

**THESIS**

**Noora-Maria Niemelä  
2013**

**PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF  
SALLA PACKAGE FOR MAGNETIC NORTH  
TRAVEL LTD**



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Thesis

**PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF  
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2013

Commissioned by: Magnetic North Travel Ltd

Supervisor: Teija Tekoniemi-Selkälä

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The Thesis cannot be borrowed.

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The purpose of this thesis was to create an example holiday package for the tour operator Magnetic North Travel Ltd and to report the different phases of the process. The end product includes a PDF of a holiday package that can be tailor-made to suit every client according to their preferences. The end product will be sold on the company website and can be transformed into a ready-made package to be promoted purely as an ecological tourism holiday package. The end product also contains a full supplier information list with excursions, activities and services and their pricing, and a list of supporting services in the area. Due to confidentiality issues, these are left out of the thesis itself.

The thesis is greatly based on own observation about the destination and the product development process the company Magnetic North Travel uses in their operations. I also went to meet the local tourism coordinator and the local suppliers to introduce them the company and my project. The written material used for this thesis was gathered from both the internet, several local publications (books, newspapers) and previous theses written at RAMK. The thesis process was carried out as product development and the method applied is qualitative.

The main challenges that occurred during the process were the lack of knowledge of ecotourism as a concept, different perspectives and values of eco-friendly and sustainable manners and the common confusion of the term sustainability. There is also a lack of possibilities to develop ecotourism on a destination level in Salla, because this would involve taking into consideration the means of travel and energy consumption, such as heating. Both are still very much oil and gasoline dependent, due to the long distances to the destination and in the destination and most of the houses, both private and the ones in tourism use, are oil heated. There is an on-going project in ecological development in Salla (EcoSalla), which is also mentioned in this thesis. The results of the eco-project are not published yet.

**Key words** Salla, ecological, holiday package, product development

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Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli luoda esimerkkilomapaketti matkanjärjestäjälle Magnetic North Travel Ltd sekä dokumentoida työn eri vaiheet. Opinnäytetyön tulos on PDF, jossa paketin eri osat ovat eriteltynä ja asiakas voi itse rakentaa lopullisen paketin itselleen sopivaksi. Tuote tulee myyntiin matkanjärjestäjän verkkosivuille sekä siitä voidaan muokata valmismatkapaketti, jota voidaan myydä täysin ekologisena lomapakettina. Matkailutuotteeseen kuuluu myös lista lomapaketin eri osista vastaavista tuottajista, retkistä, aktiviteeteista sekä näiden hinnoittelusta. Vaitiolovelvollisuuden vuoksi nämä kuitenkin on jätetty varsinaisen opinnäytetyön ulkopuolelle.

Opinnäytetyö on suurelta osin perustunut omaan havainnointiin, jota kirjoittajalla on sekä kohteesta että matkanjärjestäjän omista tuotekehittelyprosesseista. Kirjoittaja on itse myös tavannut paikallisen matkailukoordinaattorin sekä paikalliset yritykset ja tuottajat, joille hän on esitellyt sekä matkanjärjestäjän toimintaa että itse projektin. Kirjallinen materiaali tässä työssä nojaa Internet-lähteisiin, paikallisiin lehti- sekä kirjallisuusjulkaisuihin sekä RAMKissa aiemmin valmistuneisiin opinnäytetöihin. Opinnäytetyö on valmistunut tutkimus- ja kehittämisprosessina, jonka vuoksi tutkimusmenetelmänä on käytetty kvalitatiivista menetelmää.

Suurimmaksi haasteeksi opinnäytetyöprosessissa muodostui ekologisen matkailun ja kestävä kehityksen konseptien yleinen väärinymmärrys sekä erilaiset näkemykset niihin liittyvistä arvoista. Myös ekologisen matkailun kehittäminen kohdetasolla on haasteellista, koska ekologisuus sisältää muun muassa kuljetukseen ja liikkumiseen liittyviä, polttoaineen kulutusta koskevia normeja, sekä energiankulutusta lämmityksessä. Koska välimatkat kohteeseen ja kohteessa ovat pitkiä, on autoilu lähes pakollista. Suurin osa yksityisistä ja matkailun käytössä olevista asuinhuoneistoista on öljylämmitteisiä, mikä ei myöskään tue ekologisuuutta. Sallassa on käynnissä ekologisuuutta kehittävä hanke EcoSalla, jonka tuloksia ei kuitenkaan vielä ole julkaistu.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Ecological tourism is a growing trend for modern travellers. Instead of settling for a ready-made, charter flight type of a holiday solution, more and more people are becoming aware of fragile nature, the ecosystems and local lifestyles of the destinations and want their holiday to respect the local tourism values. Travellers today seem to be keen on putting more focus on building their holiday experiences around the environmental, economic and social aspects of the destination, respecting the local nature and culture while being a guest in the natural habitat of the host communities. Magnetic North Travel Ltd has built their company values in respect of the Northern lifestyles, the so-called "*friluftsliv*", that is also the core idea of the company. (Magnetic North Travel Ltd 2012.)

The purpose of this thesis is to conduct research in the area of Lapland in terms of finding a suitable destination for the company Magnetic North Travel Ltd to start cooperating with and to develop the material and ideas gathered in the research into a holiday package together with the destination and the commissioner. The research and development process also takes into consideration the ecological ways the destination is already promoting and focusing on in the future. As Salla is a brand new destination for the England-based tour operator to sell, it is also needed to include a short description of the destination in terms of tourism development in the area.

One of the main challenges in Finland seems to be the lack of a common definition of ecotourism. Every area and every supplier seems to have their own visions of what the term "ecotourism" includes and how it could be promoted and what kind of actions it takes from the destination point of view to make the area more eco-friendly. (Ikonen 2012.) This is why the thesis refers to both ecotourism and sustainable tourism, although the definitions of the two forms of tourism are marginally different.

This thesis was written keeping in mind the needs of the commissioner Magnetic North Travel. The thesis describes the current perceptions of ecotourism in Finland, gives the reader a short introduction to the destination Salla and is focused on the process of creating a new holiday package in Salla. The thesis also introduces the main challenges of building a tailor made

holiday package, defines the competitors or possible competition Salla has as a destination and defines the unique selling points the destination can be marketed with.

The main development tasks in this thesis are:

1. Where can the suppliers / transportation / activities/ accommodation be found and how can these elements be used in building a new product (for specific use)?
2. How can these elements be sold as an ecological holiday package?
3. Who are the competitors or is there competition?

As the result of the development process there are two holiday packages, one of which can be sold on so-called 'main markets' and one of which is targeted for 'niche markets'. The development process was focused on creating another holiday package for existing markets instead of mapping out entirely new markets. The commissioner sells similar types of destinations in Finnish Lapland.



