

Slow Travel Features on Eastern King's Road for an International Cyclist

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<p>This thesis is commissioned by Outdoors Uusimaa project, of which aim is to research and develop nature based products and outdoor activities for international travelers in Finland. The report was set to find out what kind of slow travel experiences Eastern King's Road has to offer for an international cyclist in the Uusimaa area. The research was completed in the timeframe of January-May 2017, and it was conducted by using content analysis for Visit websites of Sipoo, Porvoo and Loviisa.</p> <p>The backbone of this research is slow travel ethos, which is a theme that runs through the whole report. Both tangible and intangible features of a successful cycle trip are addressed, which contribute to the holistic experience of wellbeing, immersion to the moment and culture. It covers wellbeing as a trend, a term coined 'microadventures', and the nature resources which are Finland's trump card. It was discovered that occasional cyclists are the biggest group of cycling tourists, Modern Humanists are the main target market of Finland, of which both were recognized in slow traveling cyclist styles. By using a model for a marketing plan, specific characterizations and distinctive features were found from the target market. Sustainability, which covers social responsibility and environmental values was the distinctive factor which separates this target group from other travelers.</p> <p>By using internationalization criteria and guidelines for sustainable tourism businesses, altogether approximate 321 attractions listed on Visit Sipoo, Visit Porvoo, and Visit Loviisa websites were individually evaluated, in order to find keywords which matched with sustainability guidelines. However, they could be applied only to companies. Therefore, the internationalization criteria and the guidelines for sustainable tourism businesses were used for evaluating companies, whereas the rest were searched for other values of slow travelers, such as historical features, traditionality, locality, and nature features. From the 62 selected attractions appropriate for the target group, 16 were companies and rest 46 were activities, historical sites, and nature attractions. They all had attributes of sustainability values, but only a few was truly dedicated. Some had these features by default, but did not commercialise or advertise them.</p> <p>Language was an issue which eliminated many potential companies and services, as they didn't provide sufficient information in English. Especially the companies on Visit Sipoo website have a huge deficit of websites in English, which would be an essential factor for an international traveler to discover their attractions. Online marketing and selling would need to be uplifted for the 21st century: many attractions did not have a website, or it was very rudimentary. Relevant information of location, price, and information of the company or service itself was often missing, or provided only by a phone call or email. The Eastern King's Road has charming features of locality and countryside, but these features need to be advertised more. Organic farming and produce is there, but it doesn't translate to the international traveler. Eastern King's Road certainly has potential for attracting this target market but its opportunities are not used to their full potential yet.</p>	
Keywords Slow travel, cycling, King's Road, sustainability	

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1 Introduction

Finland has a lot to offer for a tourist. It has never been on the top of the charts with its tourist arrivals, but it has lately started to rise to recognition. According to Visit Finland (2017a), Lonely Planet and National Geographic mentioned Finland as among the most interesting travel destinations in 2017. Lonely Planet placed Finland as third on its Best in Travel list, and National Geographic featured Finland as one of the six countries in the nature category of their Best of the World list featuring 21 destinations (Visit Finland 2016a; Visit Finland 2016b). The centennial celebrations of the Finnish independency along with nature experiences, and unique city culture are among the reasons for the popularity boom (Visit Finland 2017a). Nature is Finland's trump card: The Arctic Circle, national parks, wilderness and hiking areas were praised by National Geographic which shows the importance of nature in Finnish tourism appeal (Visit Finland 2016a). The local respect shows in Finland's new Flag Day; it is the first country to celebrate its natural resources by raising the flag, which has been assigned on the last Saturday of August, starting from the centennial year of 2017 (Nationalparks.fi 2016).

According to Virkkunen (Visit Finland 2016b) well-being tourism, and the healing power of nature are new viewpoints built around the nature experiences and services in Finland. Virkkunen states that cultural factors are also becoming more visible attributes in contributing to a fascinating and unique urban surroundings: new trendy restaurants, Helsinki design district, and Löyly terraces are for example attracting international crowds (Visit Finland 2016b). These natural and cultural features represent the value proposition of Finnish tourism, which shows also what kind of things international travelers are interested in. Nature has always had a strong presence in Finnish culture, which offers prominent possibilities for tourism activities.

The mission of this report is to research nature and cultural attributes as slow travel features in cycling. This thesis was commissioned by Outdoors Uusimaa project, which focuses on King's Road in Finland. The whole route stretches through Norway to Russia, as it was a Royal Post route in 16th century (Holmroos, 2003, 4). In Finland, nowadays the route is separated to a Western and an Eastern route starting from Helsinki, which are marketed as cycle routes. This report will focus on the Eastern route, and the goal is to find attractions and ideas for slow travel experiences along the route.

The report is constructed in two sections, having more general literature review in the beginning on chapters 1 to 2.4, in which slow travel and relatable experiences are defined, continuing to nature and its effects, and then explaining what a successful cycle route

should have, and then finishing off in target market and marketing. The second is about King's Road, where the theory base will help in the research in chapters 4 and 5. The commissioner and King's Road will be presented more detailed, and the research methods fully explained. Finally, results and conclusions are presented. Attachments are included in the end of the report.

The aim of this report is to discover what the Eastern King's Road can currently offer for an international, cycling, slow traveler. The main research question is: What kind of slow travel features King's Road has? This will be explored in chapters 4 and 5, where a content analysis is applied to pinpoint places of interest by using tourism websites. The other, background questions for the researched issue, this report sets out to answer are:

- What is slow travel?
- What kind of experiences cycling slow travelers appreciate?
- Does King's Road fit for an international, cycling, slow traveler?
- What could be improved or developed on the route?

These questions describe the structure of the report and help keeping the focus on the subject. They help to build the background and explain the trend of slow travel, as well as draw conclusions whether the route is fitting for this customer group at all. In the end, some ideas for development are presented which were discovered in the research.

2 Cycling as a Slow Traveling Feature

The concept of slowing down has been a rising trend since 1980's, when the Slow Food movement rose in Italy in 1986 to oppose the prevalent trend of globally increasing fast food consumption. The Slow Cities (CittaSlow) was inspired after the Slow Food movement in 1990s. (Fullagar, Markwell & Wilson 2012, 3.) Slow Cities took the values of taste-ful and quality food of Slow Food movement and turned them into a larger ensemble, as Fullagar & al. cite Knox when telling that the movement's focus is: "the development of places that enjoy a robust vitality based on good food, healthy environments, sustainable economies and the seasonality and traditional rhythms of community life." Since then, the movement has spread to multiple different branches. According to Fullagar, Markwell, and Wilson (2012, 1), the ideal is being attached to more and more industries: slow food, slow cities, slow parenting, and so forth. The priorities have moved from quick, accomplishment-driven ideals to values of balance; creating the wellness trend. It carries a broad meaning of overall well-being; creating harmony in mental, physical, spiritual and biological health. In the Western side of the world, there are many attributes related to wellness: it's the harmony of body, mind and spirit, self-responsibility, physical fitness, beauty care, healthy nutrition, relaxation, meditation, mental activity, environmental sensitivity, and social contacts. (Koncul, 2012, 530.) Today, it's a luxury value to slow down; to take time for yourself and live healthy.

In the case of tourism, Oh, Assaf, and Balogu (2016, 205) refer to Moore when identifying two trends: environmental sustainability and personal/social wellbeing, which have contributed to the emergence of slow tourism. They state that the environmental issues have had an emphasis as the start of the movement, since transportation plays a big role on the emissions caused by tourism, therefore linking slow tourism strongly with the sustainable tourism segment. However, citing Parkins and Graig, Oh & al. (2016, 205) state that in recent years, slow tourism has moved from the emphasis of sustainability towards personal satisfaction and wellbeing. As Fullagar & al. (2012, 3) state, slow tourism is much more than just moving from one point to the other. It carries values of responsibility and appreciating of culture. They describe it having linkages to the Slow Food and Slow city movements, as it embraces the local, heritage, and organic values with food, as well as linking more senses together; in this case taste and sight, which create the experience. Fullagar & al. (2012, 4) identify slow travellers as not necessarily travelling to see specific things, but to immerse themselves in something or someplace, which can transform the traveller and create the experience through lived knowledge. They also link low carbon travelling options to represent the environmental values of slow tourism: for example walk-

ing pilgrimages, canoeing, leisurely cycling and place-based experiences, which all value nature and cultures (Fullagar & al. 2012, 4).

However, even with the wellbeing and responsibility values of slow travel on the rise, the demands of a busy lifestyle are relentless for many. According to a Global Trends report (Euromonitor International 2016, 25), adventure traveling is Europe's leading trend, but Europeans are often too busy for a traditional, immersive adventure, and go for shorter adventures instead. Dubbed as "microadventures", they embody the slow travel features by having physical and health attributes; including low risk activities which need little or no previous experience (Euromonitor International 2016, 25). According to the report, British explorer Alastair Humphreys came up with the term microadventures, meaning an outdoor adventure, which is easily achievable for an average person. Microadventures range from a simple camping experience to more physical activities like hiking, kayaking, swimming or cycling, and require very little gear, emphasizing the importance of a slower-pace holiday in the midst of fast-paced life of the traveller. The costs vary from potentially free, home-based adventures, to more expensive activities, where gear and instruction are needed. (Euromonitor International 2016, 26.)

Cycling could be one option for a microadventure. Being an environmentally low impacting activity, and a physical, outdoor activity, it carries the characterizations of both slow travel and adventure travel. Fullagar (2012, 99) participated on a nine-day cycle tour of over 600km for over 1000 people in 2010, organized by Bicycle Queensland in Australia, where she did ethnographic research and interviewed 17 women. The results showed values of mindfulness and slow travel: the women Fullagar interviewed characterized the experience as a break from everyday life, a chance to distant themselves from their responsibilities and focus on the current moment (Fullagar 2012, 104-107). It offers a feeling of flow, when the mind is fully focused on the one thing that is at hand. For her interviewees, cycling is a form of self-empowering and relaxation: a chance to enjoy and experience the whole journey, not just reach the destination. Many of her interviewees described how they paid attention what they could sense on the road: hearing birds sing, seeing the dew on spider webs, feeling the pedalling in their muscles, enjoying a cup of tea in the morning, visiting villages... (Fullagar 2012, 104-107.) The trip reaches a whole different meaning, when the experience consists of so many stimulus: it becomes a wholesome, holistic joy of senses. Fullagar (2012, 106-107) describes how important the slow pace, social, and environmental aspects are for the participants and how the cyclists become a community: creating a bridge between different people by the same interest. However, one difference was noted by Fullagar (2012, 105-106) in her research: cycling seemed to carry out different values for some of the men; the need for speed and the results, as in timing

in getting from one place to another carried more importance, whereas the slow pace and social aspects were more important for women. Different motivations for the cycling trip might produce different kind of experiences, but as an experience is always unique, it does not take the meaning away of having an outdoors adventure.

Experience is an abstract concept, which is hard to define. Every experience is unique, and therefore difficult to categorize. It is something like the feeling of an unusualness, which leaves an impression on the guest, and aims to create memories and novelty. According to Pine II and Gilmore (1999, 30), experience can be divided into four realms: entertainment, educational, esthetic, and escapist. The model below is structured according to the original figure:

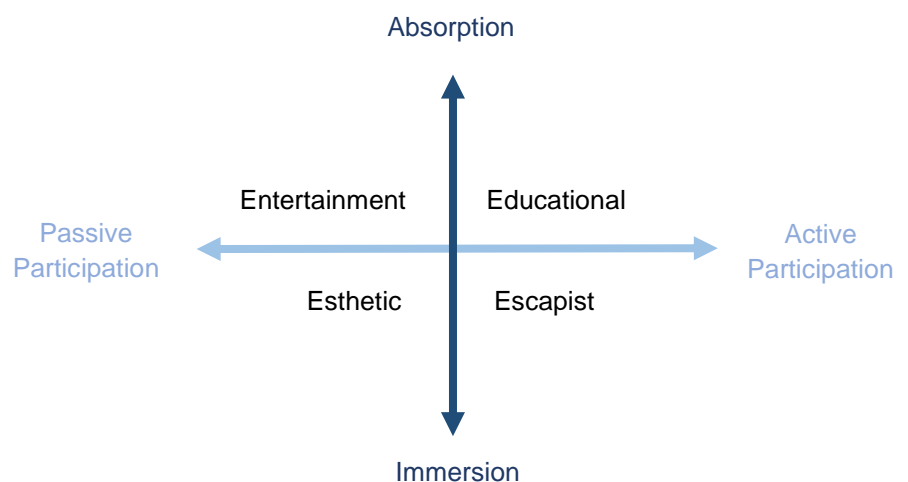


Figure 1. Experience realms. (Pine II & Gilmore 1999, 30)

These realms represent the different categories, which are also connected to the level of participation, as shown in the horizontal line of the Pine II and Gilmore's model, as well as the absorption and immersion, which are shown on the vertical line of the model. The idea of this figure is to show the elements of an experience and how they interact with each other. The realms are not inseparable, but are compatible with each other, creating unique experiences. In fact, the most wholesome experience is created, when the features are combined from each sector, locating the ideal experience in the middle of the figure. (Pine II & Gilmore 1999, 31.)

