laws and regulations, comparable data, travel chains

## All-year destination

area includes common characteristics and popular destinations to different seasons which can benefit from each other



Recognizing the added value is the activating factor to seek cooperation possibilities.

## Improving the business processes

- Joint marketing to have better input-output ratio
- Shared resources as one of the answers to scarcity of resources (lack of seasonal and trained staff, sales resources, etc.)
- Learning from each other, sharing the best practises
- Improving the quality of services

# Essentials

## WE NEED

- **Defining common target groups**
- **3-5 USPs** (=unique selling points)
- **Common goal that everyone can commit to**

## PREREQUISITES

- Key factors that unite the both sides of Bothnian Bay
- Common marketing based on common knowledge of each other
- Open dialogue and shared market view

## COORDINATION

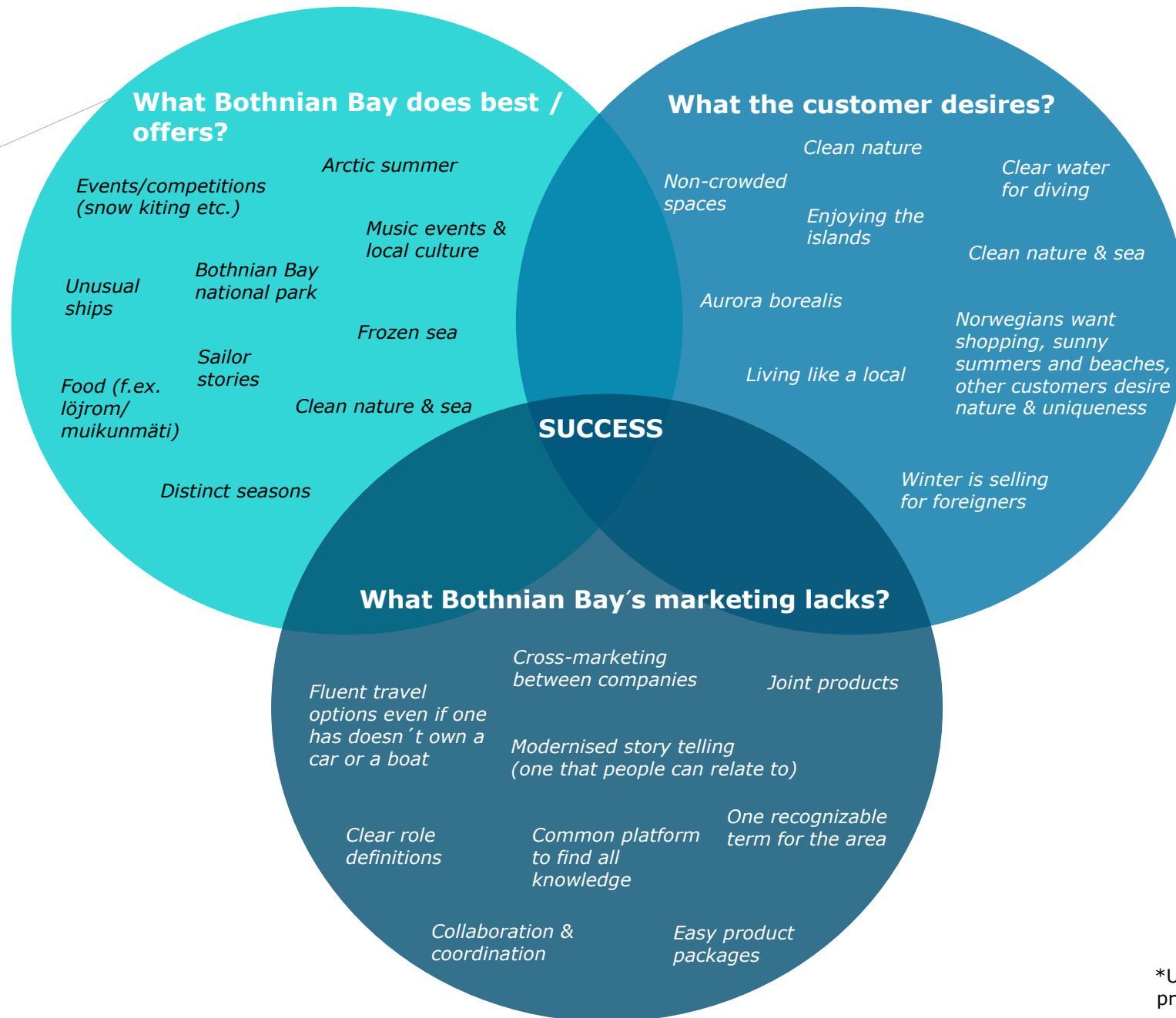
- The willingness to cooperate exists
- We lack shared decisions
- Synthesis of projects

