

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences  
Business Administration, Lappeenranta  
Master's Degree Programme in International Business Management

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## **The development of cross-border sport tourism**

Thesis 2018

## **Abstract**

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The development of cross-border sport tourism, 80 pages, 2 appendices

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The objective of this thesis was to develop the cross - border sport tourism project involving the key stakeholders from business, governmental and sport organizations of both countries, in order to obtain the grant for further intensive and long-term cooperation in the declared regions. The work was commissioned by the lead partner organization that was Etela-Savon Liikunta. The project proposal that constituted the case study of the thesis was evaluated by Managing Authority of the Program and selected for the grant contract. The case study project was developed in accordance to logical framework methodology designed for developmental projects. Data for this thesis was collected during the work on project proposal for the case company through the series of program trainings, in collaboration with experts, project team discussions, observations, from relevant literature review and existing academic research findings.

The result of the thesis was the constituted case of project proposal on cross-border sport tourism cooperation that was successfully submitted for the evaluation and was awarded with required funding. Such result demonstrated the practical relevance of sport tourism as an activity of cross-border cooperation. It also confirmed that sport tourism could have a significant influence on social and economic development of border regions and create certain conditions for lively, active and competitive economy.

The constituted case can be used as a reference for practitioners for further implementation of sport tourism projects and initiatives for SMEs and regional development. A further study is required to evaluate the results of the proposed project and its effectiveness in respect to the program regions.

Keywords: cross-border cooperation, sport tourism, regional development, developmental project

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Today's trend in the economic development relates to the operation of multinational alliances, intensification of cross-border cooperation when most countries belong to some supranational coalitions. These coalitions include trading blocks, free trade areas, customs unions and economic alliances. Dozens of these alliances exist in different parts of the world and take many forms. Tourism directly or indirectly is affected by the various intergovernmental policies and regional strategies in the areas of environmental protection, cross-border trade in goods and services, cross-border movement of tourists and human resources, common currencies and passports, supranational funding in development (Aalbu, H., 1997; Zaitseva & Kropinova, 2016).

Tourism as a direction for cross-border cooperation has an increasing potential in boosting the economic activity in the regions, establish long-term cross-border cooperation and sustainable development. Particularly, sport tourism is one of the most developing branches of tourism with significant economic value and potential (Zaitseva & Kropinova, 2016).

Sport tourism can be identified as a true sign of our times as nowadays, families, teams and individuals are on the move. Motives are different: for some it is competition, others seek interaction with likeminded travelers and the most are acting as spectators. In every case, money is spent. Such spending has a beneficial effect on local economies, helping to support perhaps millions of employees of companies serving travelers' needs. In many cases, such companies represent SMEs that mainly benefit from involvement in the sport tourism business (Vehmas, 2010; Gammon, S. & Robinson, T. 1997; Gibson, H. 2004).

Therefore, on the state level, governments try to support the cooperation in the field of tourism via various funds and policies. On the level of the EU such funding is realized through a series of cross-border cooperation programs. How effective these programs are and how they can intensify the business activities and

SMEs development in certain regions can be worth discussing within the format of the master's thesis.

The South-East Finland – Russia CBC 2014-2020 program is one of the three programs implemented at the border regions between Finland and Russia. The program contributes to economic and social development, mitigate common challenges and promote mobility among actors of regional relevance to further improve cross-border cooperation and the sustainable prerequisites of the program area. The program is supporting cooperation projects working for a more innovative and more accessible region, where partners look for joint solutions to common issues (South-East Finland-Russia CBC 2014-2020 Joint Operational Programme, 2015).

The total funding frame of the program is 72.3 million euros of which the EU co-financing is 50% and the other half equally covered by the state co-financing from Finland and Russia (50%/50%) (South-East Finland-Russia CBC 2014-2020 Joint Operational Programme, 2015).

Tourism is one of the prioritized directions in this cross-border cooperation program. Russia and Finland have a long history of sport and tourism relationships and well-established working partnership networks. Understanding the potential of sport tourism and seeking for extension in the economic relationships between these countries, the governments of Russia and Finland provided the full support for sport tourism related projects.

## **1.2 Research question, objectives and delimitations**

As the project of the case company is planned under the business and SME development which priorities lively, active and competitive economy, therefore the overall objective is to attract the business to invest, locate and operate in the program area. Thus, the culture and tourism industry (including well-being) is considered as one of the measures within this priority.

The purpose of the thesis study is to develop a competitive project proposal for the case company that will be able to accomplish the overall objective of the cross-border cooperation project and obtain financial funding for project realization. Also, the present study aims at constituting the practical case of one cross-

border cooperation project in the sport tourism that can be further on utilized as a sample for future applicants that operate in this subject area.

The research question for the thesis study is to explore: How the cross- border cooperation in the sport tourism contributes to the lively, active and competitive economy in the program region?

To accomplish the cross-border program objective, the case company is planning the system of actions for promoting business and SME development through its project with key partners. These actions will include the support of the most potential business cooperation activities (subcontracting, production cooperation, joining forces in the marketing of products and services etc.), promotion of the mutual brand of the region on the internal and external markets in order to promote the attractiveness of the region in terms of investments, develop the intensive and environmentally sound tourist industry and increase tourist attractiveness of the region via promoting sport tourism and developing new products and services, foster cooperation between public and private sector, enhance competitiveness, support the development and modernization of tourism.

Through this practical case, the author tries to develop practical solutions and recommendations on how to incorporate sport tourism into cross-border cooperation with the involvement of SMEs, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, public entities and sport organizations. This is a unique case example where all the various stakeholders from the public and private sector are united to activate the cross-border for the enhancement of lively, active and competitive economy of both program regions.

### **1.3 Structure of the thesis**

The present thesis consists of introduction, theoretical part, methodology, practical part, summary and discussion. The theoretical part presents the key concepts and models that are taken into the consideration for the constituting the practical case of the thesis. The methodology part is the explanation of the project development process that has been followed by the author when preparing the application paper for the Managing Authority of the CBC 2014-2020. The practical part is a case study itself that demonstrates the real project application model that has

been submitted for the grant receipt. The summary and discussion reveal the key outcomes and lessons learnt on the process of developing such a case of developmental project for its further practical utilization.

## **2 Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 The tradition of cross border cooperation in Europe**

After the World War II, many nations began to shift their views towards deeper political cooperation and stability and considered the idea of partnering with neighbors. Therefore, economies opened their borders towards the extension of production and consumption of goods and services. Cross-border partnerships were seen as a way of expanding supply and demand, as each collaborating country could specialize in what it was most efficient (Practical Guide to Cross border Cooperation, 2000).

Scale is crucial in understanding cross-border cooperation. Thus, there are at least four different scales in trans-frontier cooperation: global organizations, regional alliances, bilateral networks and inter-local cooperation (Costa, Panyik & Buhalis, 2013).

At the largest scale these are organizations that have a multiplicity of member countries throughout the world. Examples of this include United Nations, and the World Trade Organization. The EU is an example of regional alliances that are usually geographically bounded and cohesive and involve three or more countries. These can be also trade alliances, customs unions and economic communities (Practical Guide to Cross- border Cooperation, 2000).

Bilateral arrangements represent the cooperation between few countries often between the smaller country and its largest neighbors. Inter-local cooperation refers to small regions or areas of countries reaching across political frontiers to work with adjacent areas on the other side. Euroregions are an example of this. These are small trans-frontier regions where public agencies and private organizations work together to address certain social, economic and technical issues in the borderlands. Nowadays, more and more cross-border areas realize that they have common socio-economic concerns that can be addressed via collaborations

from both sides of the boundary. This is related also to the areas divided by international borders, like Russia and Finland (Practical Guide to Cross-border Cooperation, 2000).

In EU level, cross-border cooperation as a key element of the EU policy towards its neighbours aimed at supporting sustainable development along the EU's external borders, helps reducing differences in living standards and addressing common challenges across these borders (Practical Guide to Cross-border Cooperation, 2000).

Cross-border cooperation promotes cooperation between the EU countries and neighborhood countries sharing a land border or sea crossing. Funding can also be provided for a program between several EU and neighborhood countries which, for example, are part of the same sea basin. Cross-border cooperation is aimed at promoting economic and social development in border areas, as well as addressing common challenges such as environmental, public health, safety and security. The other aim is creating better conditions for people (Practical Guide to Cross-border Cooperation, 2000).

The EU is also actively involved in cross-border between the states that emerged from the break-up of the USSR on the one hand, and the countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean on the other. Particularly, such a country as Finland is known for its intensive and well developed cross-border cooperation with Russia in the area of Saint-Petersburg (Cross-border cooperation-benefiting from borders, 2011).

Finland has a successful history and positive experience in the realization of cross-border cooperation projects both within the EU and with Russia. The development of cross-border cooperation started from 1996 when The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funded the South-East Finland INTERREG II A programme 1996-1999. The key objectives of the programme were targeted at the improvement of border crossing points and creating conditions for later large-scale projects. The project also aimed at the increase in economic and commercial profitability, promotion of job creation and the competitiveness of the services and operations of companies in the programme area.



The Tacis programme of 1996 gave a start to Russia, particularly Saint-Petersburg's active participation in such cooperation. From 1996 till 2003, a total of 134 projects were funded under Tacis CBC Small Project Facility. Saint-Petersburg was awarded with grants for 34 projects and Leningrad Region for 27 projects (South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020 Joint Operational Programme, 2015).

The South-East Finland – Russia INTERREG III A programme of the period of 2000-2004, specified at developing border crossing points and transport links, maintaining and improving the state of the environment, supporting expertise and the conditions for cooperation and welfare, and increasing the number of SMEs and improving their operational preconditions (South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020 Joint Operational Programme, 2015).

South-East Finland - Russia Neighbourhood Programme 2004-2006 replaced previous INTERREG III program and introduced a new approach to Neighbourhood Programmes. Since that time, the EU was providing financing for the Russian partners through TacisCBC. There was a single application and project selection procedure developed for joint projects. Russian authorities and Commission representatives worked together at the revision of programme documents so they would better comply with common priorities (South-East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020 Joint Operational Programme,2015).

The South-East Finland – Russia ENPI CBC 2007-2013 Programme funded joint projects across the border from one financial source, including EU co-financing, Russian co-financing and Finnish co-financing. It had one single administrative procedure and contract. The programme management was based on equality and partnership between the participating countries. A remarkable amount was allocated to large scale investment projects (South-East Finland - Russia CBC 2014-2020 Joint Operational Programme, 2015).

The lessons learned from the CBC cooperation of the previous years were taken into consideration during the preparation of the South-East Finland – Russia CBC Programme for the period 2014- 2020. The partners were working as one team in such tasks as project management, selection and decision making

processes. The experts from Russia and Finland were involved in the creation of the project evaluation system. This resulted in familiarization of a new way of working at programme management and project implementation by Russian and Finnish partners (South-East Finland - Russia CBC 2014-2020 Joint Operational Programme, 2015).

South-East Finland – Russia Neighbourhood Programme 2004-2006 and the ENPI CBC 2007-2013 significantly contributed to the development and collaboration between participating regions. Cross-border cooperation involved a large number of discussions on its sustainability and impact that emphasized the value of such cooperation in the intensification and optimization of the collaboration between regions (South-East Finland-Russia CBC 2014-2020 Joint Operational Programme, 2015).

Each of these scales of cross- border cooperation projects between Russia and Finland have salient implications for tourism. On the different scale levels, all involved stakeholders try to maximize the potential of tourism from economic and social aspects.

## **2.2 Cross border cooperation in tourism**

Cross-border cooperation is an interesting area for research and analysis that has been unfortunately neglected. Such border destinations can be placed in a separate category of tourism with special attention to them.

Based on existing knowledge and research findings, border tourism destinations are seen to have more problems than possibilities. These problems are related to the limited natural resources, logistics problems, limited infrastructure and small population (Markovic, S.V.& Seric, N., 2011). However, a common border can provide wide range of possibilities that can include a richer variety of natural resources, cultural and historical heritage, human resources and economic potential (Zimmermann, F.M, 2001.; Zaitseva & Kropinova, 2016).

