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DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF NATURE CENTRE CONCEPT IN  
YYTERI, PORI. BENEFITING THE BALTIC SEA CHALLENGE  
BY A REGISTERED TRADEMARK.

Degree Programme in Innovative Business Services  
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*Abstract.* The purpose of this thesis was to find out by the means of a framework known as a development plan, how the municipalities and companies could find a way to protect the Baltic Sea together. The objective is to improve the state of the Baltic Sea through the cooperation of municipalities and companies. The key concepts of this thesis are the Baltic Sea, sustainable tourism and water protection.

The idea to develop the Yyteri area and its services originated through many years' of observing and own profound experience of the area. After studying the current situation in Yyteri, the Baltic Sea and the trends in tourism, the idea of an innovative nature centre concept was born. The source material used alongside the observation is literature, articles, publications and websites related to tourism, the Baltic Sea and the city of Pori. There is a need for a sustainable tourist service in Yyteri area with water protection expertise. This service can be a combination of three parties: the Baltic Sea Challenge, the municipality and a local entrepreneur. By registering a trademark for the Baltic Sea Challenge with this service, it can be utilized and protected. In the future, this service can be applied in other nature destinations in Finland and it helps the Baltic Sea Challenge network in expanding and achieving financial benefit.

LUONTOKESKUSKONSEPTIN KEHITTÄMISSUUNNITELMA PORIN  
YYTERIIN. ITÄMERIHAASTEEN EDISTÄMINEN REKISTERÖIDYN  
TAVARAMERKIN AVULLA.

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*Tiivistelmä.* Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli selvittää kehittämissuunnitelman avulla, kuinka kunnat ja yritykset voisivat yhdessä löytää keinon suojella Itämerta. Tavoitteena on kuntien ja yritysten yhteistyön kautta parantaa Itämeren tilaa. Keskeisiä käsitteitä ovat Itämeri, kestävä matkailu ja vesiensuojelu.

Ajatus kehittää Yyterin aluetta ja sen palveluita syntyi vuosien tarkkailun ja omakoh-  
taisten kokemusten tuloksena. Tarkasteltuani Yyterin ja Itämeren nykytilannetta sekä  
matkailun trendejä, ajatus innovatiivisesta luontokeskuksesta sai alkunsa. Lähdeai-  
neistona havainnoinnin ohella on käytetty kirjallisuutta, artikkeleita, julkaisuja sekä  
matkailuun, Itämereen ja Porin kaupunkiin liittyviä Internet- sivustoja. Yyterin alu-  
eella on tarve kestäväälle matkailupalvelulle, jossa toteutuu vesiensuojelun näkökul-  
ma. Palvelu voi olla kolmen osapuolen muodostama yhdistelmä: kunnan, Itämeri-  
haasteen sekä paikallisen yrittäjän. Tätä palvelua voidaan hyödyntää ja se voidaan  
suojata rekisteröimällä sille tavaramerkki Itämerihaasteen nimissä. Tulevaisuudessa  
tätä palvelukonseptia voidaan soveltaa muihinkin Suomen luontokohteisiin. Se auttaa  
Itämerihaastetta laajentumaan sekä saavuttamaan taloudellista hyötyä.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The idea for the thesis came from a task during the studies; a business idea to start an innovative nature centre in Yyteri beach, Pori. Yyteri is on the coast of the Baltic Sea, western Finland, and its dunes are unique in Finland and in the whole Nordic countries. The Yyteri area is protected and it has the status of the Natura area. Important habitats and species are protected with the network of Natura areas in the EU region. The protection can be done through legislation, administrative provisions or voluntary agreements. (website of Metsähallitus, 2015.) Yyteri area is one of my favourite places to spend time, walk the paths and relax on the beach, both summer and winter time.

With my thesis work, I wanted to do something in the interest of Yyteri area. Applying the skills I have gained during this degree programme, I realised that there are business opportunities in Yyteri. There are possibilities to enhance the service business. This involves focusing more on the water protection and conserving the environment in general. Developing the services in a protected area, means taking the water and environment legislation carefully into account. When researching the current situation of Yyteri, I came across a publication by the city of Pori; a planning report for the Yyteri area from year 2010. The planning report originated from an initiative by the inhabitants of Yyteri. The report reflected the worries of the inhabitants; about the development of the area and the mass events that took place in the dune area during the last decades.

Considering that Yyteri is unique in Finland and rare in the Nordic countries' scale, it has been taken advantage of very modestly. Further study revealed that several issues support developing the Yyteri area and its services:

- The local residents want to develop the Yyteri area and the city of Pori has plans for developing the Yyteri area.

- The state of the Baltic Sea is critical.
- Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries worldwide, and especially local travel tourism is on the rise.
- Developing the Finnish tourism is included in two different strategies by governmental bodies.

After contacting four different nature- or Yyteri- related organisations, the fifth one, the Baltic Sea Challenge, agreed to work together for the thesis. The Baltic Sea Challenge was willing to collaborate in finding out what kind of a service could be generated in the area- if it supports water protection, they could possibly utilise it in their marketing. With the idea of mine, the nature centre in Yyteri, the concept of the tourist service started to form.