Using this model to a cycling trip, considering the kind of stories Fullagar (2012, 104-107) got from her interviewees, we can quite readily agree it's an immersive experience, which demands concentration and focus on the task at hand. This would locate it to the lower half of the Pine II and Gilmore's (1999, 30) figure, which fits nicely as cycling also possesses both esthetic and escapist attributes. Esthetic, due to the beautiful sceneries the

cyclists see along their trip, and escapist, because they become immersed in the activity and actively participate in creating their own experience. The upper half in this case contributes less to the cycling experience, if not being educational in a sense of learning more about the road and weather circumstances, maintenance of the bicycle, as well as training the body to a better fitness and endurance. Entertainment however is difficult to link to cycling, as it is both absorbing and passive participation, not including much activity.

2.1 Nature is part of the wellbeing trend

Physical and mental wellbeing are closely related to slow tourism. Many activities, services, and items improve wellbeing, even if not promoted as wellness products. Nature can be very self-evident for many, especially Finns, who are keen to spend time in nature, hiking, picking berries or mushrooms (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015a 2). But, as slowing down and peacefulness are growing importance in the lives of increasingly busy people, it's no surprise that the interest in nature shows growth, and great possibilities for tourism industry.

Wellness and nature are indeed internationally growing trends, wellness travel being the fastest growing branch of tourism worldwide with more than 14% annual growth rate in completed trips (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015a 3; Visit Finland 2017).

Tourism is the fastest-growing form of livelihood in Finland and is a significant provider of employment. We encourage companies to develop high-quality products, for various target groups. Thanks to clean nature, year-round nature destinations and the protected national parks, Finland has excellent qualifications to offer wellness for the body and mind. These things—which are ordinary to us—such as exercising in untouched nature, foraging for berries and mushrooms, Nordic food and the sauna tradition are of paramount importance, in being offered as accessible tourism products, says Visit Finland's programme director Kiti Häkkinen of Finpro.

(Visit Finland 2017a.)

As the quote above by Häkkinen shows, nature is Finland's most important appeal for travellers. This is what the EVP of Visit Finland, Paavo Virkkunen, says as well: "Nature continues to be our top attraction. New aspects of nature travel are the healing power of nature and well-being tourism that is built around nature experiences and services" (Visit Finland 2016b). Virkkunen states that the travellers in Finland are usually looking for memorable experiences in nature, which he says is always near: stimulating nature attractions are available even for stop-over tourists. He states that especially the national parks provide prominent possibilities for outdoor activities all year round, but he also emphasizes the need to commercialise the nature services into experiences. (Visit Finland 2016b.) Finland would need even clearer branding, and developing services to nature related ac-

tivities to harness them better for touristic purposes. It is no wonder that the main area for development in Finland's wellness travel product is based on light outdoors exercise, which would promote the nature and wellness values (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015a, 3). According to Outdoors Finland, this can become a very profitable market: every euro invested in the outdoor recreational services and nature centers brings it back to the community tenfold (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015a, 3).

Cycling is one of those activities, which can benefit from these trends, and grow as a tourism activity. According to the EuroVelo study in 2012, there is no precise value for the cycle tourism in EU, but it's estimated as a €44 billion market, with 2.295 billion cycle trips done per annum. The overnight tourists are measured as 20.4 million, spending €9 billion yearly. (European Parliament 2012, 17.) With these numbers, it is clear that there already is a market for cycling, which would help in commercializing the nature experiences.

Nature can be very integral for the experience in cycling. Scenery and landscape play a very important role for cyclists: not only by sight, but also by hearing, smell and taste, all contributing to the memorable experience (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 18). It is a healthy and easy activity for everyone, and also an option for sustainability concerned travelers: it's one of the most sustainable modes of transport, keeping greenhouse gas emissions small, creating virtually no air pollution and is almost noiseless (Parkin 2012, 4).

Nature provides us much more than beautiful views. It has the capability to produce both mental and physical improvements to well-being, and it doesn't take long for the effects to show. It's an important element for wellness, which still fascinates every age group. Outdoors Finland (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015a, 5) lists some of the effects written below:

- ⇒ 4-7 minutes watching or spending time in nature relaxes: it slows down pulse and removes muscle tension, as well as improves mental health.
- ⇒ 20 minutes in nature lessens negative feelings.
- ⇒ 40 minutes in nature grows attention.
- ⇒ 150 minutes in nature increases immune response and immune system.

The effect of nature heightens even more, when there is a water system in the area, for example a river or a lake, and that the effects of nature are often highest with youth (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015a, 5). It's remarkable what kind of an impact only five minutes in the presence of natural environment can do, and it is no surprise it contributes a lot, both for the experience and health. The effect is heightened with exercise: cycling as a moderate exercise can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, type-2 diabetes, some

cancers, osteoporosis and depression (International Transport Forum 2014, 19). However, air pollution can be an endangering factor for an active cyclist if the cycling route runs next to highways and road traffic. The deep and often breathing cyclist can collect more fine particulars and ozone into their lungs than when using other transport methods, which can become a problem in the long run. Therefore it would be important to build the route in natural areas, away from car traffic and other sources of pollution. (International Transport Forum 2014, 19.)

2.2 Managing cycle experiences

When it comes to experiences, it is impossible to control the wanted outcome exactly. The task of the company or an organization then becomes to arrange the frame; the setting for the experiences to happen. According to the Retkeilymatkailun Suunnitteluopas (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015a, 16), the experiences and the atmosphere of the recreational route come from the nature and the special characteristics of the route: it's important to find attractions which are distinguishable and interesting to the target audience. The guidebook advises to emphasize these attractions and to build a story line for the route: a route should have both pictures and descriptions, which will be found on spot. The mission of the organizer is to take care the attractions will have the opportunity to be experienced as they were meant to: this means that the quiet spots are indeed quiet, and that nothing disrupts the view at viewpoints, for example. (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015a, 16.)

Outdoors Finland Etelä (2015b, 18-24) lists eight checkpoints for a successful cycle route (see appendix 1 for more detail) which cover the importance of:

- 1. Sceneries**
- 2. Attractions & Services**
- 3. Route maintenance**
- 4. Accessibility**
- 5. Difficulty level**
- 6. Route name**
- 7. Cyclists' safety**
- 8. Guidance**

The process of designing a cycle route is detailed, and it is important to think where the route is drawn, so that it is interesting, yet safe. There should also be enough attractions on the route. The route should be designed specifically cyclists in mind, to take care everything they need is conveniently available. Enough guidance should be on place both on

route and on map, and the maintenance of the route is essential to make sure it endures time and use. It should be easy to reach the start of the route, and there should be information what there is to be expected and how challenging the route is. The name should also be chosen to describe the route and use it consistently throughout the route and in all of the information material. (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 18-24.)

With these checkpoints in order, the cyclist will have the opportunity to experience a fluent and enjoyable trip, as well as the option to modify their trip according to their own physical fitness and preferences. They also help to maintain the environment, as the paths are well guided and maintained, decreasing the risk of corroding the nature. Communities will also be able to get more income with more targeted services, as the cyclists will have their needs evaluated and served better.

According to a survey of touring cyclists in Montana, the most common theme cyclists brought up relating to a successful and enjoyable multi-day cycling trip was road conditions. Other most-mentioned factors were food, lodging, amenities, scenery, historic sites, and attractions. (Nickerson & al. 2013, 9-10.) The biggest concern with the road conditions was traffic:

A safe route with little traffic or designated cycle paths was a commonly expressed need. For some, little traffic is the reason they enjoyed cycling in Montana. But for others, who assumedly took the more populated routes with an increased availability of food, lodging, and other necessities, the lack of shoulders and overabundance of rumble strips forced many to cycle in the road, which greatly reduced their safety. Comments also included concern over the high speed limits as well as encounters with commercial semi-trucks, RVs, and cars pulling boats or trailers. Designated cycle paths also stood out as a necessity and were suggested as a solution to the shoulder/rumble strip problem and to make for a safer cycling experience.

(Nickerson & al. 2013, 11)

Traffic and cycling has also been analyzed by Horton (2007, 133) as he states, one discouraging factor for cycling is fear. He refers to the UK Department of Transport research by saying 47% of adults in UK were frightened about cycling on busy roads. He also points out that this is not a problem only in UK, but also in U.S. Referring to Gardner, he states that a research made on three different cities in United States showed over half of the respondents not cycling because the lack of safety. Horton refers to Department of Transport by saying that cycling dropped from 37% of all journeys in 1949 to only 1% in 2002. (Horton 2007, 133.) Horton suggests that cultural factors, and the wide spreading motorized traffic had an influence to the decreasing numbers of cyclists. He refers to a sociologist Frank Furedi when saying that Western societies live in a 'culture of fear.' We are safer than ever before, yet more fearful. (Horton 2007, 133- 137.) As the cars came,

the streets for people were transferred to roads for cars, and citizens were taught to get out of the way. Horton writes: "Yet road safety education concentrates not on the drivers of vehicles but on those who they have the capacity to kill." Horton explains, that ironically the safety measures the government took to protect cyclists, in fact reduced the cyclists on the streets, which also makes it more dangerous, as car drivers are not accustomed then to take them into consideration. Pushing cyclists off the roadways heightens their fear of cycling near cars, as creating specific roads for cycling and walking makes it more unusual for these ways of transport to mingle, and therefore the more unexpected and unpleasant experience. (Horton 2007, 138-144.) This shows that indeed, specifically designed cycle routes would be integral to encourage more people to cycle.

With lodging and food, according to the Montana survey, the main issue was availability; there should be enough options on the route. Some of the stretches of the route lacked the opportunity to buy food, in the form of grocery stores, cafes or restaurants. Common wish was to be able to have access to fresh and healthy food regularly throughout the route. With accommodation, many liked to stay at campgrounds due to affordability, the higher chance of a late-night check in, and due to the fact planning ahead is difficult with cycling, but the main complaint with Montana was the high pricing of camp grounds, and that there wasn't enough space available. The need for cyclist/hiker campgrounds was highly recommended, as they worked well in other states and regions. With amenities, the lack of showers and water was a visible feature in complaints. Respondents were unhappy there were not enough free, hot showers, which were hoped to be found in campgrounds and other lodging facilities, as well as in public areas such as pools and truck stops. The survey suggests the lack of water on rural routes is connected to the lack of stores and other facilities, but also had a suggestion by one respondent of placing water fountains on the route. However, sights, attractions and scenery were an important part of the trip for the respondents and even made up the deficiencies of the route. This shows that experiences and esthetics have a huge importance for the cyclists' trip. (Nickerson & al. 2013, 13-15.)

This shows how detailed the needs of a cyclist can be, and it is important to think of all of these issues in route planning. Water availability for example, is a small but an extremely essential factor for a cyclist. It's important to not only have it available for purchase, but as an opportunity to refill the drinking bottle around the clock. Opening hours of stores, services and accommodations can also be an issue especially in Finland, where summertime is so light, the cyclist is not driven to rest by decreasing light, but might continue their journey until very late. Therefore the need for targeted services specifically for the cyclists and other road users are a high importance.

2.3 Target audience

With the identified trends of slow travel and microadventure, cycling offers prominent possibilities as a tourism activity in Europe. The biggest customer groups for cycling travel markets are in Germany and United Kingdom, and popular cycling destinations include Austria, Denmark, Switzerland and France. Germany and Switzerland have long developed their cycling routes and cycling information, which makes their routes the best in the market. (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 6-7.) However, a quick google search with the search words “Best Cycling Routes” reveals that France and United Kingdom are often the most recommended destinations for cycling, and as the distances are not great in Europe, it becomes an easy possibility to cycle through multiple countries on the same trip.

The majority of touring cyclists are well educated, middle-aged couples traveling without children (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 6-7). In fact, the majority of all nature tourists seem to be approximately 35-65 year old according to the State Forest Enterprise (Metsähallitus), when they were researching customer groups and their motivations for visiting nature attractions (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015a, 7-8). Similar results are shown in the survey of touring cyclists in Montana, as the respondents were ranged in ages between 18 to 79, with a mean of 52 years. The clear majority of respondents were male (76%), whereas there was only 24% women respondents. The majority were also employed (44%), and the next biggest group was retired (36%). (Nickerson & al. 2013, 3.) Therefore, the target group for cycling routes seems to be the older population, but the question has to be asked: could more of young population be interested in light outdoor exercise? It is difficult to determine whether this result has been made with incomprehensive research, the lack of interest by younger population, or the lack of advertising or availability of gear.

However, the groups the guidebook of cycle travelling (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 8-11) found offers us some more variation in age:

- **Occasional cyclists:** family travelers, young adults & seniors traveling with friends and family. Cycle only occasionally, use maximum two hours for the trip and cycle slowly, under 10km/hour and stop often. Prefer easy, well paved routes and prioritize socialisation and recreational activities outdoors.
- **Short daytrip cyclists:** early middle aged or older, cycling alone or with friends or family. They cycle often, 30-40km in a day with a higher speed of 12-18km/h and stop often. Priorities are in sociality, enjoying outdoors and the physical activity.