Therefore, the unique opportunities and evident potential of cross-border cooperation in tourism can be used as an instrument for the development of the sustainable tourism cluster with international aspirations. Thus, borders are

perceived more as an access to more advanced and richer tourism offerings (Zimmermann, F.M., 2001; Zaitseva & Kropinova, 2016).

The cross-border tourism potential can be studied from the perspective of tourism key stakeholders' attitudes. For example, the study of borderlands along the Slovene-Croatian frontier focused on the attitudes of the tourism supply providers in the frontier regions with regards to cooperation and their interest in increasing competitiveness by creating joint cross-border tourism products (Vodeb, 2010). The study was addressed to the perceptions of small and medium tourism companies in the borderlands in regard to competitiveness of the frontier regions and how it can be enhanced through cross-border cooperation between the destinations. Another aspect was related to the evaluation of interest of tourism actors in the frontier regions in cross-border cooperation in tourism. The competitiveness of the frontier destinations was assessed based on five factors from Crouch and Ritchie's competitiveness model: appeal, management, organization, information and efficiency. A factor analysis of responses in this survey identified the variables affecting cross-border cooperation. The research concluded that tourism and cross-border cooperation are perceived a powerful tool to develop border regions (Vodeb, 2010).

The study by Cankar, S. et al. in 2014, was aimed at determining the factors that influence cross-border cooperation between tourism businesses in the Alps-Adriatic region (Cankar et al., 2014). One of the main conclusions of this study was that personal relations, language skills and mutual interests enhanced cooperation, while administrative and legislative systems were barriers to it.

The above mentioned studies are considered as a platform for defining the cross-border cooperation theory today. The theoretical aspects of cross-border cooperation are focused on the analysis of its relationships with tourism. One of the main points in this theory is that cross-border cooperation is an interregional phenomenon that requires public facilitators, i.e. international, national, local and regional level authorities, for the practical implementation of the cooperation. The cooperation itself is an important notion that emphasizes the need for interaction between destinations in order to better market the tourism product effectively and meet the competition at the regional or global level (Vodeb, 2012).

The needs, priorities and capabilities in frontier regions define the selection of concrete forms of cross-border cooperation. These factors can be studied through surveys and studies on stakeholder's attitudes. The degrees of involvement of state and official organizations define various forms of cross-border cooperation, also the extent of formalization of this process and size of investments. The subject for the cross-border cooperation specifies the way it is organized. For example, it can be cooperation on existing tourist segments, on new potential tourist segments, on improving existing products, or creating new tourist products (Vodeb, 2012).

The three-step action by Markovic, S.V. & Seric, N. (2011) describes the cross – border cooperation as a process of a few stages that includes the conduct of preliminary actions for developing a framework of conditions for the effective participation in cross-border cooperation, the shift in a destination's policy from traditional marketing towards development-oriented goals and establishing of common forms of cross-border cooperation when an existing destination's stakeholders are put together into the local level working groups or councils.

The practical guide to cross-border cooperation (2000) develops the categorization of possible actions for promoting of cross-border cooperation between tourist destinations. Cross-border cooperation on the upper strategic level involves higher officials and local governments that work together to develop a joint plan and policy for regional tourism products and their integration into the cross-border tourism brand. This joint work includes certain preparatory actions such as destination resources' audits, analysis of destination profiles and finding common meeting points for cooperation (Practical guide to cross-border cooperation, 2000).

Another action relates to cross-border cooperation through the implementation of specific projects between frontier destinations. This form of cross-border cooperation can involve a wide range of organizations and actors in the tourism industry. Their joint work results in external promotion of the cross-border destination, creation of joint tourism information systems, joint marketing, creation of cross-border networks of tourism suppliers and joint training in skills

required by the tourism industry (Practical guide to cross-border cooperation, 2000).

The joint branding of tourist products in frontier destinations provide a promising ground for cross- border cooperation at different levels. In this case, the tourism products in border regions are being marketed under the same umbrella brand and using a joint communication platform. Therefore, the main competitive advantage gained through cross-border cooperation by frontier destinations is building of a stronger interregional joint tourist brand that gains from the variety of historical, cultural and other resources in these frontier regions. This form of cooperation is studied by Markovic, S.V.& Seric, N (2011) in the model for evaluation of tourist resources in the border area of Karlovac County and Southeast Slovenia. In this study, brand management in cross-border tourism is used as a supporting method to find the right market position for the cross-border tourist area in the global tourist context (Markovic, S.V.& Seric, N.2011). This cross-border cooperation model for creating a joint tourist brand for two or more destinations also mentions the different strategies for branding already existing common tourist products, and for the implementation of the new common tourist products for the border areas.

The factors that stimulate cross-border cooperation are the main area of cross-border cooperation studies. Cankar (2014) suggested to classify the factors of cross-border cooperation considering the positive experience of involved stakeholders with previous cross-border cooperation projects, the transaction costs that should be low in order to shift to joint marketing, the availability of funds for cross- border cooperation, existing need for economic development in the regions, good network of partners between the cooperation regions and their collaboration experience, size of cooperation area, desire to solve common problems and shared common interests, the presence of language and intercultural communication skills to facilitate cross-border cooperation, existence of transnational organizations, availability of cross-border cooperation experts, similiarity of business structures and regional administrative structures.

The establishment of the interregional or multinational tourism cluster that embraces a group of smaller destinations across the borders would normally

result in many benefits for its members, and in consequence in building a strong interregional brand and product portfolio. The cross-border region can offer a unique range of products and can replace the existing competition between the regions with more opportunities (Practical guide to cross-border cooperation, 2000).

The benefits of such cooperation can result in synergy effects of economy of scale, provide access to larger markets and better distribution channels, create a stronger tourism brand and marketing platform by accumulating international funds, human resources, technologies and efforts, allow transferring of knowledge and expertise between regions, create more competitive and high-quality regional tourism products and strive to achieve more sustainable regional development in the long term (Prokkola, E.K., 2010; Practical guide to cross-border cooperation, 2000).

Therefore, these potential gains explain why the elements of cross-border cooperation and clustering are internationally pursued in contemporary tourism planning policies. In particular, these instruments are useful for frontier and distant regions that are less promoted in a global world tourism context and do not favor attractive geographical and historical position, infrastructure and other objective factors (Prokkola, E.K., 2008).

Taken all of these issues into account, cross-border tourism cooperation can result in increasing competitive advantages and overall competitiveness for the destinations involved in collaboration. However, it is important to consider certain challenges as the process of clustering with respect to joint branding of existing or new tourist products is a complicated and demanding task. The cultural, geographical, economic and other differences between the parts of this cooperation process are both the resources to create a new competitive unit and improve the destination's own performance, as well as a series of serious challenges. A practical example of such a challenge in collaborating across the borders is that it would set the requirement for each destination involved in this process to have the same or at least comparable standard quality for its tourist products or tourist facilities (Prokkola, E.K., 2008; Zaitseva & Kropinova, 2016).

The overview of possible challenges or barriers to cross-border cooperation is provided by Cankar et al. (2014). In studying the attitudes of businesses in the border areas of the Alps-Adriatic region, Cankar identified such barriers as complex administrative and funding systems, legislation that is not harmonized or too different in border areas, frequent changing of the rules of business, unstable political situations, unfavorable historical events, corruption, security problems, poor infrastructure, quality of the banking systems, differences in culture that hinder intercultural communication, language barriers, barriers that are rooted in historical or political differences, lack of local, regional, national government assistance, lack of assistance from business associations, poor purchasing power of nearby markets on the other side of the border, poor quality and productivity of local firms, product differentiation of local economy and unfavorable geographical conditions in border regions

Another classification of the typical barriers to improving competitiveness of a frontier destination through cross-border cooperation is found in Practical guide to cross-border cooperation (2000):

- Gaps in knowledge and information about how a tourist destination can become the cross-border platform for creating and offering tourism products;
- Misunderstanding, lack of communication and conflicts between the stakeholders across borders as well as the conflict of tourism as an industry with other activities;
- Shortage in cross-border expertise, existing networks and experience in collaborating on tourism between stakeholders across the borders
- Gaps in accessibility, transport and economic infrastructure that is required by tourism;
- Not enough expertise and knowledge that are required to supply quality products and services in tourism across borders;
- Insufficient knowledge of markets, tourism products and knowledge of how to market and communicate destination to target markets;
- The fear that there exists a serious threat of competition from the neighboring destination, which means that cooperation will result in worsening current conditions.

Returning to the case of the cross-border cooperation of Russia and Europe, it is important to consider certain contemporary problems they are facing at this area. Thus, according to the research paper of Zaitseva & Kropinova (2016), these problems include:

- Macroeconomic problems that involve the negative impact of sanctions on bilateral socio-economic relations between Russia and Europe. This resulted in reduced financial stability of the enterprises, increased the number of bankruptcies due to the global economic crisis.
- Socio-economic problems of development of cross-border cooperation in the field of tourism. This involved the introduction of restrictions on visits abroad for a number of civil servants of Russia that resulted in the reduction of travelling to Europe. The decline of the ruble led to the decline of purchasing power of the population that caused the overall decline in the number of tourists and in travelling to Europe. Also, the price – quality aspect, when for Russians, it is too expensive to travel to Europe and for Europeans the quality of tourism products is not high enough, significantly reduced the attractiveness of Russian and European holiday destinations. Also, from Russian side there is a need for training of qualified personnel capable of providing high-quality services and developing tourism in cross-border areas.

Thus, the success of cross-border cooperation between Russia and Europe depends particularly on resolving the above mentioned problems. However, the existing positive cases of cross-border cooperation, for example, between Russia and Finland, demonstrate that these issues can be successfully resolved already at the level of individual areas of cross-border tourist regions thus enhancing the integration of population and industries in these areas (Zaitseva & Kropinova, 2016).

### **2.3 Sport tourism and its potential for cross-border cooperation**

Sport and travel have long history of interrelations. They have been linked together at least since the first Olympics in 776 BC and attracted a lot of spectators. These spectators were already called sport tourists at that time (Standeven & De Knop, 1999). During the Roman Empire times, sport travelling was more and more motivated by health and social reasons. As to sport, the



competitiveness of the event played an important role in travellers' motivation (Delpy, L.,1998).

The development of sport tourism during the middle ages was not intensive, it was mainly concentrated around sport tournaments but spectators did not travel too much (Weed & Bull, 2009). The industrial revolution of the 19th century brought a new wave of sport tourism development as it brought new transportation that allowed athletes and spectators to travel long distances (Hinch, T., & Higham, J. 2001).

Also, with the increase of income and improvement of general economic situation, people could afford spending money for travelling and sport. The first Olympic games in Athens in 1896 demonstrated a huge interest among spectators, however, visiting the games was not the only purpose as travellers wanted combine architecture or local food with watching sports (Standeven & De Knop, 1999).

The raise of interest in big sport events consequenced in their rapid growth and increasing economic potential. As sports and sport events become more available for wider audience, the number of sport travellers increased. The peak of sport tourism growth is assigned to the 1980s, however, a significant increase was present already from the 1960s when mass tourism started to take form and services for the travellers in general started to develop fast (Standeven & De Knop, 1999; Hudson, S. 2003).

Nowdays, sport related travel products are developing extensively and rapidly. They are always in request, especially those related to mega sport events. Mega sport events attract thousands of travellers around the world and poses huge economic potential and unique social values (Standeven & De Knop, 1999; Weed & Bull, 2009; Chalip, L., & Leyns, A. 2002).

As sport tourism is a rather new research area, there is a lack of clear concepts and definitions. Sport and tourism are associated with so many kind of trips that sometimes it is hard to identify its clear borders. Sport tourism is also viewed as a business phenomenon as it boosts the development of relevant infrastructure, various services and goods (Getz, D. 1998).