## 2 DESTINATION SALLA

### 2.1 Choosing Destination

As a winter holiday destination, Salla has a long history. It is remote but located less than two hours from both Rovaniemi and Kuusamo airports. Previously, Salla also had a railway connection all the way to Helsinki. It is an hour's drive from the Ruka skiing centre and Suomu fell and two hours from the Pyhä-Luosto National Park. The Oulanka National Park, which has the Pan Parks certificate, is also an hour away, located on both sides of the municipality borders of Salla and Kuusamo and is connected with the Paanajärvi National Park on the Russian side (Pan Parks 2012).

The choice of destination derived from my personal interest towards the area. I was born and raised in Salla; which gives an excellent advantage of knowledge about the area as a whole and as a tourist destination. Despite being a winter holiday destination, Salla has great opportunities also in developing as a summer tourism destination. At the moment, marketing summer tourism in the area is not used up to its full potential. Thus, there is lack of marketing summer tourism in Lapland region, or moreover a problem with understanding how tourism options in the summertime should be promoted, the potential Salla has is to be mapped out. (Lapinliitto 2012)

By developing the ecological tourism aspects, the destination could sell the summer more efficiently and find new forums to promote itself in. The core attractions are there (especially Oulanka National Park and Sallatunturi fell) (Sallan kunta 2013) (therefore building and rethinking the supporting services in more ecological ways are one of the main factors that need to be put focus on in near future in order to enhance the uniqueness the destination can offer to the current markets. The good resources for extending the holiday package family with a summer holiday package in the destination was one of the main reasons why the destination was chosen for the product development process. This thesis is focused on developing a winter holiday package, which will be launched and sold on Magnetic North Travel website. The success of the winter package, as well as building the relationship between the tour operator and local suppliers determines the need for a summer package in the destination in near future.

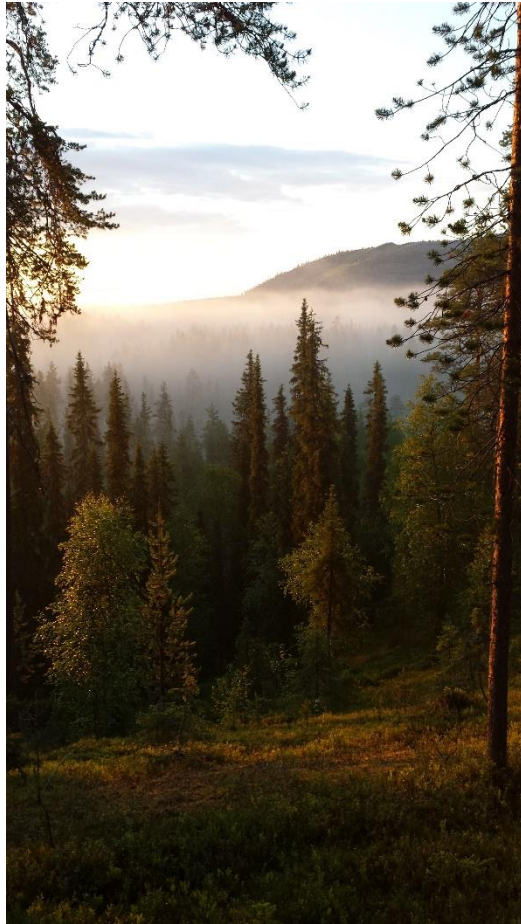


Figure 1. A view of Sallatunturi fell (Niemelä 2013)

## 2.2 Short History of Tourism in Salla

As Salla is a new destination for the commissioner Magnetic North Travel Ltd, it was found necessary this thesis includes a short history of how Salla has developed as a destination and how tourism has started in the area. Although a piece of the oldest ski in Finland was found in Salla, the beautiful landscapes with fells and cabins started to develop for tourism use as late as in the 1960s (the second development period). The area of Salla is located at the Russian border, and the old village centre with its fells was one of the areas Russia claimed for itself after the World War II in 1944. There already was tourism development in the area prior to the war, but most of it was destroyed and the area given to Russia. The development in the area prior to the war is generally referred to as the first development period, whereas the development in the current Salla and Sallatunturi fell is referred to as the second development period (Sallan Sota-ja jälleenrakennusajan museo 2013).

Salla changed its name from Kuolajärvi to Salla in 1936 and Sallatunturi fell is also known as Pyhätunturi fell (Sallan Sota- ja jälleenrakennusajan museo 2013), which is why some of the material studied was confusing because of the mixed use of the two names. Nevertheless, this thesis is focused on the time after the war and both Salla and Sallatunturi fell refer to the current location of the village and the skiing centre, unless mentioned otherwise.

Tourism in Salla has always been under the influence of the general development of infrastructure in Lapland and in Finland. The first proper roads were built to Rovaniemi and Kemijärvi as late as mid-1800s, and the railway connection to Rovaniemi took 50 more years to be built. A connection from Rovaniemi to Kemijärvi and Salla was then built around 1930, after which travelling from Southern Finland to Lapland was easier. Before then, the only buildings loosely reminding of today's accommodation for tourism use were the solitary buildings standing alone in Lapland and used by mailmen on their long journeys through the wilderness. (Kanerva 2010, 87) Also the bus connections starting at around 1940 from Rovaniemi were an important means of travel for people, because there were only a few private cars in the area as late as in the 1950s (Heinänen 1993, 228–230, 362–363).

The development of tourism in Salla started in the 1930s, when the first travellers found their way to the area. These people were interested in health tourism kinds of options; travelling on fells and skiing (Lapin kävijät 2011). The first accommodation solely intended for tourism use was built in the mid-1930, after which Salla was granted to hold the first Finland's championship race in slalom and speed skiing in 1937 (Helsingin Sanomat 1935; Kanerva 2010, 186-187). In general, the development of tourism and hotel industry in Lapland was prospering in the 1930s until the Second World War; the so called Winter War (1939-1940) and the Continuation War (1941-1944) destroyed most buildings and roads. It took almost 20 years, until 1960s to reach the same level of accommodation there had been in Lapland prior to wars. In 1960s, several skiing centres were built all around Lapland, because both slalom and cross-country skiing were in fashion and there was a demand for proper snow-guaranteed skiing tracks (Lapin kävijät 2011).