- **Long distance cyclists:** middle aged or older, cycling alone, or with friends or family. They cycle regularly, doing approximately 40km day trips, but rarely over 60km. They cycle rapidly, 14-20km/h and stop every 1.5 hours. Priority is the physical activity and enjoying the sport.
- **Active cyclists:** adults, varying from youngsters to seniors. They cycle regularly to work out or to keep up their fitness. Their day trips are long, even 200km or over, but in mountain biking could be shorter, depending on how challenging the route is. Active cyclist cycle fast, even over 30km/h. They cycle to keep up their fitness, to compete or to look for challenges. Their preferred routes are longer and more challenging than the other groups' routes.

The market for occasional cyclist is the largest, but the group of active cyclists is growing as well (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 32). These two groups have been presented more comprehensively in appendix 2 in the end of this thesis. From the table it is possible to see that the groups differ by their speed as well as by some of their preferences and prioritizations. For example, in the case of occasional cyclists, their main goal is to go for a holiday, enjoy spending time together with their friends or family and do cycling among other activities, as a part of their holiday. Active cyclists have a different mindset, as their main goal is to cycle, and the whole holiday is built around that specific activity, possibly doing some minor activities alongside of it. They prefer more challenge and want to develop their skills and fitness. However, the combining factors for these two groups are that both have similar age groups, varying from teen to seniors, and that both need information of the route beforehand. Occasional cyclists need more guidance and the possibility to rent equipment, and active cyclists want to find out about the activities and services available for them on their cycle holiday. They're also more detailed in their plans, whereas occasional cyclists are more flexible. (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 8, 11, 32.)

Since these groups can co-exist on the same route, it would be possible to target both occasional and active cyclists. However, active cyclists can possibly be more demanding of the destination and the challenge level the route offers, whereas for occasional cyclists merely cycling can be an experience. Targeting occasional cyclists gives tourism businesses more opportunities to sell as occasional cyclists' motivation for traveling was not necessarily a specific cycle route, but the destination itself. This way the cycle route can serve as a way to discover the destination and the culture. Therefore, it is beneficial to explore what kind of other groups are interested in Finland and cycling, and how to fit these all together, to fit into the slow tourism context.

The main target group for the Finnish tourist board (MEK) has been specified as Modern Humanists, who value new experiences, culture and locals, as well as responsibility. As the traveler's mindset is characterized: "I don't expected anything extraordinary, I just want to experience Finnish nature, culture and way of living, the way it is." These travelers are curious explorers, who want to avoid mass tourism and are looking for more atypical destinations. (Visit Finland 2014, 1-4.) Therefore, this group could be a potential customer group for slow tourism and cycling: they want to immerse themselves into the destination by learning local habits, the culture and the day-to-day life.

Visit Finland (2014, 3) has distinguished three groups of Modern Humanists: Active Families, Culture Fans and Modern Humanist Couples (see appendix 3). Their interests are divided in activities, culture and discoveries. As subcategories of Modern Humanists, they share similar values, but prefer slightly different things on their holidays. Modern Humanist Couples present the average values of the Modern Humanists. They like to discover, and experience something new, considering values of responsibility and authenticity at the same time. Active Families are open to all kinds of experiences, they prefer doing different kinds of activities, and research things they can do in a destination. The report also found an even more specific subgroup from Active Families category: "Young Nature Explorers," who are especially interested in physical activities and adventurous experiences. Culture Fans are interested in more than art galleries and museums; locality, food culture, and history are important features for them on the trip. Culture Fans also had a subgroup: "Scandinavia Fans," who are especially interested in the Northern countries and their culture. (Visit Finland 2014, 12-37.) The profiling of Modern Humanists give some guidelines what kind of things the travelers are looking for, and therefore can help in designing authentic Finland experiences. How their values could be harnessed in cycling, is presented below.

An American company 'Biketours.com' (2017) which promotes cycle tour operators selling trips to Europe, have categorized 14 different travel styles for cyclists (see appendix 4). Considering the concept of slow tourism, and the previous findings of occasional cyclists and Modern Humanists, the second column of the table represents this segment best. Biketours.com (2017) described these four different profiles as such:

- Laid-Back and Leisurely
 - Enjoys slow pace, and appreciates the journey more than the destination.
- Retired but Wired
 - Wants to be active and spend time with partner, family or friends, by seeing new places, experiencing new cultures and enjoying good food.

- Foodie
 - Linking together the slow food and slow tourism features, by having a delicious meal after physical activity.
- Culture Vulture
 - Embraces the ideals of slow tourism, where journey is more important than the destination. Is interested in history, art, architecture, and culture.

To piece these three different classifications together: we have acknowledged that occasional cyclists are the largest group in the market, Modern Humanists are the target group for Finland, and four different profiles fit for slow tourism were identified. In viewpoint of these groups, we can pinpoint by highlighting similarities with these groups and by matching them with slow travel values (see appendices 2-4) that these travellers:

- **Travel in groups, either with a partner or a family or friends.**
- **Are flexible with timetable.**
- **Prefer easy, well paved routes and prioritize socialization.**
- **Are physically active.**
- **Are interested in culture, history, traditions and locality.**
- **Appreciate responsibility and environmental values.**
- **Enjoy slow pace and appreciate the journey.**
- **Want to see and experience new things.**
- **Want to enjoy good food.**

Previous experience in cycling in this case does not necessarily have to be high, as the priorities are in cycling slowly, enjoying the journey and spending time with partner, family or friends. The sceneries, cultural aspects and locality are important features for these cyclists and they don't need a very challenging or a long route. Therefore, the route should be easily accessible, well promoted, and there should be enough chances to stop. Considering the values and interests of this target group, there could also be Finnish attributes on the route, like staying in a summer cottage or camping, going to sauna and frying sausages at a camp fire. There should be enough information to promote these features, but to maintain the aspect of independency: it's an experience to try things out on your own. Locality and social aspects would be important to think of as well.

2.4 Marketing

After identifying the target group, it becomes important to inform them of the service or the product in a way that is appealing to them. The aim is to be able to understand the cus-

customer better, and therefore serving their needs more efficiently. Therefore active research of the target market and discourse with the customers is essential. According to Kotler, Bowen, Makens, and Baloglu (2017, 31), seller is not the only one doing marketing; it's also the buyer. They state that the focus has moved from how to influence the customer, to how the customer can influence the business, and how customers can influence each other (Kotler & al. 2017, 31). This means that the customer experience and feedback should have a strong influence on the product or service.

According to Kotler & al. (2017, 29), marketing is often confused with advertising and sales promotion. They state that selling and advertising are only two functions of the marketing mix, and often not the most essential, compared to the other elements; product, price and distribution. The process starts from identifying customer needs, proceeds to developing or modifying the product or service, and then pricing, distributing and promoting it effectively. (Kotler & al. 2017, 29.) Attractive products and services targeted to the customer group sell themselves, and create satisfied customers, who then act as advocates by describing their experiences to others.

Kotler & al. (2017, 31) present a simple five-step model for marketing:

- 1. Understand the marketplace and customer needs and wants.**
- 2. Design a customer driven market strategy.**
3. Construct an integrated marketing program that delivers superior value.
4. Build profitable relationships and create customer delight.
5. Capture value from customers to create profits and customer equity.

This report will concentrate only on the first two phases of the model, as they focus on the market analysis and target group. The previous chapters have focused on the marketplace and the needs and wants of target market. This chapter will bring together these attributes and develop conclusions how the expectations could be filled. It will also focus on the designing of the market strategy. It will present some of the things which would need to be emphasized for this specific target group in order to attract them as customers. The marketing plan and suggestions specifically for King's Road will be presented in the later chapter 5.2, but this section will deliver some cues of the overall market, which will be later integrated into the context of King's Road cycling route.

In the earlier chapters slow tourism and small outdoors adventures called 'microadventures' were identified as rising trends, and then a customer group which embraces these values and wants to experience the holiday destination by cultural, authentic and both ethically and environmentally responsible activities was found (Oh & al. 2016, 205; Eu-

romonitor International 2016, 25; Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 8, 11, 32; Visit Finland 2014, 12-37; Biketours.com 2017).

By using the five-step marketing model of Kotler & al. (2017, 31-34), as seen on the appendix 5, earlier identified features of the market can be placed into the table to create the key points the customers are looking for. As discovered in the earlier chapters, a good cycling experience for slow travelers consists of both tangible and intangible aspects. Tangible aspects are the practical features: how the route is constructed, what services it has and all of the equipment, water, accommodation, and food options there are available for the cyclists (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 18-24; Nickerson & al. 2013, 13-15). Intangible aspects are the values supplied for the cyclists, such as personal satisfaction, well-being, relaxation, and being beneficent, by preserving nature and culture for example (Fulgagar & al. 2012, 4; Biketours.com 2017).

After identifying the key points for a valuable product for the targeted market, the model of Kotler & al. (2017, 31-38) in appendix 5 focuses on the perceived value of the product, the expectations, and the satisfaction of the customer: it's important not to oversell, but to exceed expectations. The benefits should be larger than costs, and all of the information available for the customer transparent and truthful. Fulfilled and exceeded expectations create satisfied customers. (Kotler & al. 2017, 31-38.) A cycle route can aim to be well structured guaranteeing a smooth trip as a fundamental value, and by adding notice boards, and service offerings for cyclists can improve the experience (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 18-24). The experience can then be exceeded by matching the values of the target group, with environmental values visible throughout the route, for example (Kotler 2017, 31; Visit Finland 2014, 12-37).

After the customer experience, the perceived value should be communicated. As Kotler & al. (2017, 31) stated, the discourse between the company and customer, as well as between customers, is essential. Outdoors Finland emphasizes the importance of social media platforms, which offer visitors the opportunity to share experiences and recommendations, to leave and read reviews, as well as for the managers for publishing videos and blogs to market the route (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 33). The user experience is a good indicator of the standard of the service. It can also measure the interest of consumers and the size of the market.

The next step in Kotler & al.'s (2017, 31) model for marketing was to create a market strategy driven by the customers. The model for market strategy can be found on appendix 6, where the different marketing management orientations are presented. According to

Kotler & al. (2017, 37), the marketing concept and the societal marketing concept are modern and efficient techniques; marketing concept aims for long-term customer relationships by analyzing the market and the needs and wants of customers, and societal marketing concept focuses not only benefiting the customer, but also the society. The societal marketing concept is about embracing sustainable values; environmental friendliness and social responsibility (Kotler & al. 2017, 37). The societal marketing concept fits especially well with the target group of slow traveling cyclists. Embracing the locality and cultural factors, as well as preserving nature and favoring sustainable practices, fit well with the slow travel ethos (Fullagar & al. 2012, 4). These are the factors which should be visible on the cycle route, in the attractions along it and in the marketing.

Sustainability is not only environmental practices. The definition of sustainable tourism according to UNESCO (2010) is: “tourism that respects both local people and the traveler, cultural heritage and the environment”. There are clear guidelines what tourism businesses can do to operate in a sustainable manner and how they can educate their customers: the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (2016) lists a detailed view of the minimum every tourism business should strive for. The main categories are:

- Effective sustainability planning
- Maximizing social and economic benefits for the local community
- Enhancing cultural heritage
- Reducing the negative impacts to the environment

The full list is presented on appendix 7, which specifies what kind of aspects a tourism business should take into consideration in its operations and marketing.

3 King's Road as a Research Subject

This section will focus on the King's Road and the experiences it can offer, in the viewpoint of slow tourism. It is an empirical section, in which the research methods will be explained, the King's Road presented, points of interests on the route discovered, and more detailed marketing ideas suggested.

3.1 Outdoors Uusimaa Project

This thesis is commissioned by Outdoors Uusimaa project. Its aim is to research and develop nature based products and outdoor activities for international travelers in Finland. The project co-operates with Laurea and Haaga- Helia University of Applied Sciences, and is scheduled between 1st of August 2016 to 31st December 2017. The focus is on developing Uusimaa region cycle routes; Lake Tuusulanjärvi cycling, Lake Lohjanjärvi cycling, Mustijoki valley cycling, and King's Road cycling, together with local entrepreneurs. The project aims to develop Outdoors Finland portal and route descriptions by adding attractive themes and including storytelling, as well as to produce marketing material and appealing photographs. (Grönroos 2017.)

3.2 King's Road

In all its length, King's Road is a long route with historical roots; it is an old mail route which stretches through Norway to Russia, across Sweden and Finland. It used to begin from Bergen, go through Oslo, Gothenburg, Stockholm and Åland, Kustavi, Turku, Vyborg, St. Petersburg and end in Moscow. (Holmroos 2003, 4.) According to Holmroos, it is presumed this route has developed from a horse riding path in 1280, when letters were directed to bailiffs living in Turku castle. He states that there is information which shows that the route was in steady use already in the beginning of 1300's but it took 200 years before it became a busy traffic route, in 1500's when it received its official name "Kuninkaallinen postitie" which means Royal post route in English (Holmroos 2003, 4). According to Kärnä, after that it has had multiple different names: Rantatie (Shore road), Venäjätie (Russia's road), Suuri armeijatie (Great military road), Turun ja Viipurin välinen postitie (A post road between Turku and Viipuri), etc. He states that the name King's Road was established in 1970 for tourism and promotion. (Kärnä 1998, 6.)