Sport tourism can also be explored through the motives and reasons why people include sports as a part of their trip. Some people are motivated to travel for active sports and exercising, others as passive spectators but they are all considered as sport tourists (Vehmas 2010; Gibson, H. 1998).

Therefore, the various forms of sport tourism led to the existing research interest in the area of this social activity. The concept of sport tourism has been widely defined by many scholars and nowadays we have quite a range of different definitions that allow understanding the concept. Thus, for Hall (1992) sport tourism is travelling away from home to be actively involved in sport as participant or watch sports events. Weed & Bull (2009) define sport tourism as all the vacations which have to do with sport activities. Gibson (1998) defines sport tourism as leisure travelling, which takes an individual momentarily away from their home area to participate in physical activities or to visit attractions that are associated with physical activities. Standeven and De Knop (1999) define sport tourism as either passive or active participation in sport activities. The participation in the activities is either organised or not organized and has commercial or non-commercial nature. Participation in sport activities also considers travelling to another destination (Gibson, H., Attle, S. & Yiannakis, A. 1997).

The above mentioned definitions of sport tourism emphasize the aspect of travelling away and the possibility to participate in sports. Also, the degree of participation in sports can also be considered in the sport tourism explanation. Thus, the participation can be active or passive .

Ritchie et al. (2004) suggest to divide sport tourism into three different categories which are active sport tourism, event sport tourism and nostalgia sport tourism. Active sport tourism comprises active participation of tourists in sports activities. These can be, for example, hiking, skiing and diving, cycling. Active sport tourism can be in a hard and soft mode. Competitiveness defines the difference between hard and soft modes. Participating in any sport activity without elements of competition is called soft active sport tourism. The competition in sport activity brings the hard active mode into sport tourism (Ritchie, B.W & Adair, D., 2004).

Travelling to sporting events is called event sport tourism. The events can be classified as mega events, such as the Olympic Games or football World Cup, local sport events like national championships and competitions. Usually, sports tourists travel to watch sport events. However, they still can be active and characterised by active watching and supporting the teams and athletes. Minor sport events are sometimes underestimated by the academic scholars. However, it is important to mention that many national leagues and championships have big potential and are very productive (Arlington, VA. Gibson, H. & Yiannakis, A. 1994; Ritchie, B.W. & Adair, D., 2004).

Nostalgia sport tourism is the other type of sport travellers that is mainly interested in sport related places of interests such as sport museums, parks, stadiums. In this case, the element of a sport event and its history is more important than event itself. Thus, the behaviour and motives of such tourists are closer to regular tourists who are in search for new attractions (Ritchie, B.W. & Adair, D., 2004).

Thus, tourists seek for various travelling experiences based on different motives that drive them. Some tourists seek to escape from everyday life and search for new places to be entertained. Others do not need to be entertained and would rather see an authentic way of life in different cultures and try to blend in the local culture. When it comes to sport event tourists, they consider both options: to be entertained and gain new and real experiences related to the venue, event itself and people around (Gibson, H. J., & Hinch, T. 2002).

## **2.4 Sport tourism as a sector of active economy in Saint-Petersburg and South-East Finland**

Tourism is considered as an important and potential direction for cross-boarder cooperation in the project area. Thus both Saint-Petersburg and South-East Finland are equally attractive for different types of tourists, including sport tourists.

If we look at the tourism potential of the both program regions, it is evident that that they have a significant competitive advantage that can be utilized through the realization of our sport tourism cross-border cooperation project. This

consequently will enhance the economy development and boost regional business activity to a certain level.

Saint-Petersburg is considered as the leading tourist destination for millions of international travelers. Saint Petersburg has significant historical and cultural heritage and is thus considered a highly attractive tourist destination. Saint Petersburg is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list as an area with 36 historical architectural complexes and around 4000 outstanding individual monuments of architecture, history and culture. The city has 221 museums, 2000 libraries, more than 80 theatres, 100 concert organizations, 45 galleries and exhibition halls, 62 cinemas and around 80 other cultural establishments. Every year the city hosts around 100 festivals and various competitions of art and culture, including more than 50 international ones (South-East Finland - Russia CBC 2014-2020 Joint Operational Programme, 2015; Official site Administration of St. Petersburg).

The most important development in tourism business in Saint Petersburg and the Leningrad region in the past decade has been the commercialisation of tourism services. Domestic tourism has been developing rapidly. Although tourism represents only a small proportion of the economy of the two Russian regions as a whole, it can become one generator of growth for the regional economies.

As to sport tourism, Saint-Petersburg has all the conditions for constituting a good case of this phenomenon. Historically, this city is considered as one of the key sport centers of Russia, famous for its extensive sport infrastructure, big number of sport clubs and organizations together with a significant experience in hosting various sport events.

In terms of sport infrastructure, Saint-Petersburg counts 6 435 sport units. These include stadiums, planar sport facilities, sport halls, sport palaces, indoor sport facilities with artificial ice, riding halls, cycle tracks, swimming pools, skiing lodges and others. The total number of workers in this field is 14,841 people, of which 9,876 people have higher education and 567 employees have advanced degrees. The age cohort of experts up to 30 years is 4.500 people, 31-60 is 8.800 people, over 60 is 1.400 people (South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-

2020 Joint Operational Programme, 2015; Official site Administration of St. Petersburg).

The city is famous for hosting various sport events of international significance such as Ice Hockey World Championship in 2016 and FIFA World Cup 2018. Besides this, Saint-Petersburg has a big number of traditional sport events such as: Traditional junior football tournament in commemoration of the first FIFA Vice-President V.A. Granatkin; International Marathon "The Way of Life"; International Swimming competitions "Vesely Delfin"; International Marathon "White Nights"; International gymnastics competitions "Alexander Dytyatin Cup"; International boating competitions "Zolotye Vesla"; International fencing competition "Rapier of St. Petersburg"; Combats Arts Olympics "East-West"; International competitions "Ski sprint on the Palace Square"; International basketball tournament "V. Kondrashina A. Belova Cup"; International race "Women dozen"; The stage of the world championship powerboat races "Formula -1"; Stage of fencing world Cup "Grand-Prix" Rapier of St. Petersburg"; International Boxing tournament "Saint-Petersburg Governor Cup "; International tennis tournament ATP "St. Petersburg Open" (Official site Administration of St. Petersburg).

In addition to these events, a lot of active work in the direction of mass culture and fitness is conducted with local population. The number of participants of mass sport activities and competitions is more than 1 million people annually. Mass nationwide Russian competitions include: "Ski track of Russia" (25 000 thousands of participants); "Russian Azimuth" (5 000 thousands of participants); "Cross of nation" (18 000 thousands of participants); "Orange ball" (3 000 thousands of participants" (Official site Administration of St. Petersburg).

The district centers of physical culture sports and health were created in 16 districts of St. Petersburg. Two districts (Nevsky and Centralny) have mass sport departments working with citizens based on a functioning sport school. 32 000 of St. Petersburg citizens were involved in physical and wellness activities in district centers. The workers of district centers successfully carry inner sport grounds and respond for their maintenance. At winter time of 2013-2014 were prepared

299 places for winter spots: 84 mass skating rinks, 137 hockey skating rinks, 113 ski tracks (Official site Administration of St. Petersburg).

Youth sport is a fast-developing branch of city sport. Saint-Petersburg has 229 teenager and junior clubs. The total number of young people studying sports is 33,957. These numbers are supported by 450 000 students in St. Petersburg who also actively participate in various sport events on the local and international level. Therefore, Saint-Petersburg has all the pre-conditions for active and progressive development of sport tourism both on country and international levels (Official site Administration of St. Petersburg).

International travel to Finland is on a strong growth path with an increase in international overnights by 5% in 2016. International travel to Finland increased to a total of 5.8 million visits. If the trend holds, especially among Russian and Asian visitors, 2017 was set to be an exceptional year. Safe and sustainable business environment creates a strong foundation for travel business.

Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 ranked Finland the safest travel destination in the world. Comparing a total of 136 countries, the report focuses specifically on the sustainable development of the travel and tourism sector. The country was highly evaluated in terms of promoting green values and received the highest rank for environmental sustainability. The key reasons for choosing Finland as a tourism destination are: exceptional growth creates demand for new concepts and services, the safest travel destination in the world, a hub easily accessible both from East and West, unique, clean and unspoiled nature with high sustainability standards, four distinct seasons (Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, 2017).

Due to its location, South East Finland benefits from transit travel from Russia to other parts of Finland and other countries. A large proportion of the visits are one-day shopping trips. Russian tourists visiting South Savo usually come for a vacation.

South-East region is one of the most growing tourism clusters in Finland. This area has developed into a versatile and high-quality recreation area and fitness

center for citizens and residents of the surrounding area. It has all the prerequisites for especially activate vacationing and recreation, as well as a great environment for entrepreneurship (Invest Imatra website).

In terms of exercise and sport facilities, South-East Finland makes up the newest, versatile round-the-year sports and exercise area in Finland, located on the shore of Saimaa. Both domestic and foreign clubs and teams take advantage of the training and competing conditions. Finnish national championships as well as European and World championship-level competitions are arranged in the area annually. The area's range of sports covers over 70 different sports. The latest investments are stadiums for Finnish baseball, skiing, biathlon and a roller skiing track completed in 2016 (Invest Imatra website).

The versatile selection of accommodation and its significant capacity in this area has been created. The spas, hotels and villas around the supplementary services, halls and stadiums in the area create a compact and harmonious whole for a short well-being holiday, a week-long training camp or a vacation for workplace health promotion (Invest Imatra website).

To conclude, South-East Finland and Saint-Petersburg Russia are well-developed in terms of sport tourism opportunities that can be successfully utilized for boosting business activity and regional development in the framework of the proposed cross-border cooperation project.

### **3 Methodology**

This thesis presents the project development case based on standard project methodology. The development of the project started from the problem analysis and acknowledgement, recognition of potential needs that can be satisfied throughout this project and the prognosis of potential results (Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

The discussion of project ideas was initiated by the project organization that is the lead partner and in search of adequate partners. Ideas can be originated from different types of stakeholders and differ in their purpose and scope. At the same time, the success of the proposed ideas depends on the importance of the

consistency with the approved programmer's strategy. Once the lead partner has selected the relevant partners for the project, they are all engaged in developing the idea further through joint discussion and exchange (project development). The discussion process continues with the identification of the objectives, results and outputs of the project. Objectives and results are defined in relation to those prescribed in the programme. At the same time, the programme reaches its objectives and results through project achievements (Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

The roles and responsibilities within the partnership are agreed upon, together with the work plan and budget. Another stage is an application preparation that is done according to set standards and further project submission (Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South-East Finland-Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

The data collection process for constituting the project proposal and present thesis included an extensive review of literature and existing research on sport tourism, cross-border cooperation and project development aspects. The author was involved in a series of project trainings that were organized by Managing Authority during the project preparation stage. This trainings included brainstorming, methodology practice and exploration and, overall, resulted in building the expertise in the project management process.

Also, the author of the thesis was involved in the the work of project team and collected relevant information through observations, group discussions, personal meetings with the project director from the leading partner organization. As a result, this preparation process helped to collect the necessary data for buiding the case and submitting the project application.

### **3.1 Intervention logic**

The project is designed based on the intervention logic that can be defined as a result's chain clarifying the interventions' objectives and translating them into a hierarchy of effects intended to be achieved (until a level of outputs), directly influenced (outcomes) and indirectly influenced (impacts) by a policy or action



(Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

The intervention logic is also defined with an upwards approach, explaining how the interventions' activities are expected to transform inputs into outputs and outputs into outcomes and impacts, through which mechanisms, and if assumptions hold. The purpose to describe how an intervention is expected to lead to results is the same for the intervention logic and the logical framework approach (Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

According to the Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020 (2017), the steps of the Intervention Logic include:

1. Identification of needs (the overall objectives): The starting point in setting up intervention logics is to identify the needs to be satisfied. These needs are translated into the overall objectives of your intended impacts.
2. Identification of the specific objectives (the outcomes): Identification of the outcomes (specific objectives) that are needed for the overall objectives to be achieved. The assumptions leading from outcomes to impacts need to be decided.
3. Identification of the outputs: Identification of the outputs that are needed for the outcomes to be achieved.
4. Identification of the activities: Identification of the activities that are needed for the outputs to be produced.
5. Development of the indicators: Development of the indicators with associated baselines, milestones and targets.