In the 1960s a few local men started the development of slopes and skiing tracks and after gathering a small group of local private investors, these men

found an organisation called Sallan Matkailu Oy. The purpose of the organisation was to develop and promote tourism in the area. (Yrjänheikki 2011, 15) The skiing centre was built when there was enough supporting services in the area. One of these was the hotel Revontuli (Revontuli stands for “the Northern Lights”), opened in 1973 (Heinänen 1993, 362) and operated mostly by women, who could not take part in the clearance of the fell and building the slopes and ski lifts. Both in the 1970s and the 1980s the building of cabins and supporting services rapidly increased and the first restaurants and log cabins were built in the skiing centre. The private investors shared interest towards the municipality and the skiing centre, as the development of infrastructure in the area continued. The Reindeer Park was also opened in the 1980s and became one of the main attractions in the area, followed by a sports hall and a caravan site to lure in more visitors in mid-seasons. The building nearly stopped during the recession in the late 1980s - 1990s, but the number of visitors kept increasing every year. (Yrjänheikki 2011, 15)

In the 1980s the development process had a focus on a year round experience, especially because the people developing the local tourism centres had noticed not only the Christmas, but also Easter time was a great pull-factor for people to visit. Therefore, there was a demand for services that could be marketed for a prolonged period of time throughout the year. (Kanerva 2010, 248.)

The number of international tourists began to increase in the 1990s. First came the people from the Netherlands to take part in arranged skiing lessons. Also skiing instructors, both national and international, were trained in arranged “snow camps”. The number of international tourists started to increase rapidly after the good experiences Salla was able to offer. (Heikkilä – Sax, 2010) In 2000s the charter-flights from Great Britain initiated to bring in British Christmas tourists to the destination but the number of these travellers has decreased every year since 2009 and by the year 2012 the charter buses coming to Salla had stopped all together. Whether that will be temporary and the demand perk up when the economic situation in the European Union stabilises and starts to improve, is yet to be seen. In 2010, the number of overnight stays was increasing, even though the tourism industry was widely affected by recession. Even though the number of British tourists was

decreasing, the destination received more international visitors, especially from Spain and Russia. Also the number of domestic tourists increased. (Erämaan Salla 2010c, 12.)

Salla was declared as the Finnish Skiing Centre of the Year in 2009 for its good training possibilities, coaching and competing (Viisi tähteä 2009). In the autumn of the same year, Salla announced it was going to start planning on extending the skiing centre to the nearby Iso-Pyhätunturi area, which is a part of the Natura areas in Finland. The building is believed to be scheduled to start during the year 2013, but because the area is protected by law, the municipality needs to conduct and pass the environmental reassessments. (Epressi 2009; Helsingin Sanomat 2009.)

### **3 PERCEPTIONS OF ECOTOURISM IN TODAY'S TOURISM AND MARKETING**

#### **3.1 Development of Ecotourism in the Nordic Countries**

##### **3.1.1 Defining the Concept**

Ecotourism is one of the fastest growing trends in today's tourism and marketing. Today's travellers are seen to pay more attention to sustainable and ecological aspects of their chosen destinations, and show an interest in making their contribution in the sustainable development of the destinations they travel into (Magnetic North Travel 2011, Niemelä 2013). Sustainability and ecological development are norms that should be followed, but how well are these definitions known and applied to tourism industry in Finland and in Lapland region (North of Norway, Sweden and Finland)? Harsh environment and remote locations together with old traditions are challenging the ecological thinking. Eco-friendly building, waste disposal, sewerage and heating are but some examples of the challenges ecological development faces in the arctic areas. People are encouraged to take actions on promoting ecological thinking, for example by waste management and recycling, yet in many places different recycling bins are all emptied in the same waste collecting vehicles. Sewerage and heating solutions are hard to make efficient due to areas being scarcely populated and many accommodation options for tourism also being in remote locations.

According to the study ecotourism lacks one global definition, which is why it is not thoroughly researched and is generally confused with other tourism definition, that are close to the ideas people have about ecotourism (Ikonen 2012). Due to the lack of one common definition, each country, region or tourism network can define ecotourism as it best serves their intentions. This is only recently starting to change with the common certificates and organisations found entirely to promote and develop ecotourism in each areas. Sweden has a certification programme called Nature's Best, but Finland still lacks an organisation that would be in charge of the ecological tourism. (Ikonen 2012).

Ecotourism as a concept is defined as

A form of tourism that fosters learning experiences and appreciation of the natural environment, or some component thereof, within its associated cultural context. It is managed in accordance with industry best practice to attain environmentally and socio-culturally sustainable outcomes as well as financial viability. (Weaver 2008, 17.)

Ecotourism is described to include at least an environmental and educational feature as well as containing an element of sustainable management. (Ikonen 2012)

The nature-based dimension of the model contains the natural environment, in which the touristic experience takes place. The ecosystem in this environment needs to be relatively undisturbed with as little as possible interference from humans. Furthermore, this dimension contains also a specific component of the ecosystem, which can be either flora or fauna. (Weaver 2008, 10) In Lapland, this component can include, for example, reindeer (herding) or wildlife watching, such as elk safaris.

The educational dimension consists of an element of learning. Learning is a natural process and can be executed in an entertaining manner. The education can happen through guidebooks, personalised / own experience, multimedia shows, and museums and so on. (Weaver 2008, 11-12.) In Lapland, the educational features can consist of giving the guests a chance to visit local families, especially those of Sami culture, get to see a reindeer herder in their every-day work, learn how the Northern Lights are formed, to mention but a few.

The sustainable management dimension, itself, consists of three different elements, which are: environmental, economic and socio-cultural.

The environmental responsibility lies in holistic thinking of ecosystems rather than just components of it, regulation on the negative impacts such as land-use planning and building control, encouraging good practices such as energy-efficiency and recycling rather than just preventing bad practices, raising awareness among the industry in order to reduce negative environmental impacts, paying a price that covers the environmental costs of tourism, and maintaining a balance between conservation and development. (Swarbrooke 1999, 54–55.)

The economic responsibility covers the economic costs the destination faces, making economic benefits larger than the costs. The responsibility is focused

on the money generated through tourism actions to stay in the destination and within the local businesses, spreading as widely in the community as possible, to benefit the local workers and industry instead of larger, international businesses that take the money out of the destination. This can be avoided by supporting the local small and medium businesses (even of those that have no direct linkage with tourism) and hiring locals instead of getting the workforce elsewhere. (Swarbrooke 1999, 61–66.)

The social dimension of sustainable tourism “includes several players: the tourist, foreign tour operators, destination government, local tourism industry and the host community. Socially fair tourism has been suggested to consist of four Es: equity, equal opportunities, ethics, and tourists and hosts being equal partners.” (Swarbrooke 1999, 70–78, 323–324.) This means the local community should be able to take part in decision making, be employed in tourism field to the highest possible percentage, and should enjoy the long-term benefits of tourism in the area, instead of having to change its way of life and forgetting the traditions the community has cherished until the emerge of tourism in that particular destination. (Swarbrooke 1999, 70–78, 323–324.)