This was the starting point for innovating the nature centre in Yyteri. This protected area needs to be developed with an appropriate expertise. The city of Pori could use an up to date- service to combine tourism and the Yyteri area and lure more tourists that way. The inhabitants of Yyteri, the city of Pori and environmental organisations are all willing to act in favor of this area. As a topic, the Baltic Sea is perhaps more relevant than ever. It is in a critical state and degradation of the nature, referred to as eutrophication, is a major threat. I will look into the issues for developing the Yyteri area more closer in the next chapters.

The research question of this thesis is: **how can the municipalities and companies find a way to protect the Baltic Sea together?**

## 2 CASE STUDY: YYTERI AREA

A case study approach was chosen because a “how” question of current set of events, over which the researcher has little or no control is being answered (Yin 2009, 13). Also, the meaning is to get a comprehensive understanding of Yyteri and a case

study approach is suitable for studying phenomena in depth and within its real-life context (Yin 2009, 18).

Yyteri has about six kilometres sand beaches altogether, it is famous and a nationally valuable landscape in Finland and a unique beach in Nordic countries (website of poritieto.com, 2014). Yyteri has been popular for recreational activities among the inhabitants of Pori. Local manufacturers built their villas in the area in the 18th and 19th century, but the story of Yyteri as a nationally significant holiday resort started in the 1930's (Tiira 2013, 44). After decades of varying service provided in the area, the situation still causes discussion. Different suggestions have been manifested concerning the range of services, however, the outline has been that the majority of people want to maintain the integrity of the area.

The maintenance on the Yyteri beach is limited considering an average of even approximately 200 000 yearly visitors at the area (Ympäristösuunnittelu Oy, Porin Yyterin lomakylän asemakaava- alueen Natura- arviointi 2011, 6). There are a few restaurants, a spa hotel, a camping site, a golf course, surf center and a horse riding center in the area. The technical infrastructure, such as waste disposal, water supply and sanitation on the beach is very small-scale in the summer time and in the winter time it is almost non-existent.

Having enjoyed the area's many sides myself and having noticed that the service supply has gone downhill, I decided to do my thesis about this area. I thought about what would make me, as an inhabitant of Pori, happy and proud about the area. The peace and cleanliness are essential to the area and necessary to maintain, so the development has to be carefully considered. Yyteri is a wonderful destination in the winter time, too. When studying the situation closer, it turned out I was not alone with those thoughts. Lately, one particular wish has occurred in the statements of the local residents: year-round tourism.

### 3 THE CURRENT SITUATION

Mapping the current situation about Yyteri area and its development, I will study closer the four points mentioned in the introduction. That is the knowledge base of this case study. The following information gives arguments for 1) developing the area and 2) providing a direction for the development.

#### 3.1 The residents of the Yyteri area and the city of Pori

Both, the residents of the Yyteri area and the city of Pori, have expressed their willingness to develop Yyteri area into a direction that benefits the local residents, the local business and the tourists. The report from the Yyteri village evening, held in the 18th of November 2014, shows things that the residents of the Yyteri area wrote down; things they want to either have in the future or maintain in the area. Also, a questionnaire was made among the residents, about the mentioned issues. The residents indicated that they want to use the local services in order to maintain them and also the development of the tourism was recorded, especially the year-round utilisation of the area. Improvement of the signposting to the Yyteri area was mentioned; currently the tourists do not find the area well enough. More services in general, developing of the tourist services and the marketing of the area were desired. And, as an icing on the cake: a nature centre was mentioned on the list. The sea, the beaches, the idea to develop year-round tourism, adventure tourism and local travel tourism were listed as either possibilities or strengths of the area. (Yyterin kyläilta, yhteenveto 2014.)

There are two significant factors in the nature resources of the city of Pori; the national park of Sea of Bothnia and the national city park. Having these two assets, Pori is one of a kind among the cities in Finland. This possibility should be utilised in the planning, profiling and the visibility of the Yyteri area (Porin kaupunki, Yyterin kehittämisen yleissuunnitelma, 2012). Because of its vulnerable nature, Yyteri dune area needs a tourist service which respects the environment. Instead of exploiting the destination, tourism can be sustainable. Sustainable tourism is defined as “tourism



that respects both local people and the traveller, cultural heritage and the environment” (website of Unesco, 2015). It seeks to provide people with an exciting and educational holiday that is also of benefit to the people of the host country (website of Unesco, 2015). It means that nature- based tourism can be a powerful tool for sustainable development and biodiversity conservation (Yunis 2007, xiv). Sustainable development is, according to the Brundtland Commission Report from 1987, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Rogers, Jalal & Boyd 2008, 22). Sustainable development is seen to have three approaches: economic, ecological and social-cultural (Rogers, Jalal & Boyd 2008, 23). As a municipality in the Baltic Sea region the city of Pori has an obligation to make a bigger effort for the Baltic Sea, in the name of sustainable development.