All in all, intervention logic fills in the gap between each activity and the objectives linking inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts.

### **3.2 Project indicators**

The project development process includes also the identification of indicators. An indicator itself means a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of an actor. The indicators are focused on desired change that the stakeholders expect. The indicators show what the improvement is and how far the target is (Programme manual. Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

Indicators allow verifying the achievement of the expected results and the evidence of the project impact. Effective and consistent indicators provide a tool that is capable of focusing attention on the desired change.

Indicators can be quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative indicators can be easily counted and they are expressed in a numerical form (absolute numbers, percentages, rate or ratio). Qualitative indicators measure quality, opinions, perceptions, stages in a process, or a status. They can be expressed in various forms (yes/no, compliance with, quality of, extent of, level of). They can also be expressed in numerical form, scores, or rankings (Programme manual. Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

Thus, indicators can be formulated at different stages of intervention logic: input, output, outcome and impact indicators. Input indicators measure the resources and means. Process indicators measure what happens during implementation and they mainly focus on the execution of activities. Output indicators show the degree of achievement of the direct products of an activity or set of activities. They are by nature activity-specific. Outcome indicators signal whether the short to midterm desired changes are happening. Impact indicators signal to what extent the overall objectives have been achieved (Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

An indicator comprises of :

- title: the name of the indicator
- definition, which describes the unit of measure, what is observed and how the value of the indicator is calculated;
- baseline: the reference value at the start of the intervention against which progress will be assessed;
  - milestone: the path towards the final target;
- final target, which signals how much change is expected and in what direction;
  - reference period to which the baseline, milestone and final target values refer;
  - source of verification; – indication of the frequency by which the indicator is or needs to be updated;
- and the responsibilities for collecting the data and building the indicator.

### **3.3 Logical Framework Approach**

For the project design and planning the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) is used. It helps to systemise the flow of project actions and activities. It helps to find out what the core problem of an issue is and what the best way to solve the problem. The LFA presents all the project information systemized in a form a table called the Logframe Matrix. The matrix helps to communicate what the project is about and how it will achieve its objectives. The matrix also contains monitoring and outcome indicators to help measure progress and success. It also assists in developing a project timeline and budget (Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

The steps of the LFA include stakeholder analysis, problem analysis, solution analysis, strategy analysis, logframe matrix, activity scheduling and resource scheduling. The project has to clearly define the tangible main outputs needed to reach their intended result (Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

The project success from a lead partne's perspective depends on the careful development of thematic activities of the project that constitute a set of tasks to be carried out throughout the whole project. These activities will lead to the main

project outputs that should be tangible. Finally, this all will result in a change in the areas where the main outputs are used.

When the project has been prepared by the lead partner organization, the relevance and cross-border value added has been considered. This means that the project should clearly contribute to the chosen programme's overall objective, addressing development needs that are shared across the regions participating in the project. The project allows the problems identified to be solved more efficiently jointly, instead of individual regions or a country acting alone. Solutions are jointly developed by organisations working together in a project, thereby showing a clear cross-border added value going beyond the results independently achievable in the involved regions/areas. The cross-border working approach has been reflected in the project outputs. All partners actively participate in the project, according to their functions and competences, in order to achieve the project results (Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

The lead partner organization has paid special attention to the selection of the main partners and their relevance. Thus, the criteria of competence and relevance for the development and implementation of the project activities, communication as well as capitalization of the planned outputs and results have become the decisive ones. Partners were also evaluated from the perspective of their capacity and required expertise to address the needs of the target groups and to achieve the project objectives and results, adequate experience and competence to implement the project, maximum dedication for the joint implementation of the project (Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

Another important aspect to be considered during project preparation is sustainability. The sustainability of project outputs and results is crucial for ensuring territorial impact and long-term benefits which continue after the project ends in order to reach the project's overall objectives. The project has to ensure that outputs obtained and results achieved are durable and suitable to be continued

after project closure. Sustainability has to be considered already when designing the project and to be integrated in the work plan (Guide for applicants and project partners responding to the calls for proposal of South- East Finland- Russia CBC 2014-2020, 2017).

The project is aimed at enhancing knowledge and skills, including e.g. the exchange of experience and good practice, innovations and capacity building. To achieve this, relevant actors in the partnership and during the project design and implementation are involved in order to ensure the availability of the relevant knowledge and expertise.

#### **4 Case study: developmental project oncross-border sport tourism in co-operation with regional sport federations, sport clubs, public authorities and business society.**

##### **4.1 Project summary**

By developing of the sport tourism sector in South-East Finland and Saint-Petersburg can make a substantial contribution to their economy and social sphere, providing substantial income annually and supporting hundreds of jobs. Sport tourism is becoming more and more popular in the program regions and reveal a clear trend in socioeconomic development, profiles cross- border cooperation and embodies spatial features of investment policies, wealth, local pride and environmental policies.

Researches and trends in the tourism sector clearly show that investments and tourism strategies for sport tourism in South-East Finland and Saint-Petersburg Russia are required. Local authorities and entrepreneurs are seeking for opportunities to enhance the number of tourists visiting areas. Sport tourism can create such opportunities. Sport tourism stimulates the movement of people from one country to another to take part in sport competitions and sport camps, which are based on the use of wide range of tourism services. In terms of overnight tourism growth, sport tourism can be considered as a profitable activity, because participation in sport tourism activities usually takes more than one day. For example, sport events refer to a larger number of participants for a longer period that will

require accommodation, catering, transportation services together with cultural and well-being program activities.

In addition to its cultural heritage, Saint-Petersburg can be considered as a sport tourism destination as the city is hosting a big number of major sport events of national and international level, as well as offers various sport, active leisure and well-being activities for professional athletes and amateurs. South-East Finland has four bright seasons and therefore four reasons to visit the country for active leisure and sport. Advanced sport infrastructure, high level of tourism products and services, good ecology, beautiful nature and generally high standards of living clearly constitute the competitive advantage of this Finnish region.

Thus, it is essential to create various opportunities and use the existing infrastructure, resources and services for the creating of new tourism products that would attract business and enhance the cross-border movement of tourists and professionals. Clearly, sport tourism provides a niche for this. In addition to that, the development of a new tourism sector such as sport tourism will stimulate business activity and create new business clusters.

The type of activities that can be included in forming of sport tourism products and services may involve the organization of sport events for professional and amateur athletes from both countries of the program area, e.g. sport camps, visiting major sport events as spectators, participation in seminars and topic related conferences, well-being and recreational activities. For example, sport events involve a big number of people that participate in the event as athletes and spectators for often more than one day. Thus, various stakeholders are involved in the process of event organization: from governmental to business bodies.

From the business perspective, the involvement in sport tourism activities may bring the access to new target groups of clients and income. Also, the involved business companies can get an access to the internationalization opportunities that will result in an exchange of knowledge, development of skills and competences while operating on the international level. Additionally, business can benefit from the partnership with public bodies that are involved in the sport tourism activities, as well as from the creation of new cross-border business clusters.

The objective of the project is to stimulate the development and promote sport tourism thus creating conditions for attracting business to locate and operate in the program area, as well as developing sustainable tourism enterprises and business in general. As a result, the development of sport tourism within the cross-border project will improve the tourism and sport infrastructure, international relations, business relations, economic growth, people migration, create new job opportunities and social added value in the participating countries of the program area.

The main beneficiaries of the project will be tourism entrepreneurs of South –East Finland and Saint-Petersburg regions. Organizing sport events and well-being activities will contribute towards the development of new tourism products. The investments within this project that will be made to develop the intensive tourist industry, create new sport tourism products and improve the cooperation of sport tourism companies and promoting sport tourism will be beneficial in a long - term perspective. The growth will have a positive effect on local businesses and will bring more life to tourism. It will increase returns, profitability and employment in all cross- border regions.

The project aims at targeting different groups of population in the program area that include:

1. Professional athletes both individual and teams of different age groups from different sports, that will participate in the various sport events of the program partners
2. Amateur athletes both individual and teams of different age groups, that will participate in grassroots and semi-professional sport events of the program partners
3. Professional coaches and sport educators that will participate in topic related events such as education seminars, conferences and knowledge exchange programs.
4. Small and medium enterprises that operate in tourism business in the program area
5. Public companies and NGOs that function in sport and tourism sphere in the program area

6. Disabled athletes, both professional and amateurs, as well as broader audience of such a target group that are interested in participation of sport events of such type.
7. Local and international tourists of cross- border areas of South-East Finland and Saint-Petersburg (youth, families, elderly people)
8. Inhabitants of cross- border areas

The following activities will be implemented:

1. Management and coordination.

To ensure the original timescale, planned budget and good service quality, the implementation of project activities will be supervised by the project management team on a regular basis. Each partner will have a project manager that will supervise the implementation of general and specific activities, will oversee organization, coordination, financial management, project reporting and follow-up in accordance with legislation requirements.

2. Information and visibility.

To disseminate the information about project related activities among the target groups, there will be regular press releases and news updates on the partners' websites, social media tools, TV, visibility materials

3. Seminars and workshops.

Seminars and workshops on project related topic will be aimed at establishing working relationships and setting-up the professional network that will gather practitioners, experts, stakeholders from business and public sectors. Also, special thematic workshops will allow to exchange best practices knowledge accumulation.

4. International sport events.

To create new tourism network and attract tourists, international sport events will be carried out. It is planned to organize 28 sport events: 18 in South- East Finland, 2 in Pajulahti and Tampere and 8 in Saint-Petersburg. Athletes from Russian and Finland and other EU countries will compete in skiing, triathlon, running, rowing, football, hockey, cycling, basketball, judo, wrestling, sport for disabled, orienteering, volleyball, swimming, family games.



The project is carried out to develop and promote sport tourism as well as the socio-economic development in cross-border areas of South – East Finland and Saint-Petersburg while creating new tourism products and services, creating new business opportunities for entrepreneurs in the program area and operating business networks, also through joint events and information activities.

The planned results of the project realization include:

1. New operating networks of cooperation in the sport tourism field between South – East Finland's and Saint-Petersburg's stakeholders will be established
2. Well informed societies of cross – border regions about the possibilities of sport tourism and active recreation, as well as new business opportunities and forms of economic activity;
3. Establishment of new and sustainable business initiatives between South – East Finland and Saint-Petersburg tourism related enterprises in a form of new cross- border economic clusters
4. Movement between cross-border areas will be fostered, and the number of visiting tourists will increase through creating new sport tourism products and services

Thus, the project creates the preconditions for the sustainable SMEs and business development in the program regions, contributes to the developmental processes in the program areas with the knowledge, expertise and resources that will be exchanged and accumulated during the project realization.

The cross-border cooperation will strengthen the capacity of South-East Finland's and St. Petersburg's local authorities, make significant input towards the development of the international tourism sector and attract business to operate in the program area.

#### **4.2 Project partners**

From the side of Saint Petersburg Russia, the key partner is St. Petersburg Sport Committee. The Committee for Physical Culture and Sports is the executive body of St. Petersburg government, the structural unit of the Government of St. Petersburg, established to carry out state policy and the implementation of state administration in the field of physical culture and sports in St. Petersburg, and to

coordinate activities in this field. The Committee in regards to the project will carry out activities in order to create conditions to attract citizens of St. Petersburg for physical activities, sports and healthy lifestyle. To promote mass sporting events in St. Petersburg in order to attract foreign sportsmen and fans to St. Petersburg and thus to increase the attractiveness of St. Petersburg on the international level.