One of the main problems in Finland seems to be the lack of knowledge of the terms ‘sustainable’ and ‘ecological’, as these are commonly confused (Ikonen 2012). Also nature-based tourism, sustainable tourism, wildlife tourism, adventure tourism and alternative tourism have all been used as synonyms for ecotourism which has led to confusion and misunderstanding of how ecotourism relates to other forms of tourism (Weaver 2008, 18). The typology chart of tourism definitions (Table 1) best describes the differences between the most common tourism definitions:



Table 1. Typologies of tourism (TIES)

Category	Definition
Adventure tourism	A form of nature based tourism that incorporates an element of risk, higher levels of physical exertion, and the need for specialized skill.
Ecotourism	Responsible travel to nature areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people.
Geotourism	Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place - its environment, heritage, aesthetics, and culture and the well-being of its residents.
Mass tourism	Large-scale tourism, typically associated with 'sea, sand, sun' resorts and characteristics such as transnational ownership, minimal direct economic benefit to destination communities, seasonality and package tours.
Nature-based tourism	Any form of tourism that relies primarily on the natural environment for its attractions or settings.
Pro-poor tourism	Tourism that results in increased net benefit for the poor people.
Responsible tourism	Tourism that maximises the benefits to local communities, minimises negative social or environmental impacts, and helps local people conserve fragile cultures and habitats or species.
Sustainable tourism	Tourism that meets the needs of present tourist and host regions, while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.

Ecotourism is seen as a subset of nature-based tourism (Blamey 2001, 27). What distinguishes it from adventure and wildlife tourism, both of which are also nature-based tourism options, is 'ecotourism' being a collation of nature, education and sustainability. Sustainable tourism and ecotourism as definitions differentiate with ecotourism only covering nature-based tourism, whereas 'Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations' (UNWTO 2004, according to UNEP 2011), which means ecotourism is a subset of sustainable tourism (Ikonen 2012). Adventure tourism is not always nature-based or does not meet the ideals of sustainable management. Even in the case of adventure tourism taking place in nature environment and being sustainably managed, the motivation of the tourist can be more on the physical exertion than focused on the educational experience, which is one of the core elements of ecotourism. (Weaver 2008, 20.)

Wildlife tourism distinguishes itself from ecotourism for its captive and consumptive nature, for example in terms of hunting or fishing in the wilderness, whereas ecotourism does not allow humans to meddle with nature in any way (tourists are seen as visitors and nature should remain untouched). This, however, is controversial and can be argued on both sides. Wildlife tourism can regulate the species population, which is seen as interfering in nature's own processes. On the other hand, when done according to regulations, hunting and fishing can promote the recovery of certain species and can be argued of being 'ecological', as it is done by the indigenous peoples living in the area. This type of tourism, if managed well, is also beneficial for the locals, because it brings money to the destination. (Weaver 2008, 19; Ikonen 2012). Ecotourism and cultural tourism are also very much alike and overlapping, because both include a cultural component. This component, however, plays a secondary role in ecotourism, whereas in cultural tourism, it is primary. Ecotourism can also be mass tourism, even though generally mass tourism is seen as the 'easy' option for people, who do not wish to pay attention to environmental or local aspects on their holiday ('sea, sand, sun' type of thinking). (Weaver 2008, 19-20; Ikonen 2012)

### 3.1.2 Accommodation Spectrum

One of the main challenges in developing ecological tourism in the area of Salla is the challenge of using more ecological building and heating components. Ecotourism accommodation spectrum model (Figure 2) (Wight 1993) explains the differences between off-site and on-site accommodation, and their relative impact on ecotourism in the area (Figure 2). Off-site accommodation is described as the one most tourists travelling to the Arctic are familiar with; it is

Any village, town or city-based accommodation, also including resort destination areas, where the primary attraction is other than ecotourism. Off-site accommodation serves visitors, who wish to minimise impact on resource...be more comfortable or secure, while taking day-visit or tours to the resource. (Wight 1993).

On-site accommodation can be non-permanent (such as tents) or permanent (log cabins, huts) that can vary from anything basic to luxurious. The idea of

an on-site accommodation is that it is located in the resource, whether it be accessible or remote (see Figure 2) (Wight 1993).

When combining the holiday package, I only used off-site accommodation options. The destination has on-site accommodation options, such as wilderness cabins for the tourists and a common man to use freely but I considered these options to be too remote and primitive to meet the level of quality and security needed for the selling process.

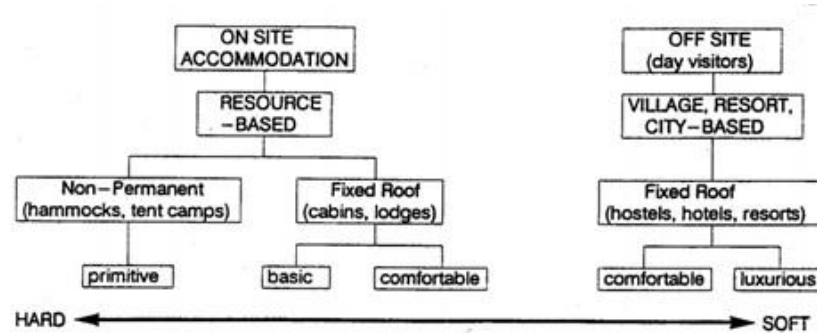


Figure 2. Ecotourism accommodation spectrum (Wight 1993, 58)

### 3.1.3 Ecotourism in Northern Sweden and Norway

Sweden and Norway are well-known for the beautiful Scandinavian nature and therefore tourism in our neighbouring countries greatly depends on nature-based attractions. According to the Finnish Tourist Board, Sweden and Norway are seen as Finland's biggest competitors in numerous tourism activities based on nature. These activities include, if not all, at least most of the activities Magnetic North Travel is offering to their guests (reindeer and dog sledding, wildlife observation, ice fishing, kayaking to mention but a few). (Finnish Tourist Board 2010; Visit Finland 2009). Finland and Norway are listed as the most interesting Nordic countries in Central- Europe and Russian markets, in terms of nature-based tourism in the Arctic regions (Finnish Tourist Board 2010, 32).

Both Sweden and Norway have an ecotourism programme to guide the local tourism industry into more ecological solutions. In Sweden the certificate is called Nature's Best (Naturen's bästa), and it was introduced to tourism industry in the International Year of Ecotourism in 2002. Norway has a programme called Ecotourism Norway (Norsk Økoturisme), published in 2008.

The reason why Norway is years behind Sweden was the simple fact that ecotourism was not nationally acknowledged, at least not in intended business activities. Norwegians are traditionally close with nature, which is why their actions and business are naturally eco-friendly. This is why the destination could be called as an ecotourism destination, despite the lack of formal labelling until late 2000's. (Viken 2006, 50.)