### 3.2 The Baltic Sea region: the municipalities and employment point of view

According to a recent study by the Boston Consulting Group, the Baltic Sea is currently in critical condition but consensus exists on the primary threats that face the region: eutrophication, hazardous substances, and overfishing. In spite of the efforts to address these issues, deterioration continues. The Baltic Sea region, which is financially strong and whose residents are highly educated, has a better position than most to address these global issues (Holfve et al. 2013, 3). The same study says that the Baltic Sea area needs a cross-sectoral and cross-governmental approach to achieve change and reduce the coordination difficulties in the network of stakeholders. A shared vision is crucial in guiding the region towards a desired state. Operators in the private sector are in a good position to participate to change, as the environmental challenges provide multiple business opportunities (Holfve et al. 2013, 3). And, not only do the states of the Baltic Sea region have a good position to address the state of the Baltic Sea, but it also raises the importance of showing global leadership and opens potential for exporting solutions (Holfve et al. 2013, 6).

Even more recent study by the Boston Consulting Group brings more good news about the state of the Baltic Sea- from the employment point of view, that is. So as to reach sustainable nutrient levels and begin reviving the waters, local initiatives by the

1500 municipalities in the area will play a crucial role. The starting points of these municipalities vary vastly, and two-thirds of the municipalities in the catchment area are either unaware of the problem or do not have sufficient resources to address it. (Dahlgren et al. 2015, 3.)

The report continues that the financial benefits of water restoration are multifarious. By restoring local waters, a municipality has a possibility to develop sustainable businesses and increase several factors such as recreation, aesthetic value, flood control, biodiversity, and population's well-being. "For an average municipality, the difference between two scenarios, clear waters state and shipwrecked state, could amount to almost 3000 full-time jobs and €270 million in economic output aggregated over the course of 15 years. For the entire region this would imply a difference of 900 000 jobs in year 2030 alone, corresponding to approximately 2 percent of the region's total labor supply" (Dahlgren et al. 2015, 6).

This report has an obvious message for politicians and municipality leaders: helping the Baltic Sea should not be seen only as a cost, but also as an opportunity to create local jobs and economic worth. Investing in pure and healthy waters boosts jobs and economic activity in municipalities (website of the Boston Consulting Group, 2015).

In Yyteri, there are ideal conditions for cross-sectoral cooperation. The landowner is the city of Pori. As a nature destination it is unique in Finland, it is protected and it demands the presence of a water protection expert party. There are already local entrepreneurs operating in the area and they want to boost the business in the area.

### 3.3 The trends in tourism

There are signs of certain trends in the tourism and demographic development which also speak on behalf of a need for this kind of service. Aging populations demand more health and wellness tourism products, a rising retirement age will partially slow the growth of travel by seniors (McDonough 2013). While part of the baby boomers continue to stay in the working life and do not travel far, this speaks for the local

travel trend, which is seen to be on the rise in the year 2015 (Talty 2014). A nature destination is a health and wellness tourism product.

Yyteri offers perfect surroundings for adventure tourism. Adventure tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in tourism. Adventure tourism contains, according to the definition, at least two out of the following three elements: physical activity, natural environment or cultural immersion. Instead of extreme experience, people seek for lighter experience, for example shorter tracks. The growth of this segment also brings in the challenge of the sustainable development, careful and responsible tourism management. (UNWTO Global Report on Adventure tourism/ AM Reports: Volume nine, 2014.) The nature trails in Yyteri area are a few kilometres long, varying between approximately 1,5 and 10 kilometres (Porin kaupunki, Yyteri- Satakuntaista luontoa parhaimmillaan- esite, 2015).

According to the accommodation statistics, “nights spent by foreign tourists in Finland decreased by 9.6 per cent in December 2014” (Majoitustilasto, 2014). This is compared to December 2013. In Satakunta, the drop was 12 per cent (Majoitustilasto, 2014). These figures are only from December 2014, but it supports the fact that there should be more tourist attractions in Satakunta region, and preferably those that are open all year round.

### 3.4 The tourism strategies

The Finland’s tourism strategy 2020 by the Ministry of Economy and Education says that while the traditional support legs of the Finnish industry are transferring the production away from Finland, Finland needs new successful and growing industries. At the same time, the growing opportunities for tourism are good in Finland. The key idea of the tourism strategy is that the recognized strengths will be reinforced and the growth-oriented and networked companies will be helped to succeed (Suomen matkailustrategia 2020, 2009- 2010, 3). The growth of the tourism cannot rely only on the volume growth of the existing products and services, the tourism sector and service production has to reform. Especially the service and experience consumption is estimated to grow (Suomen matkailustrategia 2020, 2009-2010, 12).