The lead partner of the project is ETELA SAVON LIIKUNTA (ESLI) from Mikkeli. Southern Savo Sport Federation (ESLI in Finnish) is a nongovernmental sports organization and a member of the fifteen regional sports organizations of Finnish Sport Federation (FSF), which covers the whole country. It was founded in 1998 and serves as an umbrella organisation for all of its 116 members located in the region, such as sports clubs and other sports organizations. It covers 11 municipalities and works closely with them. Strictly and through its members it is tightly integrated in the network of whole Finnish sports federations and associations in different sports disciplines, organizations like the Finnish Olympic Committee and the Finnish Ministry of Education and Sport.

In this network South Savo Sports Federation operates on the local and regional level and participates in different programmes. On the International level it cooperates with EU countries such as Spain, France, Estonia in the Youth Action program that involves youth exchanges. It has the cooperation with St. Petersburg, Russia for more than 20 years. Today the number of employees is 16 and turnover about 1,1 million euros per year. The values of the organization consist of being a forerunner, deliver the joy of sports and team work. The mission of the organization is "Live your life with Sports".

Main goals of the organization are to serve and advise members in all sports and leisure issues, to support and help clubs and organizations to maintain their vitality in the future, to contribute to the well-being of people in Southern Savo, to operate in the region as a co-organizer with FSF, Valo (Finnish Sports Confederation), Finnish Olympic Committee and The Fit For Life Programme.

The activities of organization include different sport events, sport and leisure training and courses, summer sport camps for children, various projects for example sport project for students, schoolchildren's afternoon activities, guidance

for groups, sporty events for maintaining working ability, support and development of sport clubs.

The role of the organization is to be the lead partner of the project, particularly to organize and coordinate the work of the partners in the project, to gather the project team and steering group, to organize internal and external communication, to participate in the process of preparation and realization of the entire project activities, to prepare different reports including reports for managing authority.

The participation in the project will allow the lead partner organization to support and help local clubs and organizations to maintain their vitality in the future and to contribute to the well-being of people in Southern Savo.

The project partnership will be managed on the basis of the two-sided contract that should meet the interests of participating sides. The participating partners will bring their expertise, knowledge and skills to the successful project realization. Each partner has sufficient financial and human resources, as well as experience to cover the part of their expenses according to the budget and provided sustainable coverage of maintenance costs.

### **4.3 Project relevance**

Local authorities and entrepreneurs of the program area are seeking for opportunities to enhance the number of tourists visiting the areas. Thus, sport tourism can create such opportunities through stimulating the movement of people from one country to another to take part in sport competitions, sport camps and other active recreational activities which are based on the use of wide range of tourism services.

From the business perspective, there is a problem of diverse and separated environment that lacks networking and professionalism. Sport tourism business is a small market that requires institutional support and more professionalization. SMEs that operate in this sector are in search for support and new business opportunities in order to develop and grow, especially from the global perspective. Thus, the involvement of SMEs into the cross-border cooperation project will stimulate the development of this business sector and will allow to create new cross-border economic clusters.

The overall objective of the project is to attract businesses to invest, locate and operate in the program area. To reach the overall objective of the project it is necessary to create new and promote the existing places for sport tourism and well-being in the program areas, to be interesting and attractive for international sport tourists as well as the inhabitants of both regions.

In addition to that, there is a need for the creation of cross-border sport tourism business network to intensify the economic activity between the program regions. The implementation of the project will promote South-East Finland and Saint-Petersburg as centers for active and sports tourism and business attractive regions, that consequently will increase the number of visitors and money spending on vacation services.

The project strives to make the program regions as the most popular active and sport tourism and recreational centers. Specific marketing activities and international cross-border sports events will motivate potential visitors to the program areas as well as stimulate the business development and economic activity.

Thus, the specific objectives of the project: 1. To encourage business and entrepreneurs to operate in the program area 2. To develop regional potential for sport tourism 3. To increase cross-border cooperation in the sphere of sport and tourism 4. To develop mechanisms of regional support of SMEs that operate in the sport tourism sector.

The cross-border cooperation will strengthen the capacity of South-East Finland's and St. Petersburg's local authorities, make significant input towards the development of the international tourism sector and attract business to operate in the program area. The implementation of the project will increase the attractiveness of South-East Finland and Saint-Petersburg and will foster the international tourists' flow from all over Europe. Implemented marketing activities and international sport events will introduce and promote knowledge and territorial coherence for the development of attractive and new tourism products within the European Union.

The cross-border impact of the project will be directly reflected in stronger, more efficient cooperation networks between municipalities, businesses and non-governmental organizations. It will lead to a significantly increased number of further

cooperation projects and activities, and most importantly to business attractiveness.

This project is a symmetrical one where similar activities are carried out to reach main objective of the project to promote business, active and sport tourism as well as socio- economic environment in the cross-border areas of Saint-Petersburg and South - East Finland by promoting program areas as suitable for intense business activities, particularly through active and sport tourism.

Consequently, this will result in creating pre-conditions for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism enterprises and business in general. Best practices and policies instruments that will be exchanged in the framework of this project are aimed to develop active and sport tourism business in cross-border areas of Saint-Petersburg and South- East Finland.

Implemented marketing activities and international sport events will introduce and promote knowledge and real territorial coherence for the development of the efficient and new tourism products within the European Union. The cross-border impact is directly reflected in stronger, more efficient cooperation networks between municipalities, business supporting structures and commercial companies. The project contributes to the crosscutting issues of the program, because it widely involves sports societies and other non-governmental organizations of the cross-border regions which act based on equal opportunities for every civil society groups.

The project includes the "people-to-people" principle for every group of stakeholders such as students, business people, sportsmen, municipality representatives etc. In the process of the project implementation issues of the environmental sustainability and gender equality shall be ensured to practice in the events held. One of the important theme in the project is sport for the disabled people.

The project includes special events for them, such as Pajulahti games and equipment exhibition in Tampere for the experts in this field. In St. Petersburg the multi-functional center for the disabled people will be built approximately by 2019, thus during the project new technology sports equipment for the disabled people will be checked and obtained.

#### 4.4 Thematic indicators

The tables below demonstrate general and project specific indicators that will allow evaluating the results of the project realization.

Table 1. General project indicators

Thematic indicator name	Value
Number of enterprises participating in cross-border business events	55
Number of business organizations receiving support for new business opportunities and/or modernization of businesses	15
Number of created structures for regional SME support	10
Number of new cross-border economic clusters created	7

Source: by the author

Table 2. Specific project indicators

Thematic indicator name	Value
Number of innovation/ promotion/ initiatives for entrepreneurs	31
Number of operating networks created	10
Number of partnership contracts/agreements signed, involving municipalities, NGOs, SMEs and other institutions	15
Number of new sport tourism products/services created	31
Number of joint trainings, seminars, workshops for municipalities, NGOs, SMEs and other business entities	31

Source: by the author

#### 4.5 Work plan of the project

The project work plan is the central document that presents the main activities planned for the project realization. This is basically the content of project work developed in the consultation with the key project stakeholders.

Table 3. The description of project work plan

Name	Description	Output	Location
Management and organisation	Management group meeting in St. Petersburg, establishing web page (Internet resources), preparing promotional materials and printouts, visibility materials.	Management group is established, web page established (Internet resources), prepared promotional materials, printouts and visibility materials.	Russia- City of Saint Petersburg
Initiating of the project, project seminar No 1	Preparing and holding opening seminars on the introduction of the project in each region in Finland with publicity on the Internet and local media resources, press-conference in St. Petersburg. Additionally, in Finland information will go straight to all (386) members of 3 regional sports federations, 27 municipalities, to businesses through Chamber of Commerce and in St. Petersburg to organizations which are connected with the Sport Committee.	The list of stakeholders of the project, participants lists, information on the web pages of all 4 partners, press-conferences in St. Petersburg and 3 regions in Finland.	Finland Ky- menlaak so, Fin- land South Karelia, Finland- South Savo, Russia- City of Saint Pe- tersburg

<p>International youth volleyball tournament in the memory of V. Platonov</p>	<p>In May 2017, St. Petersburg hosts the annual International Children and Youth Volleyball Tournament in memory of Vyacheslav Platonov. Teams of players born in 2002-2003 attend the tournament. In 2017, the International Tournament was held for the tenth time. For the last six years it has received the status of an international sports event. It is dedicated to the memory of the great volleyball coach Vyacheslav Alekseevich Platonov, under whose leadership the USSR volleyball team won the Olympic Games, two world championships and six European championships. The tournament is held at the Platonov Volleyball Academy on Vyazovaya Street, 10, St. Petersburg. The hall seats 1500 spectators. Free admission. 1. preparation: informing volleyball sports organizations, sports academies, relevant business community and municipalities from the partner regions, selecting two participating teams, preparing travel documents for Finnish partners. 2. participating in the tournament, workshop for the sports, business and municipality representatives; training seminar for the sports academy coaches.</p>	<p>Participants from Finland about 50 persons, incl. teams, coaches, business and municipal representatives. Established contacts and agreements between participant groups, creating operating networks and cross-border cluster within volleyball, created export sport tourism product.</p>	<p>Russia- City of Saint Pe- tersburg</p>
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Taipalsaari triathlon	Taipalsaari triathlon is two years old event but quickly growing year by year. Race is prepared for professionals and for amateurs. Series are duathlon and triathlon. Categories: men, women, boys 19 years and girls 19 years. The race follows nice Lake Saimaa views. Race distances are: 750m/20km/5km and 400m/10km/5km. The fee covers race permission, service, timing, race number. Organizer: Karjalan Triathlon, the special triathlon club founded in 1990; Partners: Taipalsaari municipality; 1.preparation: training for the event organizers, sport event package for the perspective different segments of Russian clients (sportsmen, amateurs, business and municipality representatives etc). Informing target audience via marketing channels. Travel documents for the participants of the event. 2. execution: competition, networking event.	Participants from the Russian side created operating network, modernization of the event, created export product for the Russian clients and testing service, created structures for regional SME support.	Finland-South Karelia
Saimaan veterans' icehockey tournament	The Savonlinna's Linnan Woudit organizes Ice Hockey old-timer (veteran) tournament and the tournament is played on Savonlinna, Tanhuvaara and Rantasalmi ice hockey arenas. Age groups are: 35+, 40+, 45+, 50+, 60+ and 65+. 1. preparation: sport event package for	Participants from the Russian side, established contacts and agreements between participants, creating cross-	Finland - South Savo

	<p>the perspective Russian different client segments (sportsmen, amateurs, business and municipality representatives etc). Informing target audience via marketing channels. Travel documents for the participants of the event. 2. implementation: competition, networking event, training seminar for the Finnish ice-hockey coaches</p>	<p>border cluster within ice hockey, new sport tourism product created</p>	
<p>Luonteri cycling event</p>	<p>Traditional cycling event for the sportsmen and amateurs, famous family event. Distances of 95 km and 42 km are arranged in beautiful landscape of Eastern Finland with start and finish in Anttola Spa, nearby Mikkeli. 1. preparation: training seminar for the organizers, development of this event as a sports tourism product, sport event package for the perspective Russian different client segments (sportsmen, amateurs, business and municipality representatives etc). Informing target audience via marketing channels. Travel documents for the participants of the event. 2. execution: competition, networking event.</p>	<p>Participants from the Russian side, established contacts and agreements between participant groups, created export product for the event, new sports tourism service created.</p>	<p>Finland-South Savo</p>
<p>The public sporting event "I</p>	<p>Every year since 2006 in St. Petersburg the Public sport event "I Choose Sport!" is being held, it is an event that combines the features of the exhibition and a big city holiday</p>	<p>Participants from Finland created network, initiatives</p>	<p>Russia-City of Saint Petersburg</p>