#### 3.1.4 Ecotourism in Finland

According to Björk, the discussion about ecotourism in Finland has led to misinterpretation of the concept 'ecotourism'. One of the main factors in encouraging these misinterpretations was the document Sustainable tourism – the challenge for 1990s for Finnish Tourism, published by the Finnish Tourist Board in 1993. Instead of boosting the study and promotion of ecotourism development, this document states ecotourism concept is 'a source of misunderstandings' and 'not a solution to environmental problems in the tourist field'. (Björk 2000, 197-198; 2004, 27-28) The Finnish Tourist Board then suggested the term 'sustainable tourism' should be used instead of 'ecotourism' in Finland. This has affected even the current state of ecotourism in Finland. (Finnish Tourist Board 2011)

Björk also states that the legislation of nature areas (national and natural parks) and everyman's rights were seen as a decelerating factor in the discussion of ecotourism. One of the core ideas of the concept is the tourist visiting the area paying a fair compensation of the use of the area for tourism purposes and this money used for conservation of the natural areas. According to the Finnish legislation this kind of fund raising (such as entrance fees) in natural areas is prohibited. (Björk 2000, 197-198; 2004, 27-28.)

The Finnish Tourist Board describes ecotourism as 'a part of sustainable tourism which is a part of sustainable development. This is why it is seen in Finland more as a special group of products rather than as a quality name'. (Finnish Tourist Board 2011.) Despite the lack of ecotourism education and development, the national legislation covers some parts of the sustainable tourism, such as encouraging the appropriate waste disposal and recycling and water and energy saving acts. (Ikonen 2012) The Finnish Tourist Board has together with Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services and Haaga Institute

Foundation, created several environmental quality programmes for tourism use. These include the YSMEK project (Ympäristöä säästävän matkailun edistämisen- ja kehittämishanke), Green Destination Quality Net (Green DQN®) and Green Destination Management Net (Green DQN™) programs. (Haaga-Perho 2012; Ikonen 2012.) There are three major, non-governmental organisations promoting ecotourism in Finland, all of which have introduced their own certification programmes for tourism use; ECEAT Finland, PAN Parks and Green Tourism of Finland® (Pan Parks 2012; Green Tourism of Finland 2013; ECEAT Finland 2012) Also the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, which is widely seen in domestic products, can be used in the leisure industry sector in accommodation and catering services (Joutsenmerkki 2011).

### **3.2 Perceptions of Ecotourism in Destination Salla**

According to Lapland's Tourism Strategy 2011-2014, Sallatunturi fell region is developed according to the Sallatunturi 2020 project (Regional Council of Lapland 2012) One of the key elements in this project is to develop the heating systems into a more sustainable way. At the moment a lot of local cabins and households run on oil heating, which is not an eco-friendly option. One of the main challenges in changing this is the challenge of being able to create a network that would cover most if not all of the scarcely populated areas in Salla and in Lapland in general. Some of the local entrepreneurs seemed to think the infrastructure in the destination needs to stay in its current state, spread wide in the destination, to keep the feeling of 'in the middle of nowhere', even if the destination develops and triples its beds by 2020. (Salla - Destination Quality Programme RAMK 2011) This brings certain challenges to, for example, developing the local transport methods to reduce the pollution caused by private vehicles and taxis that are needed to get around in the destination today.

Some of the entrepreneurs interviewed for the Salla- Destination Quality Programme said the presence of Oulanka National park should be seen as a positive marketing factor. What increases the attractiveness to Salla is the newly opened Pan Village, which offers cabin accommodation next to the

Oulanka National Park, which is the only Pan Parks certified National Park in Lapland. (Pan Parks, 2012)

Salla- Destination Quality Programme successfully points out the key elements on which the destination should have focus on when marketing itself under the eco/sustainable label. One of the local entrepreneurs pointed out “eco” as a theme or a concept should not be overly used but the word should be reflected to everything that is done concerning the destination and tourism in the destination. (Salla- Destination Quality Programme, RAMK 2011) Some of the things the students pointed out in their suggestions of sustainable marketing were:

The exaggerative use of the word “eco” should be avoided because marketing a destination with a false promise can lead to “greenwashing”, which means an empty or false promise of ecological development in the destination, given by the destination to the consumer. Often these empty or misleading promises cannot be fulfilled in a closer look. (Salla –Destination Quality Programme, RAMK 2011).

An example of greenwashing in a tourism business would be a hotel that markets itself as ‘green’ because it allows guests to choose to sleep on the same sheets and reuse towels during their stay, but otherwise does very little to save water and energy where it counts - on its grounds, with its appliances, lighting, in its kitchen, laundry etc. (Northern Territory Government 2009.)

Marketing of the destination should be handled in such a way, that the marketing messages would not misleadingly claim the destination to be eco-friendly but would be perfectly accurate and in plain language for the consumer to understand without problem. (Salla- Destination Quality Programme 2011) Marketing the destination as an Eco/Green destination is pointless, if the only effort done in the field is for the legal obligation. A genuine interest towards enhancing the ecological development should take place. (Salla –Destination Quality Programme 2011) The destination should also understand some elements, e.g. parts of service such as transportation or products cannot be made more ecological but nevertheless should be promoted to the public even if these could not be changed. The eco label should refer to the whole

product life cycle, but it is necessary to bear in mind Lapland as a destination is hard to reach by more ecological ways than flying or using one's own car. (Salla –Destination Quality Programme 2011) The sustainable ecotourism goals are best described as below (see Figure 3).