In the Winter Tourism Strategy to the International Market for the years 2014- 2018 by Visit Finland, it says that the potential in the Finnish winter tourism is in the nature and outdoor activities, they will have a stronger emphasis and the quiet environment becomes more important. (Talvimatkailustrategia kansainvälisille markkinoille vuosille 2014- 2018, 9.) These features and possibilities can be found in Yyteri. The residents of Yyteri area have expressed their hope for developing the year round tourism in many contexts.

Against this background, I wanted to innovate a nature centre which would bring together the relevant parties. The state of the Baltic Sea could be improved through the cooperation of municipalities and companies.

#### 4 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK FOR THE NATURE CENTRE IN YYTERI

There is a need for a year-round nature centre at Yyteri beach. It is stated in the planning report for Yyteri area by the city of Pori, that “...in public meetings there have been wishes for new services in the Yyteri- Kaanaa area, that would be beneficial both for the tourists and the local residents. These services would even out the peaks during the summer holiday season and, on the other hand, the longer, more quiet periods in the entrepreneurs’ activities” (Porin kaupunki, Yyterin kehittämisen yleissuunnitelma, 2012). Sustainable, ethical tourism contributes effectively to community development (Perdomo, 2014). This development plan of the nature centre is a plan for developing the community, too.

The nature centre in Yyteri, according to this thesis, would be a service centre that is open throughout the year. Because construction is prohibited in the protected dune area (website of Finland’s environmental administration, 2015), this nature centre would operate in the building which already exists in Yyteri, the place which has been known as Meriravintola, seaside restaurant. The idea, in this case, is to make

use of the seaside restaurant premises, located at Yyteri beach. My development plan for the nature centre contains the following features:

- a cafe/ restaurant
- a free-of-charge service center with information about the facilities on the Yyteri beach and the local nature, focusing on school classes and educating the school children. Also guided tours around the beach area would be given to groups of tourists on request.
- a public sauna and washing facilities, as a municipal, low-cost service
- toilets
- hiring cross country ski/ sled and other supplies needed in the winter time
- hiring swimming/ diving equipment and other supplies needed on the beach during the summer time

These features would be such to create good conditions for year-round activity in the nature centre. They offer a wide range of possibilities to enjoy the surroundings of the nature centre, yet the approach is one of the public interest, to encourage the local travel tourism.

This would be a low-cost nature centre for the use of both the inhabitants of Pori and tourists from outside of Pori. During the Pori Jazz Festival and the summer holiday period, the foreign tourists would get to know this destination. For the rest of the year, the visitors would be mainly from the nearby area and Finnish tourists. Having a nature centre like this, with several different services under the same roof, would be a quantum leap for the area and its development. According to the principles of sustainable tourism, the year-round operations would even out the masses of visitors along the year, not just on summer holiday season (website of Metsähallitus, 2015). Also, by making sure that all the functions are realised in an environmentally friendly manner, the principles of sustainable tourism would be followed.

#### 4.1 Employing a local entrepreneur

Like mentioned earlier, the principles of sustainable tourism require that the local business benefits from tourism. The cafe/ restaurant and the equipment hiring can be operated by a local entrepreneur. This is a way to employ local residents and bring economic benefit to the area.

### 5 THE THESIS PARTNER: THE BALTIC SEA CHALLENGE

The Baltic Sea Challenge was born in 2007 out of two cities', Turku and Helsinki, commitment to concrete voluntary actions to protect the coastal waters and the whole Baltic Sea. The Baltic Sea was addressed in the cities' strategic work, the City of Helsinki's strategy programme and the City of Turku's climate and environment programme. The Action Plan for the Baltic Sea comprised 37 concrete actions divided into nine themes. Both cities for example undertook to reduce their contribution to nutrient loading to Baltic Sea, the emissions from shipping and boating, also to develop their oil spill response and increase the research, awareness and cooperation in order to improve the state of the coastal waters as well as the entire Baltic Sea. The work is coordinated by the Environment Centre in Helsinki and the Environmental Division in Turku. Helsinki and Turku undertook to invest in international environmental cooperation: research on water pollution control and to increase the general awareness of the Baltic Sea. In addition to taking concrete action themselves, the cities of Turku and Helsinki invited other actors to join the initiative. Between 2007 and 2013, approximately 200 organizations from Finland and other Baltic Sea states took up the Baltic Sea Challenge. These include municipalities, companies, associations, educational institutions, regional actors and state institutions.

As a form of activity, the Baltic Sea Challenge is unique: its core is formed by concrete actions to protect the waters, taken at a local level and in the organizations' own operations. The Baltic Sea Action Plan has been a major success. The Action Plan has supported the cities' harbours, waterworks, rescue services, sports, building, urban planning, and education divisions, as well as international operations in paying attention to the impact their actions have on waters. It has also increased awareness of the state of the Baltic Sea and the opportunities for influencing this matter among the interest groups and customers. (website of Itämerihaaste, 2015.)