<p>choose sport"</p>	<p>for children and their parents, young people and all those who love sports and active recreation. Visitors: Parents with children, young people - more than 48 000 people. Participants: More than 80 sports schools and federations, other sports, recreational, leisure organizations, manufacturers and suppliers of goods and services. Organizer: Committee for Physical Culture and Sport of St. Petersburg, Operator: "Expo Forum International" Company. The aims: - Demonstration of the diverse existing opportunities for self-realization and development in the field of physical culture, sports, recreation and healthy lifestyles - Comprehensive and full-fledged informing of St. Petersburg residents about existing and newly opening sports facilities - Promotion of physical culture, sports, outdoor activities and healthy lifestyles "I choose sports!" – is the demonstration performances and meetings with famous athletes, competitions and contests, master classes and consultations of specialists, an opportunity to try oneself in one or another kind of sport, as well as enroll in free sports sections and clubs in all districts of the city. The idea of the event is to present at the</p>	<p>for the entrepreneurs, created structures for regional SME support.</p>	
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	<p>beginning of the academic year all or almost all the existing opportunities in St. Petersburg for sports and active recreation on one site. Thus, all interested people can get acquainted with them and determine their sporting future for the next academic year, and maybe even for the rest of their lives. The entrance to the event is free. 1. preparation: informing sports organizations, sports academies, relevant business community and municipalities from the partner regions, preparing travel documents. 2. participating in the event, thematic forum, workshop for the sports, business and municipality representatives, press conference in St. Petersburg.</p>		
<p>Saimaa Youth football tournament</p>	<p>One of the oldest junior football tournaments in Finland, first played in 1976. Now played in two weekends in Lappeenranta and Imatra at the end of September and beginning of October. Ages- boys 8 to 15 years, groups 10 to 14 years, played in two stage categories (A and B), girls 9 to 18 years, 8 and 9 years old played one day tournament, others two days tournament. Participants from 120 to 140 teams Organizers Finnish football association regional organization with local football clubs</p>	<p>Participants from Russia, established contacts and agreements between participant groups, starting created cross-border cluster within football, created export sports tourism product.</p>	<p>Finland-South Karelia</p>

	<p>FC LaPa, IPS, Joutsenon Kullervo, LAUTP and PEP in cooperation with towns and local accommodation business. The first part played from 29 to 30 September 2018, the second part played from 6 to 7 October 2018</p> <p>1. preparation: sport event package for perspective Russian youth football teams, possible business and municipality representatives, development of this event as a sports tourism product. Informing target audience via marketing channels. Travel documents for the participants of the event.</p> <p>2. execution: competition, training seminar for the sports academy coaches, networking event.</p>		
International Youth Judo tournament	<p>This event is traditional and last year was about 80 wrestlers from 11 different countries. Organizer: Wrestling club Kouvola Painijat and Finnish Wrestling Federation. Partners: city of Kouvola and different local businesses and wrestling clubs. Competition place: Sport hall Mansikka-aho, street address Mansikka-ahontie 1, Kouvola, Finland.</p> <p>1.preparation: sport event package for the perspective Russian different client segments (sportsmen, amateurs, business and mu-</p>	<p>Participants from Russian side attended the event, established contacts and agreements between participant groups, export sport tourism product created.</p>	<p>Finland-Kyminlaakso</p>

	<p>municipality representatives etc), development of this event as a sports tourism product. Informing target audience via marketing channels. Travel documents for the participants of the event. 2.execution: competition, networking event, training seminar for coaches.</p>		
<p>Interim results of the project. Seminar No. 2</p>	<p>Preparing and holding interim results seminars of the project in each region in Finland with publicity on the Internet and local media resources, press-conference in St. Petersburg.</p>	<p>Project first year results, the list of stakeholders of the project, participants lists, information on the project webpage</p>	<p>Finland Ky- menlaak so, Fin- land South Karelia, Finland- South Savo, Russia- City of Saint Pe- tersburg</p>
<p>Project audit</p>	<p>Each project partner arranges its own audit after that the lead partner makes the audit of the whole project.</p>	<p>Audit of the project held</p>	<p>Finland Ky- menlaak so, Fin- land South Karelia, Finland- South Savo, Russia-</p>

			City of Saint Petersburg
Kuolimo skating event	<p>Magical Ice Skating event which collect thousands of people around Finland and Europe to make skating on Lake Kuolimo ice in Savitaipale. The routes are 5 and 10 km. The program includes fire on ice show, music and acrobatic. Kuolimo skating event prepared for school age children and Saturday is planned for everyone. Saturday evening is popular with hundreds of real fires, which show light for skaters. The entry fee covers skating, warm juice and insurance. Organizer: STU ry Savitaipale Sport Association founded in 1915 Partners: Savitaipale musicality, local business bank, skating federation Estimated start and end date: 23. and 24.02.2018</p> <p>1. preparation: training for the event organizers, sport event package for the perspective Russian different client segments (public, business and municipality representatives etc), development of this event as a sports tourism product. Informing target audience via marketing channels. Travel documents for the participants of the event.</p> <p>2. execution: networking event.</p>	Participants from the Russian side established contacts and agreements between participant groups, modernizing the event, new seasonal tourist product.	Finland-South Karelia

<p>Open All Russia ski race "Russian ski-race 2019"</p>	<p>It is held annually in accordance with the Plan of official sporting events in St. Petersburg. "Ski track of Russia" for decades brings together fans of one of the most popular sports - cross-country skiing. This large-scale winter event has a glorious history adorned with the legendary names and achievements of skiers of different generations. "The ski track of Russia" is held annually since 1982. Such kind of events attract Russians to physical training and promote a healthy lifestyle. Along with amateurs, whose age ranges from 12 to 70 years, although there are no age limits, professional sportsmen, Olympic champions, and sports veterans traditionally also take part. For each category of participants, the appropriate distances will be selected. Exactly at noon in Pargolovo village, Vyborg Highway will be given the Central start in St. Petersburg. At the same time, the "Ski Track of Russia" starts in the parks and gardens of the districts of St. Petersburg. The winners of the competitions "Ski Track of Russia" are honored with traditional medals, diplomas and memorable prizes. A special prize will also be awarded to the youngest and most experienced</p>	<p>Participants from the Finnish side established contacts and agreements between participant groups, start creating cross-border cluster within skiing, created export sports tourism product for Finns.</p>	<p>Russia- City of Saint Petersburg</p>
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	<p>(by age) race participant. The Organizer of the Competition is the Regional Public Organization "St. Petersburg Sports Federation of Cross Country Skiing". The Committee provides assistance in organizing and holding the central start of the Competition for Physical Culture and Sport of St. Petersburg All interested citizens of the Russian Federation and foreigners are allowed to participate in the Competitions. Competitors are allowed only if there is a doctor's admission. Competition distances: 5 km, 10 km. 1. preparation: informing skiing sports organizations, sports academies, relevant business community and municipalities from the Finnish partner regions, selecting participants, preparing travel documents. 2. participating in the sport event, workshop for the sports, business and municipality representatives, training seminar for the coaches, press conference in St. Petersburg.</p>		
Happy Dolphin, kids swimming festival	<p>Venue: St. Petersburg, swimming pool "Swimming Center" (50 meters), Khlopin Street, 10. Dates: annually in April. Free admission. Sports teams of the Russian Federation, as well as foreign athletes are</p>	<p>Participants from the Finnish side attend the event, established contacts and agreements between</p>	<p>Russia-City of Saint Petersburg</p>

	<p>allowed to participate in the All-Russian competitions. This competition is for all swimming styles. Each participant can take part maximum in two types of swimming. The following distances are possible: - 800 m freestyle - 200 m complex swimming - 100 m one of the four styles of swimming</p> <p>1. preparation: informing swimming sports organizations, sports academies, relevant business community and municipalities from the Finnish partner regions, selecting participants, preparing travel documents.</p> <p>2. participating in the sport event, workshop for the sports, business and municipality representatives, training seminar for the coaches.</p>	<p>participant groups, created sports tourism product.</p>	
<p>Tykkimäki kids football tournament</p>	<p>Juniors football tournament first held in 2007 in Kouvola. Ages - boys and girls 7 to 12 years, 7 to 8 years old play 1-day tournament, 9 to 12 years old play 2 - days tournament in two categories (A and B). Participants are about 100 teams. Organizer: local club Sudet ry in cooperation with Tykkimäen Huvipuisto and local accommodation business</p> <p>1. preparation: sport event package for the perspective Russian different client segments (sportsmen, amateurs,</p>	<p>Participants from the Russian side attended the event, established contacts and agreements between participant groups, created export sports tourism product, continue creating the cross-</p>	<p>Finland-Kyminlaakso</p>

	business representatives), development of this event as a sports tourism product. Informing target audience including established contacts at the previous football event via marketing channels. Travel documents for the participants of the event. 2. execution: competition, networking event, training seminar for the coaches.	border cluster within football.	
Annual project audit	Each project partner its own audit, audit of the whole project.	Audit of the project held.	Finland-Ky-menlaak so,Fin-land-South Kare-lia,Fin-land-South Savo, Russia-City of Saint Pe-tersburg
Final project seminar	Preparing and holding final seminars on the implementation of the project in each region in Finland with publicity on the Internet and local media resources, press-conference in St. Petersburg.	prepared final report on the implementation of the project.	Finland Ky-menlaak so, Fin-land South Kare-

			lia,Fin- land- South Savo, Russia- City of Saint Pe- tersburg
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Source: by the author

#### 4.6 Sustainability of the project results

Sport tourism as a direction of cross-border cooperation between the program regions, first, considers, sustainable tourism policies and tools that stimulate social, economic and cultural development. Moreover, the project considers the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that emphasizes the importance of sustainable tourism as a driver for job creation and promotion of local culture and products. Sustainable tourism is defined to be a significant contributor to the three dimensions of sustainable development thanks to its close linkages to other sectors and its ability to create decent jobs and generate trade opportunities.

Therefore, the project of sport tourism supports sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity-building that promote environmental awareness, conserve and protect the environment, respect wildlife, flora, biodiversity, ecosystems and cultural diversity, and improve the welfare and livelihoods of local communities.

The proposed project includes social, economic and environmental aspects into its operations. Thus, social aspects include social inclusion, gender equality, and accessibility. The project will provide new opportunities for social development through provision of new infrastructure and sport event opportunities to local communities that will allow promoting healthy lifestyle, integrate variety of new activities into the social and cultural life of program areas.

The aim of the project is to focus on the sustainable development and recreation of South-East Finland and Saint-Petersburg via the development of active sport

tourism activities available for different target groups. In terms of socio- economic perspective the development of these areas will give to visitors/tourists, sportsmen and local people various opportunities for different recreational activities.

This project will improve the opportunities for active life style among young people, adults and visitors to practice competitive sports. It will create better conditions for the organization of international sport events and business community. Investments will directly contribute to the development of regional sport tourism business.

The event organizers will have a possibility to renew their knowledge, get ready contacts, working networks, marketing channels to work independently in the future. Small clubs in different sports will be integrated in the networks and clusters, which gives them chance for the large scale of international possibilities like tourism, creating their knowledge in sports, attending different events, ready contacts, be more attractive for young people to work in sports clubs and federations, sports industry.

For the students, this project will be a unique possibility to have practice, make their case studies on international events and have an opportunity for creating real products. Through this experience they will grow as professionals and even can find work for themselves in this industry.

From the economic perspective, the project will contribute to the provision of significant income to the regions and support hundreds of jobs. Moreover, regions will become attractive for investments in the sport and tourism sector that can stimulate the development of local SMEs.

Creating good opportunities for active recreation and sports in South-East Finland and Saint- Petersburg will significantly increase the number of tourists visiting the regions and consequently support entrepreneurship in both regions. In practice it means that during the project modernized events will be more attractive for the tourists. Export will be created, and new products oriented to Russian/Finnish markets. Business, municipalities and NGOs will find their parts in this "win-win" cooperation model and this will be the best motivator for each participant of the project to continue the work after the project.

Ecological aspects are considered through the following “Event Sustainability Management System” as a reference document to consider sustainability when managing and delivering an event. The project team will develop environmental impact checklist to help event organizers to ensure they are considering environmental impacts at each stage of an event’s life cycle.