Nowadays, it is promoted as a bicycle route in Finland, which is often divided in a Western and Eastern route, starting from Helsinki. Outdoors Finland has listed two route options for King's Road: an Eastern route from Helsinki to Lappeenranta (330km), and a

Western route from Helsinki to Turku (252/350km) (Outdoors Finland, a). Neither one of these routes are completely straight forward, as there are a few different route options or small detours recommended, especially in different guides the routes can change a little bit. And for this, there is a logical explanation according to Kärnä; in the history of the road, there was several different branches travelers used to take according to their business and hurry. He also mentions that many municipalities had different routes for summer and winter, and as the road has been corrected many times, the new route markings have covered the old ones. (Kärnä 1998, 6.)

Regardless of the long history, King's Road is under development. There is a "Kuninkaantie uuteen kukoistukseen" (King's Road to a new bloom) project, which aims at maintaining the King's Road brand. It was earlier a trademark administered by the Uusimaa Regional Council, but the trademark expired on July 2016. In December 2016, King's Road Trust (Kuninkaantien yhdistys) was founded, which has taken over the management of the development project. Many stakeholders are involved in the project: seven Leader groups, Varsin hyvä ry, I Samma Båt – Samassa veneessä ry, Ykkösakseli ry, Pomoväst rf, Eteläisen maaseudun osaajat EMO ry, Kehittämisyhdistys Silmu ry and Kehittämisyhdistys Sepra ry. However, the project also aims at activating businesses and services located near King's Road, to produce ideas and lift up the supply of services on King's Road. They offer productizing workshops and training sessions for the businesses to work under the King's Road brand, to create and lift services regionally. (Ykkösakseli.)

3.3 Eastern King's Road cycle route

This research is aimed for the Uusimaa section of the King's road, which covers the stretch of Tenala-Loviisa. However, the focus will be on the Eastern side of the route, from Helsinki to Loviisa. This sets the route's length as 107km, when using the distances Outdoors Finland states: 62km from Helsinki to Porvoo and 42km from Porvoo to Loviisa (Outdoors Finland, b).

Based on the maps on Outdoors Finland website and Google Maps with the Google Earth feature, a cursory research of the route was conducted by following the appointed route by Outdoors Finland (see appendix 8 for map). The route goes through Helsinki, Sipoo and Loviisa municipalities. It starts from Helsinki, which gives it an urban setting at first. It goes next to roadways, which can be a bit unpleasant, but the route starts to look better from Tuorinniemi beach, where the route goes on a gravel road next to coastline. Upon reaching Marjaniemi beach however, the route runs through a roadway, so the cyclists need to be wary of cars. When reaching Puotila beach, the route turns calmer again, and

is off from busy roads. In Vuosaari, the route goes next to Itäväylä highway, which changes into Uusi Porvoontie. The route follows the roadway closely all the way to Loviisa through Loviisantie. After Loviisa, the route takes a turn to a calmer gravel road Marinkyläntie, which runs through fields and next to a river Taasianjoki, as well as through wooded areas. Taking turn to Markkinämäentie, the route runs through wooded areas until reaching Markkinämäki. Upon arrival to Markkinämäki, the cyclist has a few different options on the route, as there are a few different opportunities to take detours. These routes merge in Elimäentie roadway which leads to Ruotsinpyhtää, which is the last city before the Uusimaa border. (Outdoors Finland, c; Google Maps, 2017.)

Based on this rudimentary research, the route seems to go quite a lot along roadways, either on the road where cars drive or next to it. This can be an issue to the enjoyment and health of the cyclists. However, it does have calmer areas surrounded with nature and it passes by at least three beaches, as well as other water systems, and goes next to the coast line at times. These areas are sure to offer nicer views and opportunities for stopping. The route does have quite long stretches of straight road, but it also offers change of scenery, as well as a few different cities along the way.

4 Research methods

The aim of this section is to discover if King's Road has slow travel features and points of interests for the found target group. The research will happen online, where websites will be evaluated in order to find specific things this target group would need and what it would want to see or do. This research will be conducted by using content analysis.

According to Hall (2001-2017), content analysis is a research method specifically for written text. He describes it to be based on data reduction, where long text material is transformed into more simple units of data, and defines the process thus:

1. Develop research questions. Specifying the researched subject will help to maintain the focus in the research and analysis.
2. Select material sample. This will limit the amount of text to be analyzed and gives a clear frame what is researched and categorized.
3. Read and review sample material: examining data is important.
4. Define unit of analysis and categories. The unit of analysis can be for example specific themes, words or phrases. Dictionary will be helpful in recognizing specific words and phrases, whereas categories are groups of words or themes with similarities.
5. Code the material in the sample by marking keywords or phrases and placing them into categories.
6. Interpret and report findings; as content analysis combines quantitative and qualitative techniques, writing a text about the findings works as an extension to the analysis. (Hall 2001-2017.)

Following Hall's (2001-2017) content analysis model presented in chapter 5, the research started by making up questions which defined and focused the researched issue. As defined in the beginning of this thesis, the main research question remains as: What kind of slow travel features Eastern King's Road has? However, more questions are needed to make the research more concrete:

- What aspects are important to the target group?
- What differentiates them from other travelers?

The next step was to select material sample. The process started from defining the area to be analysed, which covers the surroundings of the Eastern King's Road. Four municipalities were found in the Uusimaa region, through which the route is directed. It starts from Helsinki, goes through Sipoo and Porvoo and ends up in Loviisa. The three latter mentioned were then decided to become the focus of the research, since Helsinki is a

starting point, and offers an abundance of things to see and do, as it is the capital and therefore one of the best developed and marketed tourism destinations in Finland. Eastern King's Road is the main importance of the research, and therefore the focus should be more on the immediate surroundings of the road than the cities themselves. Therefore, there can be a few points of interests found on the area of municipality of Helsinki, but as prioritized either especially fitting for the target group or in the immediate surroundings of the Eastern King's Road.

After finding the areal borders to be researched, the process continued to the selection of sources to be analyzed. Since the target group are international travelers, it made sense to limit the material into Visit webpages; Visit Sipoo, Visit Porvoo, and Visit Loviisa. These kind of websites are directed both local and international visitors, and are most likely the first source the visitor is looking for when planning to visit a new area. When putting the names of these cities in google search, Visit webpages are amongst the first search results which pop up.

While browsing through the selected material, there was a somewhat clear selection of categories presented on the websites: accommodation, restaurants, sights, attractions, and experiences. Shopping was ruled out as a category for this research, since it hasn't been specified as an importance for a slow traveller, and as the extra items could be an inconvenience for a cycling traveler. In order to make these categories more specified and fitting to the slow traveling target group, the target group analysis on chapter 2.3 was referred to, which states that this market:

- Travels in groups, either with a partner or a family or friends.
- Is flexible with timetable
- Prefers easy, well paved routes and prioritizes socialization.
- Is physically active.
- Is interested in culture, history, traditions and locality.
- Appreciates responsibility and environmental values.
- Enjoys slow pace and appreciate the journey.
- Wants to see and experience new.
- Wants to enjoy good food.

By using these characterizations, seven categories were created:

- **Accommodation** – necessary on longer cycle trips and a part of a holiday.
- **Restaurants** –foodie experiences and refuelling amongst the physical activity.

- **Events** –local experiences.
- **Activities** –other sustainable activities included in the holiday amongst cycling.
- **Arts & Culture** –locality, cultural exhibitions, and art displays.
- **History** –historical sights and aspects, traditions.
- **Nature attractions** –nature along the route, and other scenic and interesting nature spots.

The colors are used throughout the research to distinguish the different categories; in order to make the connections more clear and visual.

After choosing categories, it became an importance to find units of analysis. The units will help in justification why these points of interests are placed in certain categories. In Hall's (2001-2017) model, the fourth phase of the research consists of finding key words or phrases to be able to search them from the material sample. Here we can review the questions made in the beginning of the research:

- What aspects are important to the target group?
- What differentiates them from other travelers?

Looking at the marketing section on chapter 2.4, it's clear that appreciating sustainable values is one of the characteristics which appeals to this target group. It's a differentiating factor, which can be used in finding out if King's Road has appealing attractions for slow traveling cyclists. The table in appendix 7 shows a detailed description of the sustainability guidelines for tourism businesses. These guidelines were used as keywords to be able to find sustainable features in the selected material. As themes, they cover three categories:

- Social responsibility –connections to community, staff, and work-environment
- Environmental friendliness –using local produce, reusing, recycling, proper treatment of wildlife and nature, conservation projects.
- Culture and heritage –displaying traditions in business model and products, conserving historically and traditionally important sights and artefacts.

These are the values which need to be present at least for some degree in order to be classified as meaningful for this research.

Proceeding to the fifth phase of Hall's model (2001-2017), the keywords were then used to code the material and piece it to categories. Each company or attraction was individually processed, to see if any of the features of social responsibility, environmental friendliness, and displaying and conserving history and traditions were to be found. Visit Finland

Criteria for Internationalization was also used as a guideline in justifying if the attractions were fitting for international travelers (see appendix 9). This was used by viewing especially the language options of the websites. All of the needed information for a visitor was to be found in English. The attractions were then listed by small descriptions depicting what features of the attraction fit to the sustainability guidelines (see appendix 10).

In order to make the final outcome a bit more clear and visual, the color coding was used in an excel table to list points of interests by name, using the three different municipalities to group them in different columns (see appendix 11). The final stage was to place the selected attractions in the map, in order to see how they were located on the route, as seen in appendix 12. Finally, as described in Hall's (2001-2017) model, the sixth phase of the research covers interpreting and describing the results, which is shown on the next chapter.

5 Results & discussion

The research covered approximately 321 attractions, of which 62 were selected fitting for the target group (see appendix 11). They were chosen by using the sustainability guidelines and the criteria for internationalization (appendices 7 and 9) as keywords for browsing through the Visit websites, as well as any links available on them. Yellow highlighter in these keyword appendices show which features were found in the attractions. In the attraction descriptions in appendix 10, yellow highlighter is used to indicate which features matched with the keywords. However, it was discovered this method was not applicable to all of the attractions: public areas, nature sights, and historical sites or buildings are not comparable to tourism companies, since they do not have a specific business plan, sustainability plan, or management. It was decided, that the before mentioned criteria was only used for companies, and other attractions would be considered by evaluating their cultural, historical, traditional and local value, which are all attractive attributes for the target group of slow traveling cyclists. They are presented below with highlighted colors to show what they mean in the appendix 10.

- **History & Traditions**
- **Culture and locality**
- **Opportunity to barbeque or picnic; foodspots**
- **Local activities**
- **Nature**

Many of the attractions were quickly ruled out in accordance to the Visit Finland criteria for internationalization, as there was not sufficient information in English. The research was also problematic since it proved difficult to find sufficient information on the researched aspects. Many of the attractions and service providers offered local and traditional features, but they were missing the sustainability aspects of conservation and social responsibility. There were also many companies who had attributes of this, but did not provide the information in English.



Sipoonrannan Sup

Sup Boards from Sipoonranta.

Sipoonranta, Västerskog, Sipoo
tel. +358 40 5555 618 Marko or
tel. +358 400 759 606 Meeri

[Facebook \(in finnish\)](#) > [Location on map](#) >

Image 1. Example of too little information and lack of English website: Sipoonranta SUP company. (Visit Sipoo, j).

The attractions which had some of the environmental, social responsibility, and cultural and heritage attributes were historical attractions, accommodation options, and restaurants. Most of the nature attractions, activities, arts and culture, and events offered little information, and often nothing about sustainable features.



Hörbergsgården

Make a journey in time back to the archipelago as it was in the 19th century! In the main farmhouse there are changing exhibitions and a small museum shop where you can buy high quality local handicrafts. 1 Jun - 31 Aug Sun 12am - 4pm. At other times by arrangement. Admission free during opening hours. At other times €50/group.

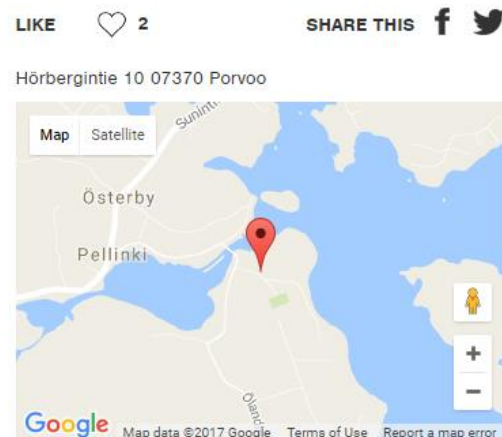


Image 2. Example of little information and no website to search further (Visit Porvoo, e).