### 5.1 Data gathering in cooperation with the Baltic Sea Challenge for the Yyteri nature centre

The Baltic Sea Challenge answered to the request to cooperate on this thesis. They brought out their viewpoint, the water protection. Yyteri could be a case study and the thesis could embody a service with a water protection angle. Thus, the idea of the nature centre could be combined with a water protection expert, the Baltic Sea Challenge. They also wanted to find out what the tourism entrepreneurs think about the Baltic Sea as an image factor and a marketing asset and how the Baltic Sea point of view is utilised or could be utilised in the marketing. Those questions were asked in an e-mail questionnaire and the answers will be mentioned later on in this thesis.

Promoting water protection in the Yyteri nature centre would combine the city of Pori as a municipality and the Baltic Sea Challenge as the water protection expert. The city of Pori has been a member of the Baltic Sea Challenge network since 2007. The basis for a cooperation exists already.

## 6 PROMOTING WATER PROTECTION AND EDUCATIONAL TOURISM IN YYTERI NATURE CENTRE

In Finland, there are abundant natural resources in relation to the population. Globally, the natural resources are diminishing and therefore we have a responsibility to

take care that the future generations can still enjoy the nature and its resources. If the Finnish people and the tourism professionals act wisely, we have a possibility to utilize our natural resources sustainably and even create new jobs and business. This can be achieved by taking good care of our ecosystems (Sitra 2009, 3). By promoting water protection and educating the tourists about the unique Yyteri area and the Baltic Sea, this nature centre would support sustainable development and sustainable tourism in Yyteri and Pori area.

With utilization of the existing premises, by renovating it or building new premises on the same place, the local nature and environment would be affected as little as possible. In order to be environmentally friendly and innovative, the operations of the nature center in Yyteri would have to burden the water system as little as possible. This requires that all the operators of the nature centre commit to follow the principles of sustainable development (Swarbrooke 1999, 10) and sustainable tourism. It means that their actions respect the environment, ensure the conservation of the natural and cultural resources and is socially and economically acceptable and just (website of Travelcon.fi, 2015). In fact, the concept of sustainable tourism brings in naturally the third party in the nature centre: the local entrepreneur. According to the principles of sustainable tourism, tourism should provide employment to its community residents and a connection between the local business and tourism should be established (Sloan 2012, 425).

There is a possibility to design and realise this nature centre in a completely new, holistic way with the water protection expertise of the Baltic Sea Challenge network. In practise, this means that for example issues like the use of detergents, wastewater disposal, water consumption, food serving and communicating to the customers are carefully considered and executed correctly (website of Itämerihaaste, 2015). Rainwater harvesting and wastewater recycling should be included in the construction design.

Also, the educational point of view is crucial in this case. One purpose of this nature center is to educate the visitors about the Yyteri beach; its features and uniqueness. The latest changes in the demand of tourism has led to an increasing interest in education and learning as a substantial part of tourism and travel experiences. In some



cases, education can be the key motivating factor for travel, when in other cases education or learning may be secondary but still have a significant contribution to the travel experience. Especially the rise of ‘new’ tourism and holidays with special interest, which involve an element of education and learning, have influenced the essence of tourism, its settings, the tourism industry, and the following impacts on the individual traveler and the destination. (Ritchie, Carr & Cooper 2003, 29.) Important issues to educate the visitors are the Baltic Sea, the state of it and water protection in general.

The best ways for this nature centre to promote water protection are: to cooperate with the Baltic Sea Challenge network, to take practical steps towards watershed-friendly actions and educate the tourists about water protection and water resources. The surroundings of a nature destination gives the visitors, school children and grown-ups, a chance to apply the information learned immediately, on the spot and hence, internalize the information better.

## 7 THE REGISTERED TRADEMARK FOR THE BALTIC SEA CHALLENGE

This concept for the nature centre in Yyteri is a combination of three operating parties. With the Baltic Sea Challenge being one of them, it makes this concept unique and innovative. Innovative is defined in the Oxford dictionary as “featuring new methods; advanced and original” (website of Oxford dictionaries, 2015). The success at innovation depends on an organisation’s possibility to understand the needs of customers before trying to create ideas to address those needs. According to the book “Service Innovation”, an ideas -first approach to innovation is only guesswork and does not lead to an efficient innovation process. Instead, the needs- first approach should be taken to innovation. (Ulwick 2010, xi.) The need is already established by the residents of Yyteri. In Yyteri, there are no service concepts of this kind at the moment, so it is reasonable to call this concept innovative. When a product or a concept is totally new, it can and should be taken advantage of.

The Baltic Sea Challenge brought up both, the water protection angle and their will to utilise the outcome of this thesis. This nature centre concept is unique in Finland and therefore it can bring benefit to the Baltic Sea Challenge. Because this concept is a service, a registered trademark would be the best alternative for branding, protecting and utilizing it. By registering a trademark for this concept, they can take advantage of it. It brings financial benefit by giving them the exclusive right to use the trademark in their marketing.

A nature center concept and registered trademark for it is a concrete way of gaining benefit for the Baltic Sea Challenge. The nature centre in this thesis consists of three parties:

- 1) the Baltic Sea Challenge
- 2) a municipality/ city and
- 3) a local entrepreneur to run the cafe/ restaurant and the equipment hiring.