The lead partner will integrate other partners and relevant project stakeholders into the operational network that will continue with its work after the project. This will be revealed in a plan of joint activities for every new year, regular meetings and thematic workshops on both program territories, as well as initiation of long-term cooperation projects in the program field. Financially, the plan of activities will be included in a regular budgets of project partners in order to secure the necessary funding for their realization.

## **4.7 Project implementation**

### **4.7.1 Administration structure of the project**

The project management and organization will be organized with the following management structure: The lead partner will set up a management team, including administration, budget, content and communication. A partnership agreement will be signed by partners to organize relationships between parties, rules and responsibilities.

The project will be managed by the project manager. This person will be responsible for the operation of the whole project. The project manager will be responsible for project implementation and reporting to the responsible bodies.

Every partner will have its own project coordinator who will be managing its own part of the work. The project coordinator of each partner will supervise the project implementation in general and will be in charge of the coordination of clerical work, organization of project progress meetings, and coordination of project activities to ensure original timescale and good quality, as well as preparation of all needed reports for project managing authority.

The project manager and coordinators will be able to meet during operational workshops, which will be hosted by each partner when needed, and take decisions on a majority basis on the action plan and implementation of the project and on any strategic decisions.

From the side of the lead partner there will be a project manager assistant and technical assistant that will oversee project documentation and reporting. Financial issues will be controlled by regional directors from the Finnish side, and the Chairman of Sport Committee of Saint-Petersburg in accordance with the legislation requirements, to ensure legal, legitimate and economical usage of financial funding in accordance with planned activities, and to control the payment procedures.

All partners have all the necessary administrative equipment for project implementation. The lead partner's regional director will be the contact person for all financial issues. With the leading partner project manager, they will produce financial and administrative management guidelines. All the financial procedures will be detailed in the partnership agreement.

Each Finnish partner's regional director will be in constant contact with leading partner's regional director regarding financial issues. Combined with each workshop meeting, administrative and financial follow-up sessions will be organized. At the launching event, a special training session will be organized on administrative and financial management. The administrative and financial templates will be provided by the lead partner.

The financial management will be decentralized: each partner will pay its own invoices and keep its own books for its part of the project. They will be responsible to keep record of the actions and expenditures. Every 6 months partners draw up an activity and financial report collected by the lead partner prior to submission. The lead partner will check that there are no annexes, invoices and payment ledgers in the file. Each partner will be responsible for the audit of their financial activities once a year, and then provide the audit reports to the lead partner. Based on provided reports the lead partner arranges general project audit and provides the report to managing authorities.

#### **4.7.2 Project communication, visibility channels strategy**

The project communication will consist of internal communication within the project team and external communication aimed at disseminating the information about project activities among target groups and wider population. Thus, the project management team is committed to adhere to the original proposed plan as it is approved by all partners. The most important phase in terms of safeguarding the project's quality is selecting and involving partner organizations and staff members who have proven track records of organizing both sport and business events.

The project manager of the lead partner plays a key role in finalizing the partnerships and concrete work plans. The project team and the partnership network will follow the organizational and communication standards of their respective countries. The rules and regulations related to e.g. working hours, work contracts, financial management and occupational health and safety will be followed.

The quality of all the events will also be ensured by communicating the aims of every event plan efficiently to all stakeholders. The project team will outline a detailed timetable for implementation, which will be followed rigorously throughout the process. Workflow charts, task lists, schedules and important documents will be available to all the project team's members via the Microsoft Sharepoint Online collaboration tool.

The project team will also have weekly meetings for keeping everyone updated and for identifying and solving any problems that occurred. The project's steering group consisting of independent experts from various fields will perform the controlling function of the project activities and monitor its implementation according to high-quality standards.

Thus, the following aspects will be taken into consideration:

- Inputs: The project team will work towards safeguarding sufficient human, physical and financial resources for the successful implementation of the activities. This includes also the recruitment of our volunteers, which will facilitate cooperation between sport clubs, federations, business and other public organizations.



- Processes: The project team will work towards creating clear and accountable processes in terms of collaborating with all stakeholders and communicating the project goals to them. One important aspect of this is to put a strong emphasis on accessible multi-channel communication in Russian and Finnish.

- Outputs and Results: It is an important challenge to create activities that offer ways of meaningful participation to all participants, no matter if they are from Finland, Russia or other countries. Simultaneously, the project team will need to ensure that all the actual outputs, such as videos of the workshop presentations, are available and easily understandable to the wider audience.

To disseminate the information about project related activities among the target groups, there will be regular press releases and news updates on the partners' websites, social media tools, TV and visibility materials.

The following communication and visibility activities are planned: press releases to be prepared by each partner, publications on websites of each partner, informational panels, memorial plaques, brochures in native and foreign languages on project activities, branded umbrellas, branded flash memories, branded pens, branded T-shirts, branded paper folders, short promotional movies.

#### **4.7.3 Project monitoring system**

The project monitoring will incorporate the following methods:

1. Internal records to track project activities, processes and output indicators
2. Keeping records of relevant secondary information to track changes in outcomes, impacts and internal records, such as policy changes, media coverage, relevant surveys/databases
3. Periodic group workshops, discussions, focus groups (including group ratings/ranking exercises and/or other visual techniques such as time lines, mapping, diagrams and other diagnostic tools)
4. Periodic surveys (e.g. to assess attitudes, event feedbacks and/or behavior change). Evaluation will be conducted through own internal evaluation processes and with the reference to an independent external expert.

The evaluation process will include the use of monitoring and evaluation system that will include certain performance indicators to measure progress, particularly

actual results against expected results. Also, questionnaires will provide a standardized approach to obtaining information on a wide range of topics from a large number or diversity of stakeholders (usually employing sampling techniques) to obtain information on their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, perceptions, level of satisfaction, etc. concerning the operations, inputs, outputs and contextual factors.

The project interviews will solicit person-to-person responses to predetermined questions designed to obtain in-depth information about a person's impressions or experiences, or to learn more about their answers to questionnaires or surveys. The planned on-site observations will entail use of a detailed observation form to record accurate information about how the program operates (ongoing activities, processes, discussions, social interactions and observable results as directly observed during an initiative). In addition to that, group Interviews in small groups will be implemented. Such interviews are meant to explore in-depth stakeholder's opinions, similar or divergent points of views, or judgement about a development initiative or policy, as well as information about their behaviors, understanding and perceptions of an initiative or to collect information around tangible and non-tangible changes resulting from an initiative.

The relevance of the project will be evaluated annually, at the beginning and at the end of the project. The effectiveness will be evaluated at the beginning and at the end of the project.

The impact of the project will be evaluated monthly, at the beginning of the program (for the preceding year) and at the end of the program, annually. The various ways of sharing the evaluation results will be used in this project, such as uploading evaluation reports and other knowledge products based on evaluations on the organization's public websites, ensuring that the reports and the knowledge products are written clearly and made available in the most commonly used local languages, organizing a meeting with interested stakeholders to discuss lessons from the evaluation(s), incorporating evaluation findings and lessons learned in the organization's existing publications, such as annual reports, newsletters or bulletins, developing a brief with a concise summary in a plain language and widely circulated, sharing findings, recommendations and lessons learned at training sessions and workshops. It is critical to make information from evaluations user friendly, easily accessible and advantageous to the audience.

#### 4.8 Project budget

The financing of the project up to the amount of 80% of total net eligible costs is provided by the Program financing. The lead partner and its partners should provide 20% from their own budgets. These numbers are to be indicated in the project financial plan.

The preparation of the project budget requires careful consideration of project main costs from both regions and in accordance with the project plan. It should include the consideration of financial resources needed for each activity of the project, and what is needed to achieve the projects results and outputs in a cost-effective way. The budget is fixed and calculated for the whole period of the project realization.

Table 4. The description of project budget

<b>Type of cost</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Total</b>
Staff	129,621	12,962	92,380	318,304
Travel	93,826	148,134	68,713	310,673
Equipment and supplies	26,402	640	144,700	149,980
Outsourcing costs, services	365,003	35,200	34,100	105,800
Administrative costs	4,920	4,920	4,050	13,890
<b>Total</b>	<b>250,848</b>	<b>303,856</b>	<b>343,943</b>	<b>898,647</b>
Project revenue	0	0	0	0
<b>Net eligible costs</b>	<b>250,848</b>	<b>303,856</b>	<b>343,943</b>	<b>898,647</b>
Project financial plan				

Requested program financing	EUR 719,966, 80% of total financing
Co-financing from the partners	EUR 178,681, 20% of total financing
Total financing	EUR 898,647

Source: by the author

## 5 Summary and discussion

The results of the present thesis demonstrate the process of building a practical case of a developmental project of cross-border sport tourism cooperation. The project development process was conducted as a part of the thesis and resulted in the application for the grant provided within CBC 2014-2020 program.

The project application on sport tourism was highly evaluated by the managing authority and selected for the grant contract for its further practical realization. Thus, the author of the thesis reached one of its main purposes, i.e. to develop a successful and practically applicable project proposal for its further funding.

Other than that, this project demonstrated a significant potential for cross – border cooperation through sport tourism and supported existing theoretical and research underpinnings for sport and tourism combination and applicability for extensive cross-border cooperation, regional development and boot of economic and social cooperation. Moreover, this project proposed a series of activities that could promote sport and tourism as well as develop socio- economic environment in the cross-border areas of Saint-Petersburg and South-East Finland. Also, it considered various conditions for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism enterprises and business in general. This project will in practice directly contribute to the achievement CBC 2014-2020 priorities, which emphasize the need for sustainable development. The best practices and policies in the development of active and sport tourism are created and will be exchanged thought the project realization.

The project's planned results evidently demonstrate that it will strengthen the capacity of Saint-Petersburg's and South-East Finland's local authorities and bring significant input towards the development of international tourism sector. The implementation of project will increase attractiveness of Saint-Petersburg and South-East Finland and foster the flow of international tourist from all over Europe.

Although, regions of Saint-Petersburg and South-East Finland have been known to tourists, the implementation of marketing activities and international sport events will introduce and promote knowledge and real territorial coherence for the development of efficient and new tourism products within the EU. The cross-border impact of the project will relate in a stronger, more efficient cooperation network between municipalities, business supporting structures and SMEs. It will lead to a significantly increased number of further cooperation projects and activities.

As the project lasts for 3 years, the project team must consider the potential risks and challenges. The project development process revealed the following potential risks:

1. Financial aid is not available at the time, which can affect the results of the implementation of the project. Probability of occurrence: medium. Preventive measures: The plan of project work should consider the potential changes on the schedule of the events and should be easily modified without damage to the whole project realization.
2. Incompetent project management: Probability of occurrence: small. Impact: average. Preventive measures: All partners have experience in the field of sport tourism and development projects and have proven their competence.
3. Undercalculation of the costs of planned works and operations within the project. Probability of occurrence: average. Impact: average. Preventive measures: planning the budget according to realistic prices, all partners will have to cover the additional costs from their own budget.

Another important aspect of such a project's development is to accumulate the expertise and knowledge of all involved stakeholders for its further utilization in the process of a project realization. Basically, there are already some lessons

learnt that should be shared and considered by other potential partners who one day will decide to initiate another cross – border sport tourism project. Particularly, important recommendations for any future organizers of sport events, include:

1. Always ensure **sustainability** of services, processes and environments. This must be taken into account already in the planning phase. Sport events can have more influence and spread many important sustainability messages related to social equality, inclusion, health and well-being, as well as wise and cost -effective spending and active volunteers' involvement. More than that, sport events can easily incorporate a lot of environmental aspects to consider and raise issues.

2. Be clever in **minimizing risks** but try not to be overly protective. Understanding the potential risks and their management is one of the key aspects to consider when planning a developmental long-term project. These risks are financial, administrative, environmental and many others that can occur at any time of an event realization. Thus, the project management team should be aware of their potential and come up with effective management strategies.