However, nature attractions were almost all kept in the list since they are essential for the aesthetics and scenery for the cycle route. Activities were also an important part of a cyclist on a holiday, but they were limited on outdoor activities which can be considered environmentally low-impacting activities like swimming, playing volleyball or tennis, or walking or hiking. The chosen attractions from arts and culture, and event categories were justified on the basis of historical and traditional attributes. As seen from the appendix 11, Porvoo had the most to offer. It is a popular area for tourists to visit, so it has also had time to develop its services and advertising. It was the only one of the three researched areas which had any accommodation options matching to sustainable principles at least in some degree. It also had the most selection of restaurants, which showed to offer local ingredients and handmade products on spot. Loviisa offered the most activities of the three, which covered a vibrant town community with a wide variation on events, exhibitions and outdoor activities. Sipoo was really different compared to the two, offering little information to an international traveler, and listing only few options on its Visit website. All of the three presented multiple nature and history sights, which were considered suitable for an international cyclist. There are for example beaches all along the route, which guarantees many opportunities for swimming and other beach activities.

5.1 The best experiences King's Road can offer for a slow traveler

The attractions which stood out from the rest had the most sustainability features described: using local ingredients in food and making them by hand on spot, conserving resources, recycling, and using recycled materials, selling local products, and using nature resources accordingly, with needed permissions. These companies are presented below, with 10 selected as an example:

- **Haikko Manor in Porvoo**
 - Environmental program in place: electricity and water conservation, recycling, avoidance of disposable products and packaging, as well as using water soluble and biodegradable chemicals for cleaning. (Visit Porvoo, b; Haikko.)
- **Boutique hotel Onni restaurant in Porvoo**
 - Kitchen has locally sourced ingredients, seasonal menu (Visit Porvoo, b; Boutique Hotel Onni 2017).
- **Hanna-Maria in Porvoo**
 - Ingredients bought from local producers when possible. (Visit Porvoo, c; Hanna-Maria 2014).
- **Bistro Sinne in Porvoo**
 - Menu presents organic and local ingredients.

“Sinne is a tribute to nature, local produce and creativity. We want to take you on a taste-journey through Porvoo gastronomy, and let you to get to know the producers and friends who are close to our hearts. Let us share our love for food and service with you. “(Visit Porvoo, c; Sinne Bistro.)
- **Noark World in Porvoo**
 - Handcrafted woodworks, trinkets, and miniature models.
 - Rugs made of 100% recycled material, which can be customized.
 - Owned by social enterprise Samaria rf, which creates jobs and supports activities through Noark World, Noark boutique and other work forms.
 - “Our work and rehabilitation activities are targeted at performing various tasks for subcontractors and fulfilling custom orders at Noark workshops.” (Visit Porvoo, e; Noark World.)
- **Café Fanny in Porvoo**
 - Bakes cakes on location and gets fresh pastries from local bakery. (Visit Porvoo, c; Café Fanny).
- **Café Rongo in Porvoo**

- Coffee comes from Keakoffee Artisan roasters who promote sustainable partnerships and claim fair and transparent steps in their operational processes (Visit Porvoo, c; Café Rongo).
- **Malmgård brewery in Loviisa**
 - Artisan handcrafts created by traditional grains from their own fields.
 - Appreciate fresh and local ingredients.
 - Estate shop next to brewery which sells local farmers' produce, as well as beer and delicacies produced at the estate. (Visit Loviisa, d; Malmgård Brewery.)
- **Café Saltbodan in Loviisa**
 - Homemade quiche and bread made on spot.
 - Selection of local beers. (Visit Loviisa, b; Café Restaurant Saltbodan 2009-2017.)
- **Augur Kalastuspalvelut, Fishing services in Loviisa**
 - Fishing responsibly, making sure everyone has permits and fishing seasons are complied with (Visit Loviisa, f; Kalaopas.info; Augur Kalastuspalvelu).

All of these attractions are located in Porvoo and Loviisa: Visit Sipoo did not offer sufficient information in English, as the information and services were mostly only in Finnish. Some of the attractions had great potential: owl safari, and sauna yoga in Sipoo could be something interesting for international travelers. Pelling summer market with local produce, Nyborgas strawberry picking, and deep forest relaxation: forest yoga, in Porvoo would provide sustainable values and relaxation in nature atmosphere. Labby Manor in Loviisa and Bosgård farm in Porvoo are both organic farms, but which unfortunately present their websites only in Finnish. All of these attractions have potential to attract international visitors, as they are certainly quite unique attractions, which also tell about locality and traditions of Finland.

5.2 Marketing King's Road

At the moment, Outdoors Finland website provides only a cursory description of King's Road, which doesn't describe much of the route and does not deliver sufficient information for a less experienced cyclist. Cycling as a tourism activity is often considered as an adventurous way of moving around in a destination: it's commonly promoted by its speed and challenge, which means it's aimed at active cyclists, to whom cycling is part of a lifestyle. This might discourage other cyclists if there isn't enough information conveniently shown how to get started. Right now it doesn't offer much for either group: it's a relatively easy route for an experienced cyclist offering little for a wow-factor, and it doesn't provide

enough instructions for a less experienced cyclist. As discovered in chapter 2.3, occasional cyclists are the largest market for cycling (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 32), which sets the need for more detailed and supportive information. There were also deficiencies found on the website:

- It's not particularly mobile friendly, route map was also difficult to control on phone.
- Route map does not open in google maps.
- International travelers who do not cycle so often in mind, there could be short guides and instructions of Finland and cycling.
- There could also be some guides what to pack, and how to pack. Carrying things on a bicycle is difficult, so there could be an instruction how to carry luggage with you, or there could be a service where luggage is transported between accommodations, as suggested in appendix one on point two (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 18-24).

To improve convenience further, there would need to be several bicycle renting and return opportunities, ads in accommodations and proficient guidebooks for everything a novice would need to know before embarking on a (possibly) longer bike trip. As stated in chapter 2.2, safety is a concern (Horton 2007, 133), and therefore there should also be options of renting or buying helmets and the route description should include detailed information where the route goes from, whether it goes next to highways and if there are options to avoid the busiest sections. It should also imply whether the roads are in heavy use with other vehicles or as walk-ways, to describe how isolated they are from habitations and roads.

Using societable marketing concept as presented in appendix 6 (Kotler & al. 2017, 37), it would be important to show sustainability values as a higher importance to attract this market. This customer group values responsible and sustainable principles, so the route could acquire an ecolabel. A part of the profits could also be donated to charity, either to domestic or international causes. Another option could be to include volunteer work, to include for example picking berries and as a reward showing a traditional recipe for the volunteer.

Aside from sustainability, it is notable that this target group are tourists coming for a holiday, and cycling is not the main activity for them (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 33). Targeting this group, it would be important to advertise cycling as a combination of being active and discovering the destination at the same time; cycling could contribute in creating a fun and a flexible way to discover Finland, to enjoy our vast nature resources while experiencing the history and traditions of the country. Along Eastern King's Road, there are multiple mansions and farms, which could be important traditional and ecological

features of the route. Many of the companies are already tightly involved with the community, co-operating with each other and creating collective events. Only some, individual companies mentioned King's Road and their close proximity to it, but it is clear that it isn't considered as a bigger part of a collective experience, which the company could benefit from. More closely connected network around King's Road would be beneficial to create an entity, which would support the cyclist better.

Lastly, as stated on the marketing chapter 2.4, "Outdoors Finland emphasizes the importance of social media platforms, which offer visitors the opportunity to share experiences and recommendations, to leave and read reviews, as well as for the managers for publishing videos and blogs to market the route (Outdoors Finland Etelä, 2015b, 33)." What the website has now, does not reach to the requirement of having active communication with the consumer. At the moment, the website has a facebook and a tag board account, as well as pictures in the flickr platform (Outdoors Finland, d). This is mainly one-sided marketing communications, which doesn't let the consumers have their say. Sharing aspects and impressions of the route is a big part of an experience, and it communicates the value to other potential visitors. It also gives feedback back to the organization, which helps to estimate the target market's needs better. Including blogs and recommendations to the route description would help the potential visitor to match their expectations to the reality and receive a more trustworthy marketing aimed at them.

6 Conclusion

Slow traveling, cycling, and sustainable values fit well together. These fit exceptionally well in Finland, where nature tourism and light outdoors exercise is the tourism breach the tourism office aims for. Nature is very important to the locals, and the effect it has on well-being is undeniable. Therefore, the structure of the route is important, in order to provide a fluent and safe routing in the natural environment, and to provide beautiful sceneries along the route. The trending topics of slowing down, appreciating sustainable values, and experiencing the locality and traditions of the destination can be applied to cycling, which adds a value of wellbeing and healthiness into the picture. Together they create a compact package which could be marketed to the target market identified for international cyclists in Finland. Modern Humanists, who would consider experiencing the country by cycling on their holiday. As sustainability is important for this target group, it would be important to add these aspects to the route as much as possible, use transparent marketing methods by not promising more than can be delivered, and inventing ways to improve practices, perhaps even striving for a green label.

The eastern side of King's road on Uusimaa offers the international cyclist changing sceneries and idyllic countryside. The traditions and historical aspects are visible along the route, which come up often in the descriptions of companies and in the Visit websites. However, where it is abundant in history, it's lacking in sustainability. The route has potential to advertise itself sustainable, as many of the companies are small, independent businesses, they are already choosing to use local and organic ingredients, and they are tightly connected to their communities. The only problem is that these companies either don't realize to mention these factors, or they are not available in a language for an international visitor to understand it. Many of the websites were also very rudimentary, which do not appeal to a modern consumer. The functions and the appearance of the business websites would need to be uplifted in order to attract more visitors.

In order for the King's Road to create a clearer image of itself, it would need to create a tighter network with everything that surrounds it. Right now companies and other attractions do not realize to connect themselves to King's Road and cycling, since the visitor count on the road has not reached high enough to become a demand. If companies were expecting cycling visitors, they would be able to value their needs better and offer products and services they require.

Lastly, it is good to note that this research offered only introductory results, as online research was the only indicator of the route and the attractions. Cycling along the route

would show better what there is to see, and apply the conducted research in practice. This was unfortunately an aspect which couldn't be done on this research due to tight schedule. There could also be a wider research applied which included all potential attractions as well, which could be further developed to suit for international travelers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Cycling Route Checkpoints

When it comes to the practical arrangements of a good cycling route, the cycle travel guide (Outdoors Finland Etelä, 2015b, 18-24) lists eight checkpoints for a good and fluent route:

1. Build the route in natural surroundings with beautiful sceneries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Route should be curvy, to keep up the interest of the cyclists, but not too curvy, since it lengthens the route unnecessarily and the cyclists will start to look for shortcuts.</i>
2. Include attractions and enough services on the route.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>A map should include all of the attractions and services on the route, but the route should be going through only the main ones.</i>• <i>An easily found and bookable accommodation option should be available for every 30km, preferably designed for cyclists: having services such as washing of sports clothes, space to store bicycles safely, a basic bike maintenance equipment, knowledge of the area and bike services, as well as good breakfast options and opportunities to purchase snacks for the road. They could also offer luggage transportation, for cyclists' belongings to be transported to the next accommodation.</i>• <i>Spots for breaks should be arranged for every 7.5-10km on easy routes, and for every 15-20km on difficult routes. The more there are break spots, the more visitors the route will likely have, since it requires less physical shape to cycle between the break spots.</i>• <i>Opportunities for bike rental and maintenance should also be allocated on the map, but not necessarily on the route.</i>
3. Manage and maintain the route.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The route should be tested on regular basis, and the condition of the road and signs should be checked.</i>

<p>4. Make sure the route is accessible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The start and end point of the route should be accessible by bike, car, or public transport. The map should also include instructions how to get to the route, inform about parking spots and public transport options.</i>
<p>5. Define the difficulty level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The touring bicycle routes are not usually categorized by their difficulty, but they should include information about the length and the hilliness of the route, the amount of accommodation options, the dangerous and difficult spots and the amount of traffic.</i>
<p>6. Name the route.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The name should be descriptive to give an idea of the route, and it needs to be consistently used in all of the information material.</i>
<p>7. Think about the safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consider the width and the terrain of the road, as well as the amount of traffic on the road, especially if the route goes next to a roadway. Mountain biking and touring cycling should also not be mixed together, to avoid collisions.</i> • <i>The roads should not be next to heavy traffic roads and they should rather be paved than gravel.</i>
<p>8. Include enough guidance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The demand is for ready planned circle routes with interesting sights along the way. Place enough signs on the route and maintain them to keep the cyclists on track, as the volume of cyclists naturally corrodes environment.</i> • <i>Include information signs about the attractions to spots where stopping does not disturb other travellers. Otherwise, all the signs should be easily distinguishable for the cyclist without stopping.</i> • <i>Warn about dangers. If there are anything the cyclist needs to be vary of during the route, there should be a warning sign in a good distance to mention this beforehand.</i>

Adjusted from the cycle route design tips on a guidebook *Pyöräilymatkan suunnitteluopas*. (Outdoors Finland Etelä, 2015b, 18-24.)