In order to fulfill the wishes of the Baltic Sea Challenge, this service in Yyteri would have to be one to encourage and support the tourism sector to water conservation inside an organization (both the city of Pori and the tourism entrepreneur's company) and to bring the idea of water conservation forward to customers.

This plan fits in the Baltic Sea Challenge's intentions. Their operational programme for years 2014- 2018 states that the cities of Helsinki and Turku are committed to continue the work for the benefit of the Baltic Sea and that more actions need to be done. It also says in the programme that "the focus of the actions should be moved from raising awareness to participating" (Itämerihaaste: Helsingin ja Turun kaupunkien yhteinen Itämeri- toimenpideohjelma 2014- 2018, 9). The objective of the operations is to "promote awareness concerning the state of the Baltic Sea and influencing in it and connecting these to economic opportunities and competitiveness" (Itämerihaaste: Helsingin ja Turun kaupunkien yhteinen Itämeri- toimenpideohjelma 2014- 2018, 22).

In order to develop trust, confidence and in the end, loyalty in its products, a company or an organization should identify itself and its reputation. That way, the organization and its products can differentiate from its competitors (website of the World Intellectual Property Organization, 2015). Brands also help customers identify products that they like from the products they do not like. Purchasing certain brands is a form of self-expression. Brands help customers evaluate the quality of product. A brand may represent a certain level of quality to a customer. (Pride & Ferrell 2013, 446-447.) This can be achieved by a trademark, more specifically, by registering the trademark. “A trademark is a symbol which distinguishes the goods and services of a company from similar goods and services of other companies. Companies should protect their trademark by applying for trademark registration. Registration gives the exclusive right to use the mark as a symbol for goods or services. Only the registration holders may use the trademark in their business and may also prohibit others from using their mark liable to be confused with it.” (website of the Finnish patent and registration office, 2015.)

Options for the trademark for the Baltic Sea Challenge and its partners could be either *association mark* or *certification mark*. “An association mark is a trademark intended to be used by members of a collective body in their professional activities. Exclusive right to an association mark is acquired through registration or through the establishing of the mark by means of use. Authorities, associations institutions whose duty is to check and supervise goods or services, or to issue directions regarding them, may, through registration, obtain exclusive right to to a certification mark to be used on goods or services subject to control or supervision. A certification mark cannot be established by means of use.” (website of the Finnish patent and registration office, 2015)

After establishing its trademark, a company or an organization can attract customers first from brand awareness to brand recognition, to brand preference and finally to brand insistence. At that point, the consumer is not willing to accept alternatives but only the specific brand and is ready to even pay a higher price for the desired brand. (website of the World Intellectual Property Organization, 2015.) Being the pioneer of

this concept in Finland, the Baltic Sea Challenge can establish its position as the first water protection- promoting nature centre concept trademark proprietor in Finland.

### 7.1 SWOT analysis of the registered trademark of The Baltic Sea Challenge

The assessment of the meaning of the registered trademark for the Baltic Sea Challenge is done with a SWOT matrix. The SWOT analysis provides a framework to analyse strengths and weaknesses (company's internal features) and opportunities and threats (external features). It helps focusing on strengths, minimizing weaknesses, and taking the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available. (Pahl & Richter 2009, 4.)

In this SWOT matrix, different factors related to the registered trademark are considered from the Baltic Sea Challenge's point of view. As the matrix shows, various angles can be taken to this issue and it should be considered carefully how each of those factors affect the utilisation of the registered trademark. The intention of this analysis is to help out the Baltic Sea Challenge to consider the pros and cons of registering a trademark for their purposes.

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the expertise in the Baltic Sea situation</li> <li>• the expertise in water protection</li> <li>• no competition between similar services in Finland: unique concept</li> <li>• EU funding may be possible</li> <li>• ensuring the good state of the Baltic Sea is state supported in Finland</li> </ul>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no history of similar concepts in Finland -&gt; no data to be mined in order to forecast the future</li> <li>• the tourism in protected areas can face resistance of local residents</li> <li>• the thorough education of the staff must be taken into account</li> </ul>
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the trend in tourism is that local</li> </ul>	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the financial recession or mili-</li> </ul>

<p>travel experience is on the rise (Talty 2014)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the local economy would be improved</li> <li>• travel and tourism continue to prosper globally (Talty 2014)</li> <li>• the Baltic Sea Challenge will be better-known</li> <li>• by letting the Baltic Sea Challenge and its partners being involved in nature tourist destinations, the development is guaranteed environmentally friendly</li> <li>• new jobs can be created (website of the Boston Consulting Group, 2015)</li> </ul>	<p>tary situation in Europe cuts down the profitability of outbound tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the local entrepreneurs are not willing to utilize the growing tourism in the destinations</li> <li>• the local entrepreneurs don't have the ability to answer the demands of tourism</li> <li>• the winter time in Finland is more quiet from tourism- point of view</li> </ul>
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Table 1. SWOT matrix