3. Be active and creative when you **build a strong network of partners**. The present project greatly benefits from cooperation between a unique network involving public authorities, NGOs, sport clubs and federations, experts, SMEs in sport tourism from both regions. These different experts and practitioners brought significant knowledge and their insights into the project application document. It is a fact that our project application would never have been this successful if only one of these organizations had been trying to implement it with no help from the others.

The present project provides a lot of possibilities of new research around cross-border cooperation tourism. Particularly, the possible research topics can focus on evaluating the effectiveness of cross-border projects and their impact on regional development. Also, it would be interesting to evaluate the role of tourism in the intensification of cross-border cooperation. The analysis of sustainability aspects of such projects can help in their better planning and realization.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

Name of the project		The development of cross-border sport tourism in cooperation with regional sport federations, sport clubs, public authorities and business society		
Date of last update *		27.04.2018		
	<b>Intervention logic</b>	<b>Indicators (with measurable values)</b>	<b>Source of verification</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Overall objective (Impact)	To attract business to invest, locate and operate in the programme area by creating new business opportunities through sport tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of enterprises participating in cross-border business events. Base value- 0, Target value 55. Reference year - 2020</li> <li>- Number of business organisations receiving support for new business opportunities and/or modernization of businesses Base value- 0, Target value 15. Reference year - 2020</li> <li>- Number of created structures for regional SME support Base value- 0, Target value 10. Reference year - 2020</li> <li>- Number of new cross-border economic clusters created Base</li> </ul>	<p>Statistics that is collected during the project realization based on the following ways of information collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through regular reporting on project progress</li> <li>- Through specially designed surveys for relevant data collection</li> <li>- Through relevant project documents examination</li> <li>- Through direct observations of facts and figures when data is received through direct measures, accountability</li> </ul>	

		value- 0, Target value 5. Reference year - 2020	and analysis of studies unites. Qualitative data based on the interviews and assessments with experts and event participants. Observations and reporting by project team based on the developed project monitoring system.	
Specific objective(s) (Outcomes)	<p>1.To encourage business and entrepreneurs to operate in program area</p> <p>2. To develop regional potential for sport tourism</p> <p>3. To increase cross-border cooperation in the sphere of sport and tourism</p> <p>4. To develop mechanisms of regional support of SME</p>	<p>- Number of innovation/ promotion/ initiatives for entrepreneur. Base value- 0, Target value 31. Reference year - 2020</p> <p>- Number of operating networks created Base value- 0, Target value 10. Reference year - 2020</p> <p>- -Number of partnership contracts/agreements signed Base value- 0, Target value 15. Reference year - 2020</p> <p>- Number of new sport tourism products/services created Base value- 0, Target value 31. Reference year - 2020</p> <p>- Number of joint trainings, seminars, workshops for municipalities, NGOs, business Base</p>	<p>Statistics that is collected during the project realization based on the following ways of information collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through regular reporting on project progress</li> <li>- Through specially designed surveys</li> <li>- Through relevant project documents examination</li> <li>- Through direct observations of facts and figures when data is received through direct measures, accountability and analysis of studies unites.</li> </ul> <p>Qualitative data based on the interviews and assessments</p>	<p>Due to the established new sustainable cross- border network that will be created the SMEs will be encouraged to operate in program area. The regional potential for sport tourism will be developed. Sport tourism cross-border cooperation will be increased.</p>

		value- 0, Target value 31. Reference year - 2020	with experts and event participants.  Observations and reporting by project team based on the developed project monitoring system.	
Results (Outputs)	<p>1. Close network of cooperation between South – East Finland and Saint-Petersburg will be established</p> <p>2. Well informed societies of cross – border regions about the possibilities of sport tourism and active recreation</p> <p>3. Establishment of new and sustainable business contacts between South –east Finland and Saint-Petersburg tourism related enterprises in a form of a network</p> <p>4. Movement between cross- border areas will be fostered, and number of visiting tourists will increase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of established crossed- border cooperation networks Base value- 0, Target value 10 Reference year - 2020</li> <li>- Number of partnership agreement signed Base value- 0, Target value 15. Reference year - 2020</li> <li>- Number of cross- border project management groups established Base value- 0, Target value 1. Reference year - 2020</li> <li>- Number of press releases prepared Base value- 0, Target value 31. Reference year - 2020</li> <li>- Number of publications on websites Base value- 0, Target value 31. Reference year - 2020</li> <li>- Number of information panels produced Base value- 0, Target value 4. Reference year - 2020</li> </ul>	<p>Statistics that is collected during the project realization based on the following ways of information collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through regular reporting on project progress</li> <li>- Through specially designed surveys</li> <li>- Through relevant project documents examination</li> <li>- Through direct observations of facts and figures when data is received through direct measures, accountability and analysis of studied unites.</li> </ul> <p>Qualitative data based on the interviews and assessments with experts and event participants.</p>	<p>New sustainable cross-border network will be established which will contribute towards sustainable development of participating regions through cooperation between local municipalities, business and NGOs. The project realization process itself and exchange of best practices will allow to start new cooperation in various fields.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of brochures on project activities on native languages produced Base value- 0, Target value 5500. Reference year - 2020</li> <li>- Number and type of other project related visibility materials: branded umbrellas, flash memories, pens, T-shirts, paper folders, short promo movies Base value- 0, Target value:1716. Reference year - 2020</li> <li>- Number of different type of sport events Base value- 0, Target value 31. Reference year - 2020</li> </ul>	Observations and reporting by project team based on the developed project monitoring system.	
Activities	<p>The following activities will be implemented:</p> <p>1. Management and coordination- to ensure the original timescale, planned budget and good service quality, the implementation of project activities will be supervised by project management team on a regular basis. Each partner will have a project manager that will supervise the implementation of general and specific activities, will be in charge of organization, coordination, financial management, project reporting and follow-up in accordance with legislation requirements. Staff, 50% travel costs, comp. equipment, financial service, audit=514710,00</p> <p>2. Information and visibility – To disseminate the information about project related activities among the target groups, there will be regular press releases and news updates on the partners’ websites, social media tools, TV, visibility materials. Information and visibility: 29300,00 Euro</p>			<p>Implementing information and visibility activities will make the project results visible and target groups informed about the main objectives of the project.</p> <p>New sustainable cooperation network will be created. Sustainable business contacts between program</p>

	<p>3. Seminars and workshops on project related topic will be aimed at establishing working relationships and setting-up the professional network that will gather practitioners, experts, stakeholders from business and public sectors. Also, special thematic workshops will allow exchanging best practices knowledge accumulation. Seminars and workshops: 56800,00 Euro</p> <p>4. International sport events- On order to create new tourism network, attract tourists, international sport events will be carries out. It is planned to organize 32 sport events: 21 in South- East Finland and 11 in Saint-Petersburg. Athletes from RUS and FIN and other EU countries will compete in ski, triathlon, running, rowing, football, hockey, bike, basketball, judo, wrestling, sport for disabled, orienteering, volleyball, swimming, family games.50% travel costs, equipment and supplies = 297836,00</p>	<p>area enterprises will be established. Common formula for cross – border operations of tourism enterprises will be settled.</p> <p>Organising of sport events will increase flow of tourists and will have a positive effect on local tourism sector growth in both partner regions. Preconditions for increasing of returns, profitability and employment in all cross- border regions will be created. The cross – border impact of the project will be seen in stronger and more efficient cooperation networks between municipalities, business and NGOs.</p>
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Appendix 2. Communication and visibility plan

Name and ID of the project	The development of cross-border sport tourism in cooperation with regional sport federations, sport clubs, public authorities and business society					
Date of last update <sup>i</sup>	26.04.2018			Reporting period <sup>ii</sup> –		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target group(s)</b>	<b>Target value</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Reporting period result</b>	<b>Cumulative result</b>	<b>Source of verification</b>
Maintenance of project Twitter page	Experts on the field of sport tourism, Governing bodies of project countries, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, journalists, scientific community, local communities, regional sport federations, sport clubs	4500 followers	Account followers			Twitter analytics
Maintenance of project Instagram page	Events participants, Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, local communities, regional sport federations, sport club	10000 followers	Account followers			Instagram analytics
Maintenance of project Facebook page	Events participants, Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant	30000 followers	Account followers			Facebook analytics



	business companies, relevant NGOs, local communities of people, regional sport federations, sport clubs					
Maintenance of project Vkontakte page	Events participants, Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, local communities of people, regional sport federations, sport clubs	500 000 followers	Account followers			Vkontakte analytics
Maintenance of Youtube channel	Events participants, Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, local communities of people, sport clubs, regional sport federations	15000 followers	Channel followers			Youtube analytics
Maintenance of project partners websites	Events participants, Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, local communities of people, sport clubs, regional sport federations	15000 followers	Publication			Website provider analytics

Production of photo materials	Events participants, Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, local communities of people, sport clubs, regional sport federations	32	Image			Photo archives in agreed storage formats and platforms
Production of videos	Events participants, Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, local communities of people, sport clubs, regional sport federation	32 events	Video file			Video archives in agreed storage formats and platforms
Participation in thematic exhibitions	Experts, business, municipal and sport representatives	Tampere sports and rehabilitation equipment exhibition for the disabled persons	Exhibition event			List of participants, relevant materials, photo and video reports, publications in project media resources
Participation in thematic forums and conferences	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations	International Forum organized in St. Petersburg by Tourism Committee	Forum, Conference			List of participants, relevant materials, photo and video reports, publications in project media resources

		in cooperation with Sports Committee				
Participation in thematic workshops	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations	9 workshops	workshop			List of participants, relevant materials, photo and video reports, publications in project media resources
Organization of project information event	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations	4 presses conferences 8 operational seminars	Opening press conference and operational seminar (in each region)			Press releases, publications in local mass media and project stakeholders' media resources, list of participants, materials of the operational seminars
Organization of project close-out event	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations	4 press conferences 4 closes out seminars	Project close out press conference, seminar (in each region)			Press releases, publications in local mass media and stakeholders' media resources, photo and videos, list of participants, materials of the seminar
Organization of promotion events within the planned thematic sport events of the whole project	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations	21 network events 8 trainings for the event organizers	Thematic seminars, formal meetings			Press releases, publications in local mass media and stakeholders' media resources, photo and videos, participant list

	clubs, regional sport federations	15 seminars for the coaches	with all involved stakeholders, networking meetings			
Issue of press releases	Journalists, experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations, event participants	32	Press release on project start, outputs, related to project key events, on project close out			Publications in local mass media and stakeholders' media resources, project media resources, video on TV and Internet, participant list
Issue of project branded pens	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations, even participants, project management staff	1200 1200	Pen paper notebook			Photos and videos on the use of branded pens and paper notebooks during the project related events
Issue of project branded t-shirts	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport	1500	T-shirt			Photos and videos on the use of branded T-shirts during the project related events

	federations, event participants , project management staff					
Issue of project branded flash memory sticks	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations, event participants , project management staff	500	Flash memory card			Photos and videos on the use of branded flash memory cards during the project related events
Issue of project branded umbrellas	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations, event participants, project management staff	500	Umbrella			Photos and videos on the use of branded umbrellas during the project related events
Production of project information panels	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations, event participants, project management staff	4	Panel stand			Photos and videos on the use of branded panels during the project related events

Production of memorable plaques	Multi-functional sports centre for the disabled persons, project steering group, experts and honoured persons presented in the project	1 50	plaque for the Centre  plaque for the person			Photos and videos on the use of branded plaques during the project related events
Production of branded paper folders	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations, event participants, project management staff	1200	folder			Photos and videos on the use of branded folders during the project related events
Issue of project related informational brochures in English, Russian and Finnish	Experts on the field of sport tourism, relevant business companies, relevant NGOs, sport clubs, regional sport federations, event participants, project management staff	3500	Hard copy of the brochure			Photos and videos on the use of hard copies of brochures during the project related events