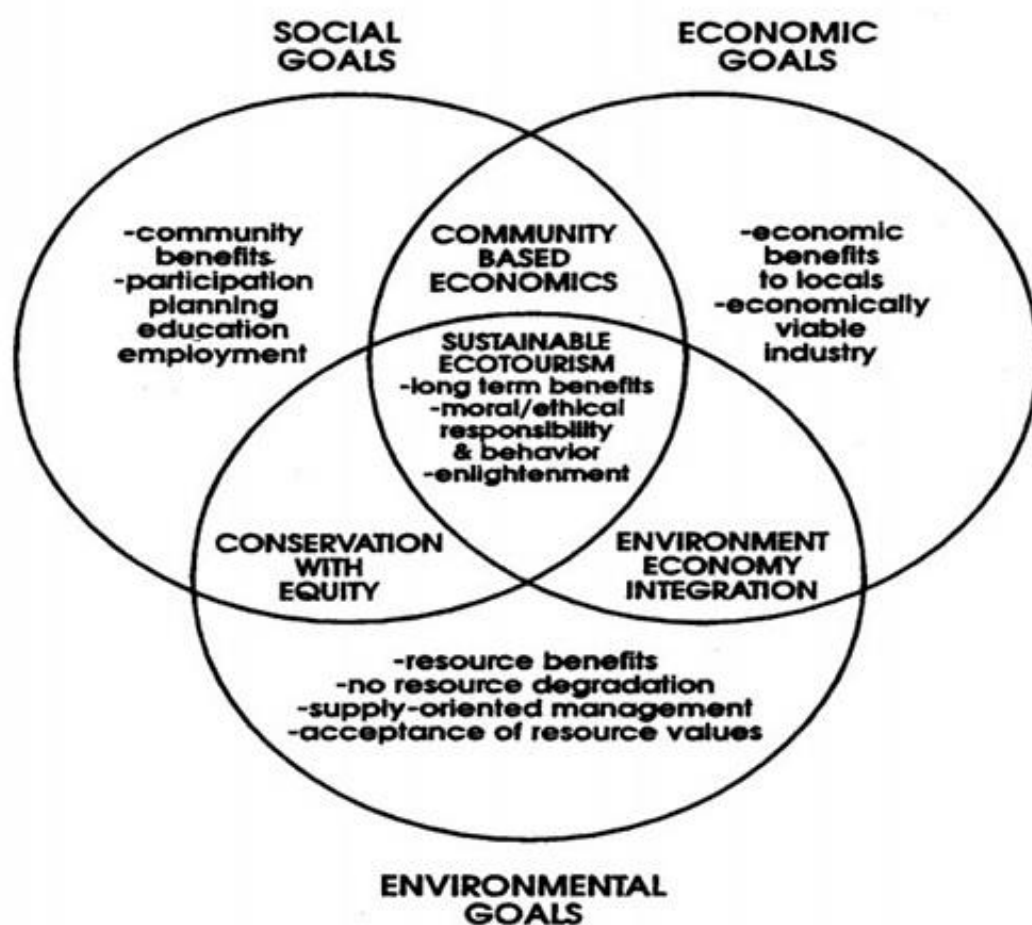


Figure 3. Sustainable Ecotourism Values and Principles Adopted from Sadler 1990 (Wight 1993)

## 4 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE HOLIDAY PACKAGE

### 4.1 Magnetic North Travel Ltd

Magnetic North Travel Ltd is a Nottingham based tour operator in the United Kingdom. The company was founded in 2010 by Laura Greenman and two private investors, one of which has lived in southern Norway in the 1980s and studied *friluftsliv*, the core idea of the business, for more than a year through Folk High School Network. Laura Greenman, Managing Director of Magnetic North Travel Ltd, is a university graduate of the University of Nottingham, having studied Russian and French before developing her career in the tourism sector in the UK. The company is a private limited company, registered in England and Wales. (Magnetic North Travel Ltd 2011)

Magnetic North Travel Ltd is a tour operator specialising in tours and tailor-made holidays to Northern Europe and Scandinavia. They travel to 'near' Magnetic North, the outer reaches of the British Isles and Republic of Ireland and 'far' Magnetic North to Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. They offer personal service to all customers, which derives from the team's passion to Scandinavia and years of experience in living and travelling in the Nordic countries. (Magnetic North Travel Ltd 2011) A tailor-made holiday consists of different standard services, e.g. transportation, accommodation, excursions and activities available at the given destination, all combined together according to customer needs.

The tour operator has an online based service, which includes the MNT website where customers can browse through different holiday locations and standard package options. Customers will then be emailed more information and a sample holiday brochure of their chosen destination for them to have an idea what kind of elements can be included in the tailored holiday package. The interaction between the tour operator and the customer is by exchanging emails and by telephone conversation in order for the MNT specialist to find out what are the customer's needs. Tailoring a package is followed by online booking and payment, after which a customer receives a letter from the tour operator including the information of the booking.



#### 4.1.1 Friluftsliv and Beyond Green

Translated literally, the Norwegian *friluftsliv* means “free air living”, which is the inspiration and ideal of Magnetic North Travel, when combining the elements of Nordic destinations into package holidays their clients can enjoy. The ideal inspires people to value the outdoor life, learn from traditions and to seek enjoyment from nature – just as the local people at the destinations have done through generations. (Magnetic North Travel Ltd 2011.)

The tour operator has also adopted a Beyond Green commitment to responsible tourism. The aim of this commitment is to assure responsibility of the company’s impact in the destination and in the clients’ mind set in developing a respect for nature. This commitment is seen on 3 different levels; as economic responsibility, environmental responsibility and social responsibility. (Magnetic North Travel Ltd 2011.)

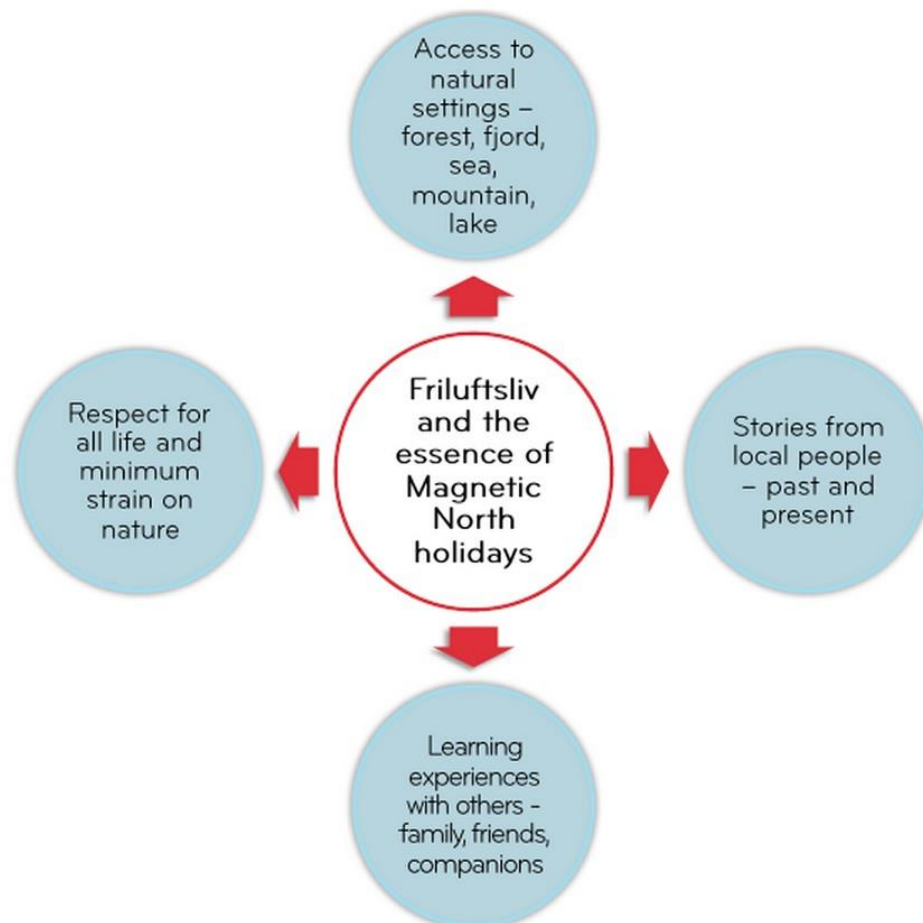


Figure 4. Friluftsliv (Magnetic North Travel 2011)