Appendix 2. Cyclist Profiles

Occasional cyclists	Active cyclists
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family travellers: young adults and seniors travelling with family or friends.• Cycling only occasionally, using max. 2hours for the trip with under 10km/h pace and stop often.• Prefer easy, well paved routes and prioritize socialisation and light exercise.• Come for a holiday.• Cycling is just a part of a holiday, a fun way to spend time with others outdoors.• Also do other activities during their holiday.• Are more flexible with their plans and day schedule.• Use rental gear and tours at the destination.• Need more suggestive marketing and information about the destination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adults: varying from teen to seniors, active sportspeople cycling for fitness.• Cycling regularly, doing long day trips, even 200km or over with a fast pace, even over 30km/h.• Cycling to work out, to compete or to look for challenges. Prefer long and challenging routes.• Come to cycle.• Look for good cycling opportunities, varying and challenging routes.• Want to develop and improve their skills.• Plan ahead and need a lot of detailed information.• Bring their own bikes.• Need information of activities alongside cycling.

Adjusted from cyclist segment descriptions on a guidebook Pyöräilymatkan suunnitteluopas. (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 8,11,32.)

Appendix 3. European Modern Humanists

	Active Families	Culture Fans	Modern Humanist Couples
Studied in GB, DE, FR, ES, IT, NL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of the segment 8.1 million • 9% of Modern Humanists • 60% will likely travel to Finland • 19% has been on a vacation in Finland before 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of the segment 15.3 million • 17% of Modern Humanists • 42% will likely travel to Finland • 17% has been on a vacation in Finland before 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of the segment 25.2 million • 28% of Modern humanists • 38% will likely travel to Finland • 10% has been on a vacation in Finland before
Segment distributions by countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Italy 28% ○ United Kingdom 22% ○ Spain 19% ○ Germany 18% ○ France 12% ○ Holland 3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Italy 31% ○ Germany 21% ○ United Kingdom 21% ○ Spain 12% ○ France 11% ○ Holland 4% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Germany 24% ○ Italy 23% ○ Spain 17% ○ United Kingdom 16% ○ France 14% ○ Holland 6%
	Are open-minded to all kinds of experiences, know about different opportunities to do activities and want to experience the best parts of the destination.	Are interested in local way of living, traditions and history.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Represent the average values of Modern Humanists. ▪ Their trip is a step to the unknown. ▪ Appreciate responsibility and environmental values.
	Keywords: Active, wellness, skiing	Keywords: Culture, city	Keywords: Countryside, touring
	Sub segment Young Nature Explorers: 45% of the active families group was under 35 years old who are especially interested in physical activities , leaving less interest for culture.	Sub segment Scandinavia Fans: they know Scandinavia well, and visit often. Even 37% of this group has been to Finland in the last two years. Most (63%) live in cities, so it possibly one reason why nature attracts. ¾ is interested to visit also Sweden and Norway.	Adjusted from Modern Humanists workbook. (Visit Finland 2014, 12-37.)

Appendix 4. Cyclist Styles

<i>Newcomers</i>	<i>Leisure & Culture</i>	<i>Special Requirements</i>	<i>Adventure & Challenge</i>
<p>Single ISO (=in search of) adventure</p> <p>Want to meet others and socialize, ride, and save money. Prefers safety and security, doesn't want to get lost.</p>	<p>Laid-back and leisurely</p> <p>Experienced cyclist but enjoys the slow pace. Journey is more important than destination.</p>	<p>FATs = families avec teens</p> <p>Family, which likes to be active. Looks for adventure, but on kids' conditions; providing enough entertainment on the holiday.</p>	<p>MTB (=mountain biking) junkie</p> <p>Mountain biker who thrives on adventure and challenge. Curvy mountain trails around the world are their passion.</p>
<p>Nervous Novice</p> <p>Newbie, who's not necessarily traveled or cycled much before but wants to try something new.</p>	<p>Retired but wired</p> <p>Active elderly looking for a leisurely tour with partner or a group of friends. Wants to see new places, experience new cultures and enjoy good food.</p>	<p>FABs =families avec babies</p> <p>Love to travel but travelling with young children needs adjustments.</p>	<p>Explorer</p> <p>Loves exploring new and emerging areas. Wants to visit unusual places and unique cultures. Wants to try new things, see new places and meet new people.</p>
<p>Lovebird</p> <p>Couple in a romantic holiday wanting to do short day trips in scenic routes.</p>	<p>Foodie</p> <p>Slow food and slow travel are closely linked, exercise emphasizing the food experience. Enjoying guiltless food experiences with activity.</p>	<p>The organizer</p> <p>Planner, who likes to organize get-togethers with family and friends. Likes to organize trips for bigger groups and likes details.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>Loves adventures and challenge, is not afraid to go out of the comfort zone.</p>
	<p>Culture vulture</p> <p>Committed to slow travel ethos: journey is more important than destination. Castles, art, architecture, history, museums, or local way of living are an interest.</p>		<p>Roadie</p> <p>Strong cyclist riding full speed the whole way. Cycling is the main intention of the trip, which leaves sceneries secondary.</p>

Adjusted from travel style descriptions. (Biketours.com 2017.)

Appendix 5. Understanding marketplace and the customer

1. Understanding the marketplace and the customer needs and wants	
<p>Customer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Needs – Physical and emotional human needs. ○ Wants – Objectives which satisfy the need. ○ Demands – Wants backed by buying power, choosing the best value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Personal satisfaction and wellbeing (Oh & al. 2016, 205).</i> ○ <i>Immersing to the destination, experiencing holistically, and embracing socially responsible and green practices (Fullagar & al. 2012, 3-4).</i> ○ <i>Microadventures: cycling as a part of a holiday; enough activities and services along the route (Euromonitor International 2016, 25; Outdoors Finland Etelä, 2015b, 8, 11, 32).</i>
<p>Market Offerings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible products • Services • Experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Bike rental, helmet, maps, snacks, water (Outdoors Etelä, 2015b; Nickerson & al. 2013, 13-15).</i> ○ <i>Guiding, instructions, accommodation, restaurants, activities (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015b, 18-24).</i> ○ <i>Learning about culture and history, sightseeing, experiencing local life and traditions (Visit Finland 2014, 12-37).</i>
<p>Customer Value and Satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits – Costs = Value • Previous experiences + Friends' opinions + market information = customer expectations. • Expectations + Reality = Satisfaction • Expectations should not be set too high, but to a point which is reachable, and even exceeded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>The route should be well functioning, guaranteeing a smooth trip, which would create the expected value. Experience could be increased with notice boards along the way and service offerings (Outdoors Finland Etelä, 2015b, 18-24).</i> ○ <i>The common experience could be exceeded by offering services which match the values of target group: green products for example (Kotler, 2017, 31; Visit Finland 2014, 12-37).</i>
<p>Exchanges and Relationships – Creating a correlative relationship with customers: for example asking for feedback and replying to comments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Setting up platforms where visitors can comment and receive replies from the managers: creating a community (Outdoors Finland Etelä, 2015b, 33).</i>
<p>Markets - set of potential and actual buyers. The demand creates the market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Measuring the size of slow tourism market, who are also interested in cycling as a holiday activity; piecing these values together:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>14% annual growth rate in wellness travel worldwide (Outdoors Finland Etelä 2015a, 3; Visit Finland, 2017).</i> • <i>Market for cycle tourism estimated worth €44 billion with 2.295 billion cycle trips done yearly. Overnight tourists</i>

measured 20.4 million spending €9 billion yearly. (European Parliament, 2012, 17.)

- 48.6 million market of Modern Humanists Finland-applicable segments (Visit Finland 2014, 12-37).

Adjusted from the five-step model for marketing process. (Kotler & al. 2017, 31-34.)

Appendix 6. Designing Market Strategy

2. Designing a Customer Striven Market Strategy	
<p>Selecting customers to serve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Choosing a value proposition – Differentiating brand from competitors’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Slow travelers who want to cycle</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Offering cultural, local and environmental values intertwined with cycling: creating a unique combination (Biketours.com 2017).</i>
<p>Marketing management orientations – Balancing between customer, organization and society. Finding a philosophy to guide the marketing strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The production concept – favoring production and distribution efficiency. ● The product concept – continuous product improvement. ● The selling concept – pushing sales with existing products without acknowledging the needs of the market. ● The marketing concept – beating competitors by analyzing the target market and delivering satisfaction more effectively and efficiently than others. ● The societal marketing concept - sustainable marketing; not just satisfying the immediate need but also providing for the future, which improves both the consumer’s and society’s wellbeing. 	<p><i>According to Kotler & al. (2017, 36), the balance between society, customer and organization can be hard to find, as the prioritization of each can easily be in conflict with the other. Therefore, they have listed the 5 different concepts on marketing management orientations, each presenting a different emphasis.</i></p> <p><i>The production concept, the product concept and the selling concept are older strategies, which are more focused on the internal processes and efficiency of the company rather than the quality of the product and adjustment to the customer need. (Kotler & al. 2017, 37.)</i></p> <p><i>The marketing concept and the societal marketing concept are more modern and effective strategies, as they take into careful consideration what kind of target group the product can have, and what they would want. They’re about creating long-term customer relationships, and aiming for more than satisfying an immediate need. Especially with societal marketing, it aims to not only benefit the customer, but also the society; for example by hiring locals in the companies and using local food, recycling and campaigning what visitors can do to help the community and nature. (Kotler & al. 2017, 37-38.)</i></p>

Adjusted from marketing strategy process. (Kotler & al. 2017, 34-38.)

Appendix 7. Sustainability guidelines

Demonstrate Effective sustainable management

Sustainability management system

Organization has a long-term sustainability management system which addresses environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, safety, risk and crisis management issues and aims to improve.

Legal compliance

Organization operates according to laws and regulations.

Reporting and communication

Organization informs its stakeholders about its sustainability policy, actions, and performance and wants to activate them to support the cause.

Staff engagement

Staff are included in the development and implementation of sustainability management and receive guidance and training periodically.

Customer experience

Corrective actions are taken on the basis of feedback. Monitoring customer satisfaction.

Accurate promotion

Accurate and transparent marketing; promising no more than what can be delivered.

Buildings and infrastructure

Compliance – in zoning requirements and laws related to protected, sensitive, and heritage areas.

Impact and integrity –taking account on the capacity and integrity of natural and cultural areas.

Sustainable practices and materials –locally and sustainably appropriate practices and materials.

Access for all –Access and information for persons with special needs where possible.

Land, water and property rights

Acquisition of land, water, and property is legal and complies with local communal and indigenous rights; does not force involuntary resettlement.

Information and interpretation

Organization provides sufficient information of natural surroundings, local culture, heritage, and appropriate behavior.

Destination engagement

Where opportunities exist, organization is involved with sustainable tourism planning and management in the destination.

Maximize social and economic benefits to the local community and minimize negative impacts

Community support

Organization is active in supporting of initiatives for local infrastructure and community development. For example education, training, health and sanitation, and climate change projects.

Local employment

Local residents have equal opportunities for employment and advancing in careers.

Local purchasing

Organization gives priority to local and fair trade suppliers when applicable, available and with sufficient quality.

Local entrepreneurs

Organization supports local entrepreneurs in the development and sale of sustainable products related to area's nature, history and culture.

Exploitation and harassment

Organization has a policy against exploitation and harassment.

Equal opportunity

Organization offers employment opportunities without discrimination.

Decent work

Obliging to labor laws, providing a safe and secure working environment and paying fair wages. Offering regular training, experience and opportunities for advancing.

Community services

Activities of organization do not affect to basic services of neighboring communities. For example, food, water, energy, health care, or sanitation.

Local livelihoods

Activities of organization do not affect local livelihoods.

Maximize benefits to cultural heritage and minimize negative impacts

Cultural interactions

Visits to indigenous communities and culturally or historically sensitive areas are complied with the international and national good practice and locally agreed guidance.

Protecting cultural heritage

Organization contributes to the protection, preservation, and enhancement of historically, archaeologically, culturally, and spiritually significant areas and traditions.

Presenting culture and heritage

While respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities, the organization values and incorporates authentic and traditional features in its business model.

Artefacts

Historical and archaeological artefacts are only sold, traded, or displayed as applicable by the local and international law.

Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts

Conserving resources

Environmentally preferable purchasing –favoring sustainable products

Efficient purchasing –minimizing waste

Energy conservation – consumption is measured and minimized, using renewable energy.

Water conservation –consumption is measured and minimized, sourcing is sustainable and doesn't affect to environmental flows.

Reducing pollution

Greenhouse gas emissions –all emissions controllable by the organization are identified, measured and minimized.

Transport –seeking to reduce transportation requirements and encouraging to use alternative, cleaner and more resource efficient options in operations, and by customers, employees and suppliers.

Wastewater – treated properly and effectively; reused or released safely without affecting local population or environment.

Solid waste –measured and minimized. Reusing or recycling when possible.

Harmful substances –minimized and substituted when possible. Storing, handling, and disposal properly managed.

Minimize pollution –minimizing pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting substances, and air, water, and soil contaminants.

Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes

Biodiversity conservation –any disturbance to natural ecosystems is minimized, rehabilitated, and a compensatory contribution to conservation management is made.

Invasive species –avoiding the introduction of invasive species. Native species are used for restoration and landscaping where possible.

Visits to natural sites –following of guidelines for management and promotion of natural site visits.