## 7.2 Conclusions from the SWOT

The SWOT analysis gives a framework for assessing strengths and weaknesses (internal) and opportunities and threats (external). It gives an opportunity to concentrate on strengths, to minimize weaknesses and to maximize the benefit of opportunities at hand. (Pahl & Richter 2009, 4.) Here, the strengths and the opportunities speak on behalf of registering the trademark for the service concept. At the moment, there are no significant competitors on this particular field in Finland, which combines the water protection and restoring the Baltic Sea to tourist destinations. Both, the EU legislation and Finnish legislation support actions which aim at the well-being of the Baltic Sea. The Baltic Sea Challenge will get more publicity for its operations. They also get to influence on the development of tourism in Finland. In other words, these above-mentioned are the areas where the Baltic Sea Challenge has a competitive advantage. The biggest downsides are on the “threats” department: the economic situa-

tion affects both the international and the domestic tourism, but on the other hand, the local travel is expected to grow in the future. The lack of history on this field of service in Finland was positioned in the “weaknesses”, but it can be seen as a “strength”, too.

## 8 TOURISM ENTREPRENEUR QUESTIONNAIRE

I carried out a questionnaire among 68 tourism entrepreneurs during the summer of 2014. The questionnaire resulted in four answers. Those answers can be used as an idea bank in developing this service concept for the Baltic Sea Challenge, for example. They provide an insight into entrepreneurs’ thoughts concerning the Baltic Sea and water protection.

The questionnaire was sent via e-mail to 68 entrepreneurs in the coastal Finland. The cities where the companies are located are: Helsinki, Hanko, Turku, Rauma, Pori, Vaasa, Kalajoki, Raahe, Oulu, Kemi and Tornio. The answers came from entrepreneurs from Kotka, Hanko, Raahe and Oulu.

The questions were following:

1. How do you use the Baltic Sea theme in your marketing?
2. As what kind of a marketing asset/ image factor do you see the clean Baltic Sea?
3. Do you use the water protection perspective in your marketing? If so, how?
4. In what ways do you think the water protection perspective could be used in the marketing?

5. Which factors would encourage your company into water protection inside the organization?
6. Which factors would encourage your company to bringing the water protection perspective out to the customers?
7. Is there anything else you would like to point out in this context?

I also mentioned in my email that the water protection perspective can mean many different things in tourism company. The use of detergents, waste water disposal, water consumption, communicating to the customers and serving the food can be observed from this point of view.

The aim of the water protection is that as a result of many procedures the company will burden the water system as little as possible. Finally, I noted that a tourism company can brand itself as “the Baltic Sea- friendly” or as “watershed friendly” by its choices and attract more customers by acting in an ecological manner.

#### 8.1 Three main points raised from the data gathered via e-mail questionnaire

*The term “the Baltic Sea” is not currently used in the marketing*

The term “the Baltic Sea” is not used in their marketing. Instead, the name of the specific part of the Baltic Sea in which they are located, such as the Bay of Bothnia or the Gulf of Finland, are used. Also, the sea and beach occur as marketing terms.

*All of the companies do not use the water protection theme in their marketing*

Instead of using water protection theme in their marketing, the entrepreneurs use “the clean waters” and “the possibilities to swim and fish” as means of marketing. Two of the answerers said that they tell about the water protection to the customers during the arrival info or by handing out brochures about the topic.

*The clean Baltic Sea and clean nature are seen as important marketing assets*

Despite the fact that the clean Baltic Sea and clean environment are considered essential in terms of their business, they are not necessarily used in the marketing. So far, seems that the clean Baltic Sea is taken for granted. The water protection is not considered in all tourism companies as a concrete means to lure more customers and contribute to the well-being of the Baltic Sea.

## 8.2 Limitations concerning the data gathered

It is worth noting that only four entrepreneurs answered to the questionnaire which was sent to 68 recipients. It is a small proportion of all the tourism entrepreneurs in Finland, and a small proportion of those in the coastal Finland, to whom this questionnaire was sent. Further conclusions are impossible to draw from these answers but they give some indication about the current situation about the water protection and tourism entrepreneurs.

E-mail as a means of interviewing is not reliable. There was no possibility to specify the questions or the answers and therefore the likelihood of mutual misunderstanding was great. The answers show that the concept “water protection” was not clear for all participants. Therefore, the data is not consistent. About the validity of the data, the entrepreneurs had various amount of information about the water protection. One answerer was specialized in the water protection methods, the rest of the answerers had no specific expertise on the subject. There was no punishment or a prize promised for certain answers. There is no reason to assume that these four answers are not valid. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 156.)

The above-mentioned issues can give a reason for further research on the topic: there is clearly room for improvement in the awareness of the importance of water protection in the tourism companies.