**Economic responsibility** ensures that the clients travelling to each of the destinations are guided and lead by local people. These people are local

entrepreneurs (fishermen, crafters, outdoor professionals) and are employed directly by the tour operator, which ensures they get a fair payment as a result of their work. The tour operator also likes to promote individual accommodation providers, such as families, as much as possible and favours local and regional suppliers of food and other provisions to give the clients the best opportunity to taste the local products and to support the local. (Magnetic North Travel Ltd 2011.)

The company and everyone working in it share the ideal of *friluftsliv* and support Nordic values. The company puts emphasis on keeping its values discernable throughout the development and selling process. They say the sales and product development work hand-in-hand to ensure that

The Northern destinations give clients the opportunity to experience the outdoors while offering an insight into how people live and have lived in the past based on the co-existence of traditional and modern values (Greenman 2011).

**Environmental responsibility** covers the ideal of *friluftsliv* and puts emphasis on the nature aspects. As the clients travelling to each destination are guided by local people, the knowledge of nature and traditions is passed straight from a local to the client. The clients have a chance to learn from the traditions used in the past, in the present and how these traditions will be carried out in the future, in a sustainable manner. Each supplier is picked carefully to ensure all holiday packages maintain a high standard of environmental sustainability. Also accommodation providers are chosen according to their environmental policies. The company supports providers which put effort on environmental aspects, such as renewable forms of energy and operate with regard to energy and water consumption. (Magnetic North Travel Ltd 2011.)

**Social responsibility** is promoted through encouraging the guests to connect with the landscape they travel within and to learn from how people live and have lived and survived in these areas. The aim of the holidays is to give clients the experiences that help them to gain fresh perspectives on nature. The clients are provided with a cultural insight, for example through visiting local homes and taking part in local events. (Magnetic North Travel Ltd 2011.)

#### **4.1.2 Distribution Channels and Markets**

Magnetic North Travel Ltd works as a distribution channel for the destination, as it is a tour operator selling the destination to customers. The holiday package is specially combined for the tour operator needs by a person working for the tour operator. This together with tailor made customer service ensures the holiday package is unique and cannot be found anywhere else in the markets (Niemelä, Harjoitteluraportti 2012). The thesis is focused more on defining the distribution channels and markets Magnetic North Travel Ltd has, instead of going through the channels and markets from the destination point of view.

The example package is divided in two; one of which is a holiday package serving the main markets and the other one being a purely ecological package focusing on niche markets. This division helps the tour operator use a greater amount of distribution channels in marketing the destination.

Nearly two thirds of Magnetic North's customers are UK based individuals and small groups (Figure 5). The remaining proportion of the client base are various nationalities. The biggest age groups travelling with Magnetic North are people in their 30 to 59 year-olds, with families taking up to 15 percent of the total percentage. Tailoring a standard package ensures a more satisfying customer service and experience for different nationalities and different age groups or party sizes.

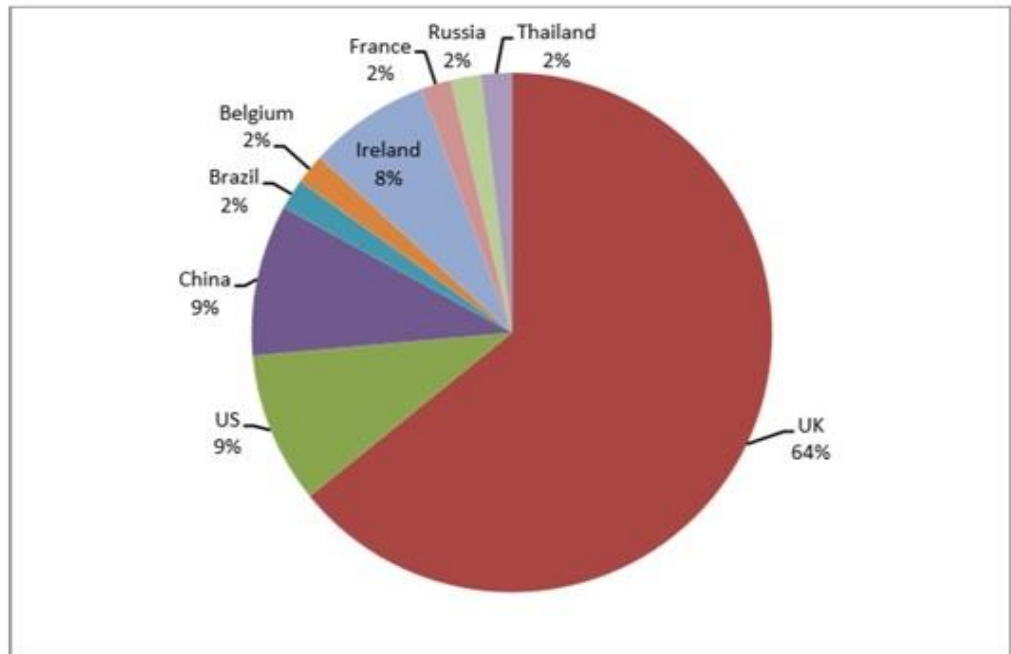
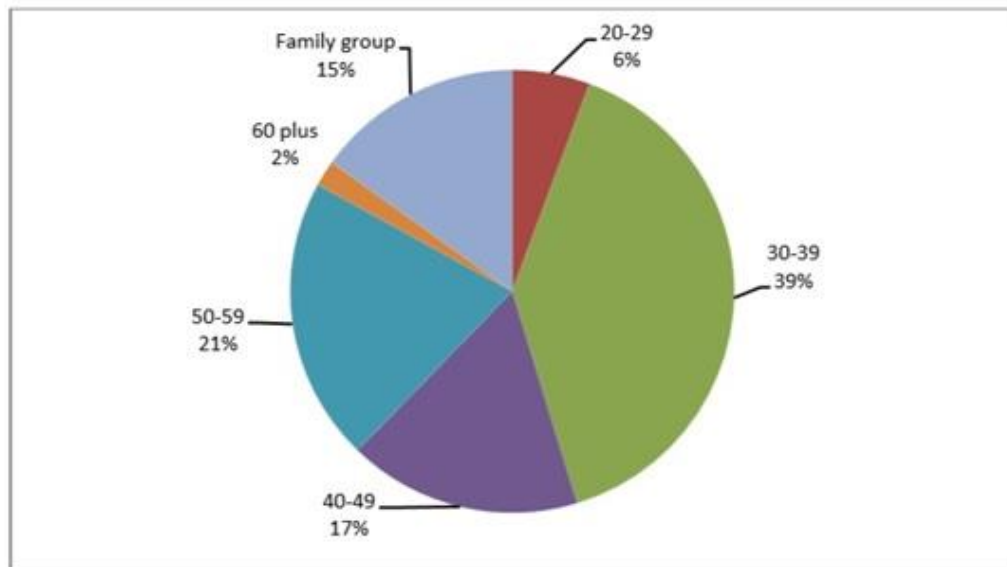
**MAGNETIC NORTH TRAVEL CLIENT DATA – 2011 – 2012****1. MARKET – WHERE THE CLIENTS LIVE****2. AGE**