Wildlife interactions –non-invasive and responsibly managed, taking into account cumulative impacts.

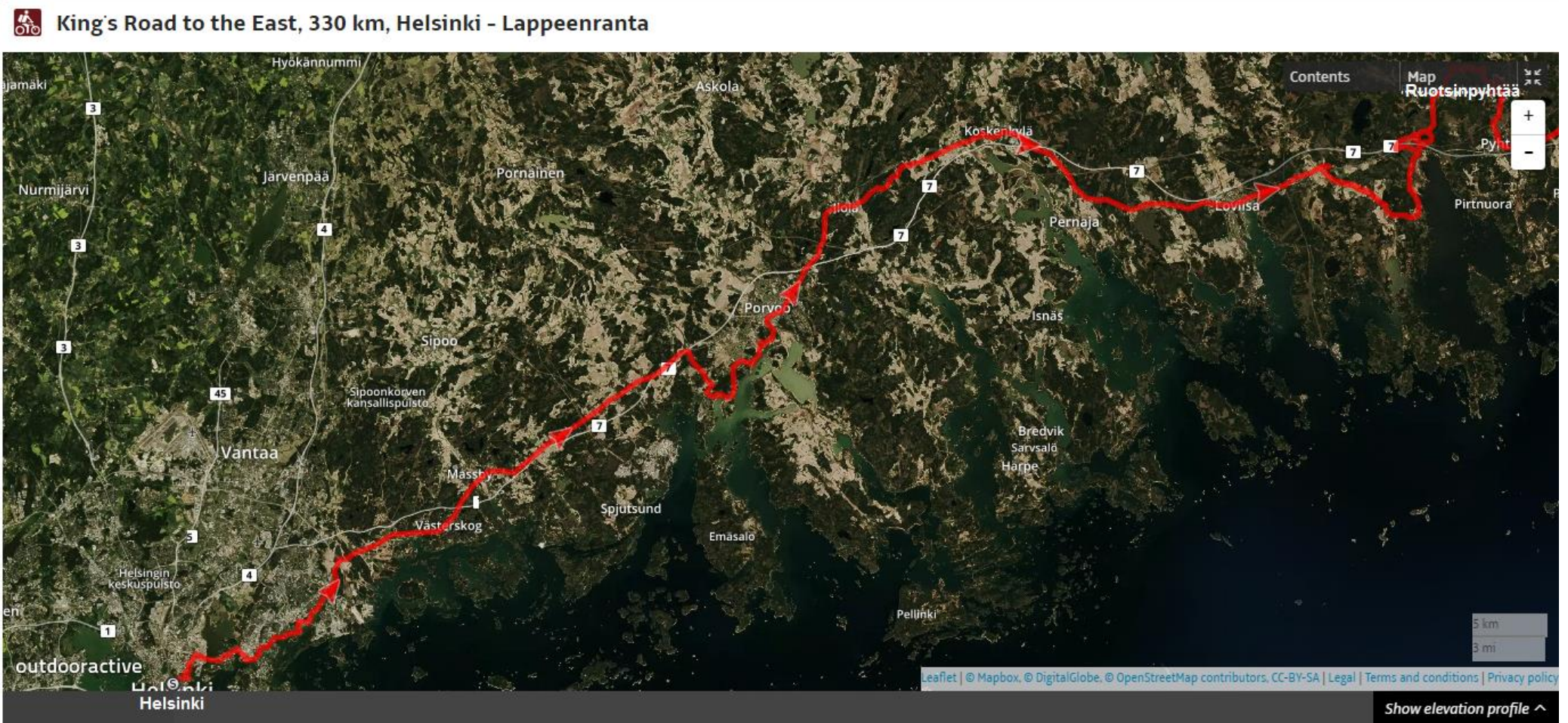
Animal welfare –wild animals are only acquired, bred, or held captive by authorized and equipped persons in regulated activities following local and international law. Highest standards applied in housing, care, and handling of wild or domestic animals.

Wildlife harvesting and trade – Wildlife species harvested, consumed, displayed, sold, or traded only as part of a regulated activity which obliges national and international laws, and is sustainable.

Adjusted from sustainability guidelines for hospitality and tourism businesses.

(Global Sustainable Tourism Council 2016.)

Appendix 8. Route Map from Helsinki to Ruotsinpyhtää



(Outdoors Finland, c)

Appendix 9. Criteria for internationalization

Visit Finland (2015) lists 10 attributes which determine the company's ability to serve international markets:

1. Customer orientation
 - Target group is defined and their needs are considered in supplied services
2. Quality
 - Actively participating in quality development programme and/or having a follow-up system of customer satisfaction. The system has to have been in use for at least one year, or the feedback is followed regularly and the necessary measures for improvement are taken.
3. Market testing
 - Product has been tested by for example international customer or a tour operator.
4. Capacity and networks
 - Either with the company's capacity or with the help of collaborative network, a comprehensive service to independent and/or group travelers can be offered.
 - Services can be reached by good transport connections or the transportation is organized from/to the nearest airport, bus, or train station.
5. Availability
 - Products and services are clearly described and priced in the language of target market, or in English. They are easy to find and purchase.
6. Language skills
 - Ability to serve customers in the target market's language or in English.
7. Authenticity and appeal
 - Using authentic Finnish experiences, traditions, culture and way of life in product development and marketing
8. Safety
 - Industry-wide safety recommendations and instructions are applied to services
9. Sustainability
 - Following the principles of sustainable development, acquiring a certification or training, or having a plan for applying sustainability attributes in the business operations.

Appendix 10. Eastern King's Road attractions for a slow traveling cyclist

Attractions viewed:

Accommodation

- Sipoo 8
- Porvoo 30
- Loviisa 14

Restaurants

- Sipoo 38
- Porvoo 28
- Loviisa 27

Other:

- Sipoo 40
- Porvoo 50
- Loviisa approx. 60

Altogether = 321, Attractions picked, 62, presented below:

Accommodation -Sipoo

N/A

Restaurants – Sipoo

- All restaurants in the visit Sipoo website have either websites only in Finnish or unsuitable ones for this target group, or don't have a website at all.

Events – Sipoo

- N/A were not available in Visit Sipoo website

Activities - Sipoo

- N/A none of the activities had a website in Finnish or free activities which do not require booking and additional info

Culture – Sipoo

- N/A, no offerings or website in English

History – Sipoo

Old church

- Medieval grey **stone church built in 1450s**, unknown architect. (Visit Sipoo, b.)

New church

- Planned by Theodor Decker, **ordained in 1885**.
- Neo-Gothic style red brick church. (Visit Sipoo, b.)

Former Hospitality area in Nikkilä

- **Designed in 1909**.
- **Operations ceased in 1999**.
- Visitors can walk on the **culturally and historically valuable hospital grounds** among jugend style houses where patients used to walk. (Visit Sipoo, c.)

Sibbesborg -Ruins of old medieval castle. (Visit Sipoo, d.)

Nature – Sipoo

Sipoonkorpi National Park

- Densely wooded forests and unspoilt wilderness, rivers
- Good mushroom and berry picking areas.
- Several villages at the edge of the park in traditional surroundings
- Great opportunities for outdoor activities, walking and hiking trails. (Visit Sipoo, e; National Parks.fi 2017.)

Lake Taasjärvi –swimming and nature trails (Visit Sipoo, f).

Archipelago

- Several recreational areas, free access.
 - Furuholmen
 - Östholmen
 - Möholmen
 - Norkullalandet
 - Kaunissaari
 - Barbeque opportunities. (Visit Sipoo, g).

Sipoo river –Suitable for kayaking and stand up paddling (Visit Sipoo, h).

Lake Pilvijärvi

- Nature reserve and a beach with a swimming opportunity.
- Nature trail around the lake.
- Picnic spots on top of the cliffs overlooking the lake.
- Barbeque opportunity. (Visit Sipoo, i.)

Accommodation – Porvoo

Haikko Manor

- Historical manor house by the sea.
- Website in Finnish, Swedish, English, Russian and German.
- Environmental program in place: electricity and water conservation, recycling, avoidance of disposable products and packaging, as well as using water soluble and biodegradable chemicals for cleaning. (Visit Porvoo, b; Haikko.)

Boutique hotel Onni

- Website in Finnish, Swedish and English.
- Renovated 18th century manor.
- Kitchen has locally sourced ingredients, seasonal menu. (Visit Porvoo, b; Boutique Hotel Onni 2017.)

Nybondas cottages

- Website in Finnish, Swedish, English, German and Russian.
- Offers three different cottages, two fisherman cottages on private islands and one grandma's cottage, one fishing cottage dates back to 1800's.
- Traditional looks, sauna and fireplace.
- Promotes local activities such as picking berries, fishing, swimming etc.
- Rental rules specify to avoid nesting birds or other wildlife and not to make new paths or trample moss. (Visit Porvoo, b; Nybondas trädgård 2017.)

Tukkila Farm

- Website in Finnish, English, German and Russian.
- Family farm surrounded by nature.
- Farm animals: donkeys, horses and llamas.
- Traditions dated back to 19th century.
Has multiple saunas, including a smoke sauna over 100 years old. (Visit Porvoo, b; Tukkilan Tila.)

Restaurants – Porvoo

Hanna-Maria

- Website in Finnish, Swedish, and English.
- Finnish home cooking.
- Ingredients bought from local producers when possible. (Visit Porvoo, c; Hanna-Maria 2014.)

Café Fanny

- Website in Finnish, Swedish and English.
- Small, family run café.
- Bakes cakes on location and gets fresh pastries from local bakery. (Visit Porvoo, c; Café Fanny.)

Bistro Sinne

- Website in Finnish, Swedish, and English.
- Sells local delicacies which are also used in restaurant.
- Bakes fresh bread on spot.
- Menu presents organic and local ingredients.
- “Sinne is a tribute to nature, local produce and creativity. We want to take you on a taste-journey through Porvoo gastronomy, and let you to get to know the producers and friends who are close to our hearts. Let us share our love for food and service with you.” (Visit Porvoo, c; Sinne Bistro.)

Café Cabriole

- Website in Finnish, Swedish and English.
- 19th century Art Nouveau building.
- Freshly baked products from their own bakery which vary by season.
- Home-made style lunch buffet. (Visit Porvoo, c; Café Cabriole Oy 2016.)

Petri’s Chocolate Room

- Website in Finnish & English.
- Family company making handcrafted products: chocolate, cakes, and macarons.
- Products made without artificial flavor and preservatives, using berries in products. (Visit Porvoo, c; Petris Chocolate Room 2015.)

Café Rongo

- Website in English, menu in Finnish.
- Selection changes by season and availability.
- Coffee comes from Keakoffee Artisan roasters who promote sustainable partnerships and claim fair and transparent steps in their operational processes. (Visit Porvoo, c; Café Rongo.)

Events – Porvoo

- N/A were not found in VisitPorvoo Website

Porvoo - Activities

Nordic Walking –Walking poles available in Summerinfo (Visit Porvoo, d).

Guided tours by foot or bike

- Walking tours in summertime where town's history and stories about visitors and locals are told in Finnish, Swedish, or English.
- No advance registration necessary. (Visit Porvoo, d.)

Bo & Tua Uddström

- Website in Finnish, Swedish, and English.
- Archipelago cruise.
- Fishing on a genuine Finnish wooden boat.
- Sauna rental, catering, seal safari, picnic, traditional meals over open fire with self-made products, Moomin island trip, Nordic walking. (Visit Porvoo, d; Bo & Tua Uddström.)

Noark World

- Website in Finnish, Swedish, and English.
- Scale model exhibition of famous cities and buildings in Finland and around the world.
- Handcrafted woodworks, trinkets, and miniature models.
- Rugs made of 100% recycled material, which can be customized.
- Owned by social enterprise Samaria rf, which creates jobs and supports activities through Noark World, Noark boutique and other work forms.
- "Our work and rehabilitation activities are targeted at performing various tasks for subcontractors and fulfilling custom orders at Noark workshops." (Visit Porvoo, e; Noark World.)

Culture – Porvoo

Walter Runeberg's Sculpture Collection

- Son of the Finnish national poet, was one of the most important Finnish sculptors.
- Presents over 100 Runeberg's works including large portrait gallery, plaster sculptures and sketches of monumental works. (Visit Porvoo e.)

History – Porvoo

Big and Little Castle Hill

- Ancient monuments situated north of old Porvoo.
- Big castle hill is one of the biggest ancient fortresses in Finland.
- Small castle hill has a burial site from Iron Age, found in 1965.
- Great pine with twisted roots known from a painting of Albert Edelfelt visible.
- Maari park at the bottom of the hill which is a popular picnic place. (Visit Porvoo, e.)

Postimäki Outdoor Museum

- Website in Finnish, Swedish, English, and Russian.
- Open air museum and a cultural heritage site.
- One of Finland's best preserved areas of cottager's dwellings.
- Buildings date back to 19th century, and most of them are still on their original sites.
- Handicraft and art courses, markets, and events. (Visit Porvoo, e; Postbacken)

Old Porvoo

- One of the most photographed areas in Finland and popular destination for visitors
- Colorful wooden buildings by the river and winding cobble stone streets. (Visit Porvoo, f.)