## DESIRED OUTPUTS

- New international markets
- Cross-selling solutions
- Campaigns, materials, manuals, imagebank
- FAM / media trips

# Unique selling points of Bothnian Bay

The unique characters or themes we could use for joint cooperation



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# CO-WORKING MODEL PRINCIPLES

(Draft)

# Why cross-border cooperation?



**POTENTIALS**

**Rich history**  
towns & villages  
lighthouses  
shipwrecks  
tar

**Experienceful**  
arctic contrasts between  
different seasons  
post-glacial rebound  
sea & ice  
northern lights  
nightless night

**Culture**  
genuine coastal way of life  
old fishing villages  
events  
museums

**Sea**  
charm of frozen sea  
healthy sea  
long beaches  
archipelago  
calming & peaceful




**COMMON INTERESTS/  
BUSINESS BENEFITS**

**Reaching new markets**  
Bothnian Bay attracts new  
customer groups and boosts  
the international sale

**Representation of border region interests**  
laws and regulations  
comparable data  
travel chains

**All-year destination**  
area includes common  
characteristics and popular  
destinations to different  
seasons which can benefit  
from each other



**ESSENTIALS FOR  
DEVELOPMENT**

Defining  
common  
target groups

Recognizing 3-  
5 USPs (unique  
selling points)

Common goal  
that everyone  
can commit to


Open dialogue  
and shared  
market view

Coordination

Cross-selling  
solutions

Campaigns,  
materials, manuals,  
imagebank

FAM / media  
trips



**COOPERATION  
MODEL PRINCIPLES**

**Potentials and benefits**  
The tourism business in the  
Bothnian Bay see many  
potentials and benefits to  
deepen the cross-border  
cooperation

**Uniqueness and responsibility**  
The cooperation will be  
based on the uniqueness of  
the Bothnian Bay in  
respectful and responsible  
way

**Brands and identities**  
Each of the destinations can  
have their own brands and  
identities, those together will  
create the Bothnian Bay

**Broader product portfolio**  
The local and regional  
destinations can use  
Bothnian Bay as one of their  
products, to broaden their  
product portfolio and gain  
more attraction

**Broader product portfolio**  
The key to activate the  
cooperation is knowing each  
other better



**COOPERATION  
ACTIONS**

**Ensuring the will to cooperate**  
networking inside the area  
site visits  
clarifying roles  
removing legislative  
obstacles  
applying funding

**Communicating & marketing as one**  
piloting joint marketing  
communicating same USPs  
content creation  
choosing an umbrella theme  
"buyability": service paths,  
umbrella visit site

**International readiness in sustainability**  
starting with a joint and  
honest communication about  
responsibility

encouraging destinations to  
sustainability certification

**The arguments behind cross-border cooperation are gathered from:**

- findings from the workshop series
- stakeholder survey
- the interviews held.



# The principles of Bothnian Bay Co-operation model



- The tourism business in the Bothian Bay see many **potentials and benefits** to deeper the cross-border cooperation
- The cooperation will be based on **the uniqueness of the Bothnian Bay in respectful and responsible way**
- Each of the destinations can have **their own brands and identities**, those together will create the Bothnian Bay
- The local and regional destinations can use Bothnian Bay as one of their products, to **broaden their product portfolio** and gain more attraction
- The key to activate the cooperation is **knowing each other** better
- **Each of us** is entitled to take the initiative!

# Vision ideas

*“The most integrated area of the world in 2030”*

*“Visiting two countries with one trip”*

*“Borderless destination”*

## **TO COME:**

**The final seminar will take place in May 11<sup>th</sup> 2023.**

**Where:** Live on the border (to be further announced)

The project will invite all the actors in tourism, businesses and other members interested to discuss about the future steps in cross-border cooperation. The event also acts as valuable opportunity for matchmaking!



[www.bothnianarc.eu](http://www.bothnianarc.eu)



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Sustainable change.