## 9 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

A personal desire as an inhabitant of Pori to contribute to the local tourist attraction and a nature destination, Yyteri area, led to solutions which benefit several stakeholders. The information concerning the current situation about Yyteri showed that I was not the only one having these designs. The information about the current state of the Baltic Sea made me realise that this moment is more favorable to a development plan for Yyteri than ever.

The inhabitants of Yyteri area and the city of Pori have already had wishes and plans to improve the business of the area. Those wishes include year round activities and also a nature centre. When starting this thesis with the nature centre concept, I was not aware of the similar intentions of the local residents. Therefore, I was delighted to be able to contribute to the plans with this thesis. In addition to these facts, I discovered that the global trends in tourism and Finland's tourism strategy speak on behalf of taking this development plan further.

The partner in this thesis, the Baltic Sea Challenge, offered their help in the form of expertise in water protection. They also had the willingness to learn about tourism entrepreneurs and what they think about water protection. All the ingredients for a suitable service in Yyteri were at hand. Finally, the pieces fell into places when the thought of the local entrepreneur's participation was included in the development plan. It seemed like a win- win situation.

After generating the development plan for the nature centre, with its employing and educating mission, followed the next output: the registered trademark for the Baltic Sea Challenge. Creating a registered trademark for this service concept brings benefits both for the service providing party and its users, the tourists. It gives the Baltic Sea Challenge and its partners an advantage of differentiating from other tourist at-

tractions and an opportunity to influence on the tourism; where do people travel and how big of a stress it is for the environment. The operating parties also gain economic advantage by the registered trademark. The Baltic Sea Challenge has the exclusive right to use the concept and the two other parties can get tourists to use their services. The tourists are given a chance to experience something different in a unique environment and in a guaranteed, environmentally friendly way. The registered trademark is a proof of controlled quality, also in the line of tourism.

The presence of the Baltic Sea Challenge network and its expertise makes this nature centre unique and innovative. At the moment, there are no nature centres in Finland which 1) concentrate especially on the Baltic Sea and water protection, 2) give the municipalities professional tools to carry on sustainable tourism, and 3) employ a local entrepreneur, all in one service. This specific tourist destination would be one of a kind in Finland. There are no similar destinations where there are three parties- the Baltic Sea Challenge, the municipality and a local entrepreneur- operating together, forming a unit which is open all year round and promotes water protection and educational tourism services under one roof.

The outcome of this thesis ended up being more significant and useful than I expected. Taking a step to a direction that is close me as a private person gave me prospects that I could not predict in the beginning of the process. The concrete example of those prospects is the registered trademark which is brings benefit to the registrant but to others involved, too. Having personal ambitions about the environment I live in and working for this thesis led back to my personal ambitions. Hopefully, it helps me find employment related to nature or the area in which I live. After this experience, I know that I can work systematically and controlled to reach the target I have set. It made me realise that this degree programme gave me good abilities to set goals and tools to find my way professionally to the destination. The initial idea of Innovative Business Services is to educate experts to meet the needs of the ever changing working life. Especially services need to be developed into more efficient direction. With the innovative service concept for Yyteri, I think I have achieved that goal of our degree programme. Because this thesis reflects my passion for nature and the skills I have gained during my studies, I want to make use of it in the working life in the future.

About the transferability of the thesis research results: there are good conditions in Finland for applying this concept in other nature destinations, too. All factors needed to implement this concept can be found in several municipalities. The tourist destinations lie always in a municipal area and there are probably local entrepreneurs operating near tourist destinations. The Baltic Sea Challenge's willingness to collaborate in different destinations in Finland is the most discretionary factor in the future utilization of this concept. If the operating parties of this nature centre concept want to design each destination into more unique direction, more interviews could be carried out among the tourism entrepreneurs. That way, the experience from the grass-roots could be used throughout all the phases of realisation of the concept. It would also ensure that the needs of the customers were met, which again leads into better customer satisfaction. Also, the waste of resources would be avoided. A different kind of study approach could be taken to this kind of project, depending on the particular, wanted viewpoint. In this case, the case study approach and development plan were chosen for the thesis because a certain phenomenon was to be described: the current situation of Yyteri area and new observations were to be made: how the state of the Baltic Sea could be improved by the cooperation of the municipalities and the companies.

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## APPENDIX 1

The questions of the tourism entrepreneur questionnaire in Finnish:

1. Miten käytätte Itämeri- teemaa yrityksenne markkinoinnissa?
2. Millaisena markkinointivalttina/ imagotekijänä näette puhtaan Itämeren?
3. Käytättekö vesiensuojelunäkökulmaa markkinoinnissa? Jos käytätte, niin miten?
4. Millä tavoin vesiensuojelunäkökulmaa voisi hyödyntää markkinoinnissa?
5. Mitkä seikat kannustaisivat yritystänne organisaation sisäiseen vesiensuojelutyöhön?
6. Mitkä seikat kannustaisivat yritystänne vesiensuojelun esiintuomiseen asiakkaille?
7. Tuleeko mieleenne jotain muuta asiaan liittyen, jonka haluatte tuoda esille tässä yhteydessä?