Hörbergsgården

- Museum for 19th century artefacts.
- Changing exhibitions at the main farmhouse.
- Small museum shop selling high quality local handicrafts.
- Free admission during opening hours. (Visit Porvoo, e.)

J.L Runeberg's home

- Historical house of the national poet J.L Runeberg and his family.
- Showcasing the everyday and social life of the family. (Visit Porvoo, e.)

Porvoo Museum/Holm House

- Holm house built in 1763 showcasing the life of a wealthy merchant family from the end of 18th century.
- Ground floor features changing exhibitions and a museum shop. (Visit Porvoo, e.)

Porvoo Museum/Old Town Hall – Historical exhibitions and artworks from Finnish artists. (Visit Porvoo, e.)

Veterans' Room – Exhibitions of war memorabilia belonging to local veterans and civil life items. (Visit Porvoo, e.)

Nature – Porvoo

Gammelbacka nature trail –

- Forest area between Gammelbacka and Hamari, in connection with a shorter tree species trail which has signs for different species of plants and trees.
- Crosses through old manor grounds. (Visit Porvoo, d.)

Hasselholmen nature trail

- Located in the city's outdoor recreational area.
- No buses to the area so own transport necessary, rowing a boat to there also a possibility.
- Approx. 1.5km long path which runs through a conservation area with beautiful and diverse vegetation.
- Areas protected by conservation laws and regulations. (Visit Porvoo, d.)

Sikosaari nature trail – located few kilometers south from city center, observation platform where a variety of birds can be seen. (Visit Porvoo, d.)

Virvik nature trail

- Located in an outdoor recreational area about 15km southeast of Porvoo center.
- Public beach approx. 1km from path.
- Café in old Virvik manor. (Visit Porvoo, d.)

Nature trails in Bosgård organic farm

- Trails are free and open all year, mail box holds maps in English for visitors.
- Situated 14 km east of Porvoo.
- Organic farming and traditional landscape and forestry.
- Website unfortunately only in Finnish, it contains a lot of information about events, café, products, their values etc. There's a lot more to this farm and manor than just trails. (Visit Porvoo, d.)

Näsinmäki Hill

- Located across river from old Porvoo.
- The viewpoint "Näsi stone" is a rock moved by ice age which gives a good view of the city.
- Näsi manor and one of the oldest cemeteries located on the hill. (Visit Porvoo, d.)

Varlaxudden seashore –located 25km south of city center, good views and spots for photographs, birdwatching, barbeque spots. (Visit Porvoo, d.)

Accommodation – Loviisa

N/A

Restaurants – Loviisa

Café Saltbodan

- Website in Finnish, Swedish and English.
- Homemade quiche and bread made on spot.
- Selection of local beers.
- Located in historical and eventful environment.
- Small art gallery with monthly changing exhibition displaying local and foreign artists. Active since 1987. (Visit Loviisa, b; Café Restaurant Saltbodan 2009-2017.)

Events – Loviisa

Sibelius Festival

- Website in Finnish, Swedish and English, but all of the parts (including description of the event) do not work in
- Traditional chamber music festival arranged yearly, since 1989 English. (Visit Loviisa, c; Loviisa Sibelius Festival.)

Activities - Loviisa

Malmgård brewery

- Website in Finnish, Swedish and English.
- Located in Malmgård estate.
- One of the biggest independent small brewers in Finland.
- Artisan handcrafts created by traditional grains from their own fields.
- Appreciate fresh and local ingredients.
- Beers are unfiltered ales without extra additives.
- Tours and beer tastings organized by request.
- Estate shop next to brewery which sells local farmers' produce, as well as beer and delicacies produced at the estate.
- Traditional café in the estate as well. (Visit Loviisa, d; Malmgård Brewery.)

Villa Mandala

- Website in Finnish and English.
- Wellness center for stress management and relaxation.
- "New luxury stands for rest and recreation, silence, fresh air, meaningful encounters, good exercise, healthy food and bare feet."
- "Zensations-wellness vacation offers space and silence, daily yoga and mindfulness exercises, wellness lectures by professionals, healthy Scandinavian super food and outdoor activities in the pure nature with a twist of Finnish mythology and folk-lore. Treatments like traditional sauna and dip in a lake or herb bath help you with stress management. Rustic countryside settings guarantee digital detox – instead of isolated hotel room traveler experiences authentic Scandinavia with every sense."
- Stress-relief, relaxation, yoga, and culinary nutrition.
- Organic, vegetarian meals, and accommodation. (Visit Loviisa, e; Villa Mandala.)

Augur Kalastuspalvelut, Fishing services

- Has an English section on website where essentials are told.
- Arranges guided fishing trips with an experience.
- Fishing responsibly, making sure everyone has permits and fishing seasons are complied with. (Visit Loviisa, f; Kalaopas.info; Augur Kalastuspalvelu.)

Frisbeegolf

- 18-hole Frisbee golf area located at the Valko sand ridge
- Route goes through forest and across hilly and rugged landscape of the sandy ridge. (Visit Loviisa, g.)

Strömfors Iron Works area

- Museums, handicrafts shops, restaurants and cafes.
- Cruises on the Kymijoki river.
- Church of Ruotsinpyhtää.
- Tallinvintti gallery. (Visit Loviisa, h.)

Laivasilta area

- Red salt warehouses which house nowadays restaurants, art exhibitions and shops.
- Harbor, Maritime museum, cruises, guided walking tours, Rantapuisto park, Laivasilta marina.
- Lot of events throughout the year. (Visit Loviisa, i.)

Culture – Loviisa

N/A

History - Loviisa

Svartholma sea fortress

- Popular recreational destination for families.
- Located in Loviisa bay approx. 10km from the center.
- Visiting by own boat or cruise leaving from Laivasilta.
- Guided walking tours, exhibition, summer restaurants and campfire places. (Visit Loviisa, j.)

The Town Museum

- Website in Finnish, Swedish, and Russian.
- Located in the Commandant's house dating back to 1755, museum was founded in 1904 and located in the Commandant's house since 1962.
- Permanent exhibitions on two upper floors while ground floor features changing exhibitions.
- Collections mainly from 18th and 19th centuries presenting history and livelihoods of locals.
- Commandant's garden presents household's and decorative plants common to 18th and 19th centuries. (Visit Loviisa, k; City of Loviisa, a)

Archipelago museum

- Showcases the cultural history of the archipelago.
- Presents means of livelihood and boat building. (Visit Loviisa, l; Museum Guide Uusimaa 2011-2012.)

Viirilä local museum

- Main building built at the end of 18th century and moved to the museum area in the 1880s.
- Outhouse, smoke sauna, and a loft storehouse presented as well.
- Presents farm life and peasant culture from the past.
- Collection of 3000 artefacts of bygone days. (Visit Loviisa, m; City of Loviisa, b.)

Nature – Loviisa

Ehrensvärd's trail – Historical trail starting from Rosen and Ungern fortresses (Visit Loviisa, g).

Beaches

- Plagen, at the address Kapteenintie, Loviisa. – Swimming, tennis, volleyball.
- Taikaranta, at the address Taikarannantie (Lake Hopjärvi), Sävträsk, Liljendal.
- Valko beach, signs from Saukkolahdentie and Kalevantie.
- Särkjärvi eteläinen, at the address Särkjärventie, Tesjoki.
- Rönnäs, at the address Museotie, Isnäs.
- Koskenkylä, at the address Staffaksentie, Pernaja. – Swimming, volleyball. (Visit Loviisa, g.)

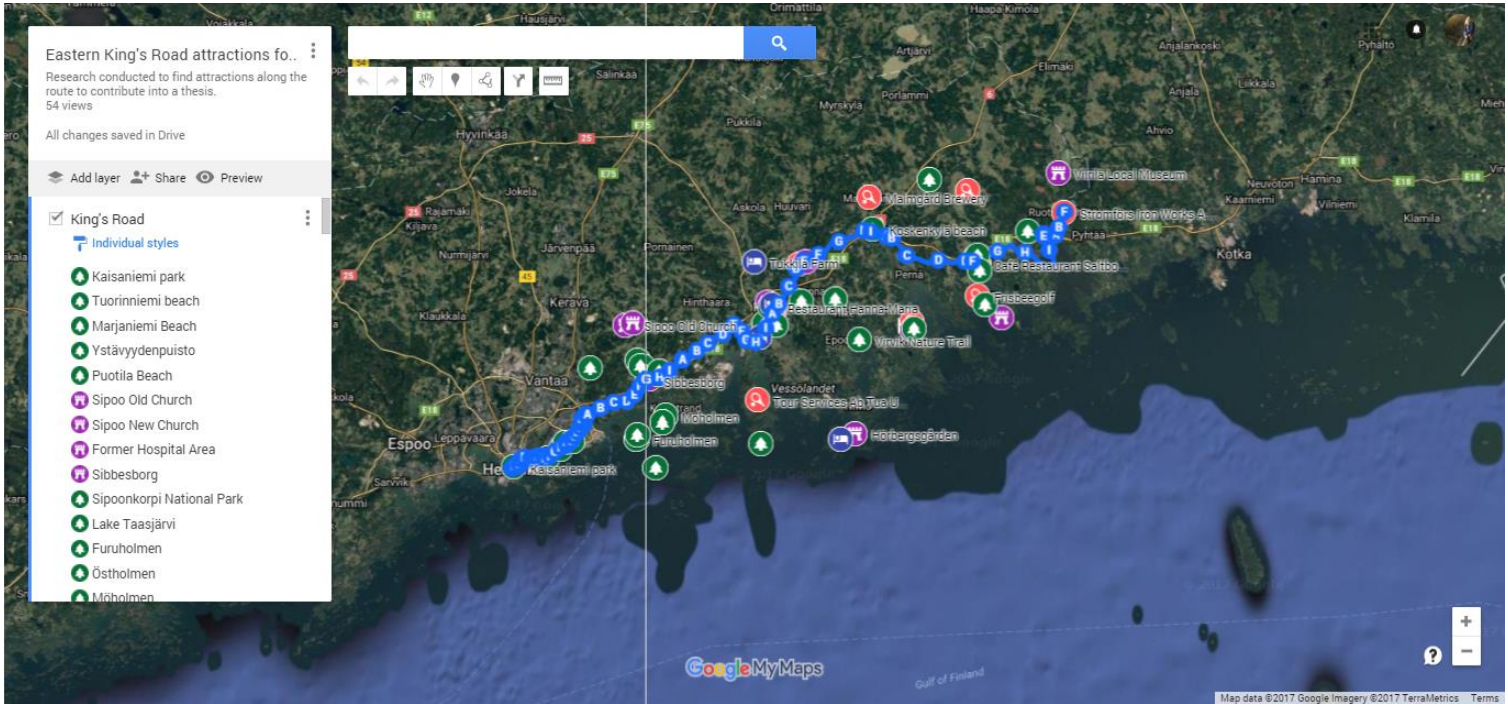
Appendix 11. A collective Excel of the attractions

Sipoo	Porvoo	Loviisa
Old Church	Hotel Haikko Manor	Cafe Saltbodan
New Church	Boutique Hotel Onni	Sibelius Festival
Former Hospital area in Nikkilä	Nybondas Cottages	Malmgård Brewery
Sibbesborg	Tukkila Farm	Villa Mandala
Sipoonkorpi National Park	Hanna-Maria	Augur Kalastuspalvelut
Lake Taasjärvi	Café Fanny	Frisbeegolf
Furuholmen	Bistro Sinne	Strömfors Iron Works Area
Östholmen	Cafe Cabriole	Laivasilta area
Möholmen	Petri's Chocolate Room	Svartholma sea fortress
Nordkullalandet	Cafe Rongo	The Town Museum
Kaunissaari	Nordic Walking	Archipelago Museum
Sipoo River	Guided Tours	Viirilä Local Museum
Lake Pilvijärvi	Bo & Tua Uddström	Ehrensvärd's trail
	Noark World	Loviisa beach Plagen
	Walter Runeberg's Sculptures	Taikaranta beach
	Big and Little Castle Hill	Valko beach
	Postimäki Outdoor Museum	Särkjärvi beach
	Old Porvoo	Rönnäs beach
	Hörbergsgården	Koskenkylä beach
	J.L Runeberg's Home	
	Porvoo Museum/Holm House	
	Porvoo Museum/Old Town Hall	
	Veterans' Room	
	Gammelbacka nature trail	
	Hasselholmen nature trail	
	Sikosaari nature trail	
	Virvik nature trail	
	Bosgård Farm nature trails	
	Näsinmäki Hill	
	Varlaxudden Seashore	

Accommodation
Restaurants
Events
Activities
Arts & Culture
History
Nature attractions

Adjusted from attractions listed on Visit websites. (Visit Sipoo, a; Visit Porvoo, a; Visit Loviisa, a.)

Appendix 12. Attractions Map Preview



Interactive map in the address:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?hl=en&hl=en&authuser=0&authuser=0&mid=1T7KIT TtX8hYveKNB0AA0gd265x0&ll=60.4015143285075%2C25.409611087402254&z=9>

Route & Attractions map created by using Google My Maps application.