Figure 5. Magnetic North Travel Client Data 2011 - 2012 (Magnetic North Travel 2012)

### 3. SOURCE (HOW THEY FOUND US)

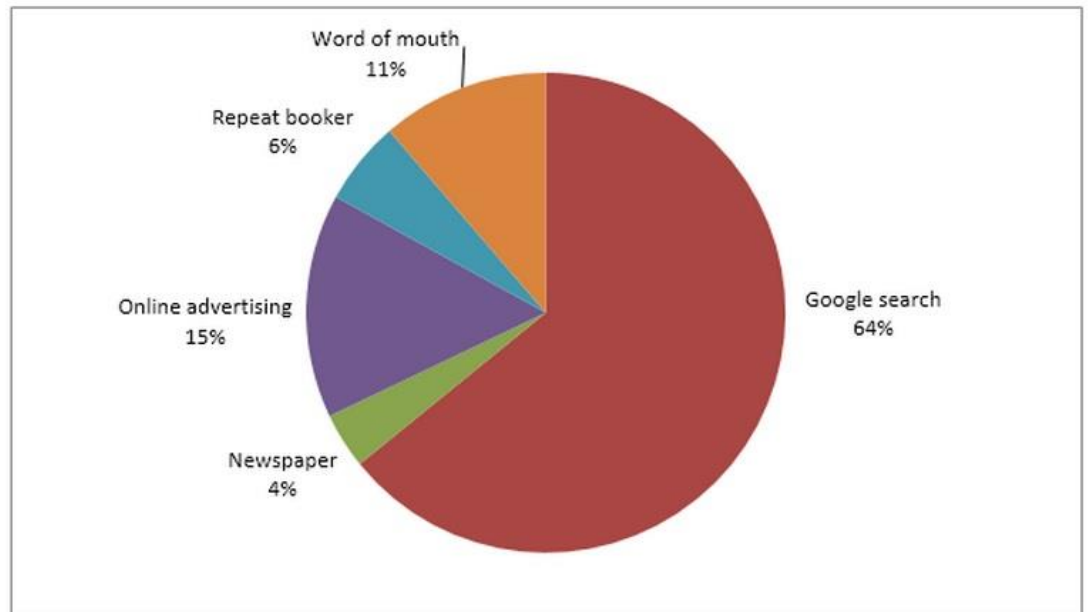


Figure 6. Source of information about MNT (Magnetic North Travel 2012)

Nearly 80 percent of the customers found the tour operator either by Google search engine or by online advertising (Figure 6). This indicates the importance of the role web-based research and advertising has in an online company. Some of the main marketing channels for the tour operator are Magnetic North Travel website ([www.magneticnorthtravel.com](http://www.magneticnorthtravel.com)), Magnetic North Travel blog, Facebook, Twitter, Responsible Travel ([www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com)) and Green Traveller ([www.greentraveller.co.uk](http://www.greentraveller.co.uk)). The company has also took part in events and fairs all over Scandinavia, Finland and the United Kingdom. One of the annual events to be mentioned is definitely the World Travel Market, held in Excel London again in autumn 2013. Fairs such as these make it easy for the two ends to meet, as the producers of tourism services and products meet the sellers and promoters.

## **4.2 Thesis Process as Holiday Package Development Process**

### 4.2.1 General Description of the Development Process

This thesis project was carried out as different types of development tasks to support and benefit the work of the commissioner, Magnetic North Travel Ltd. Because of the nature of the thesis, the research methods applied to define competition and destination values are qualitative. The purpose of the thesis was to find a new destination in Finnish Lapland for the company, Magnetic North Travel Ltd to promote and to develop an example holiday package for the tour operator in question to sell to their customers. The core idea is also to take into consideration the more ecological ways of providing the services and finding and combining the right kind of suppliers in order to be able to provide an end product that will meet the markets, satisfy the customer needs and in its own way supports the development of sustainable tourism in Salla.

The company successfully sells similar types of destination packages in Lapland, which is why the development process focused more on creating another package option for existing markets, rather than creating a package for new markets (Magnetic North Travel Ltd 2012). The benefit of this destination is their high interest in promoting and developing the ecological tourism options and individual customer service, which can be seen as unique selling points when focusing on the markets Magnetic North Travel is promoting itself on. The interest in and the currently on-going ecological tourism projects contribute such selling aspects as the possibility to sell the destination on distribution channels that are solely focused on ecological tourism. For this reason, the result of the thesis is two similar holiday packages; one of which the tour operator can promote in the so called “main markets” and one that can be sold through a network solely focused on “niche markets”; the seekers of purely ecological tourism options.

Unfortunately some components in the packages cannot be made more ecological as they are now, e.g. means of transportation. As Lapland is relatively far from the main markets in Central-Europe and Asia, it is understandable the only means of transportation the customers can use to reach the destination are either by plane or by train (when travelling on land is

an option). The closest airports in Rovaniemi and Kuusamo leave a gap of 100 - 160 kilometres to the destination Salla and this distance need to be travelled either by bus or by car. The benefit of landing in Kuusamo airport is the regular bus transportation to Salla throughout the winter. The bus operates between Salla-Kuusamo-Salla and meets most flights, so customers would not need to rent a car for their visit to the destination. The destination itself offers weekly shopping trips from the skiing centre, where most accommodation is located, to the centre of the village, where tourists can do their grocery shopping, use the postal services, buy souvenirs and more. (Salla municipality 2013) The distance between the skiing centre and the centre of the village is 10 kilometres, which is a bit far to walk.

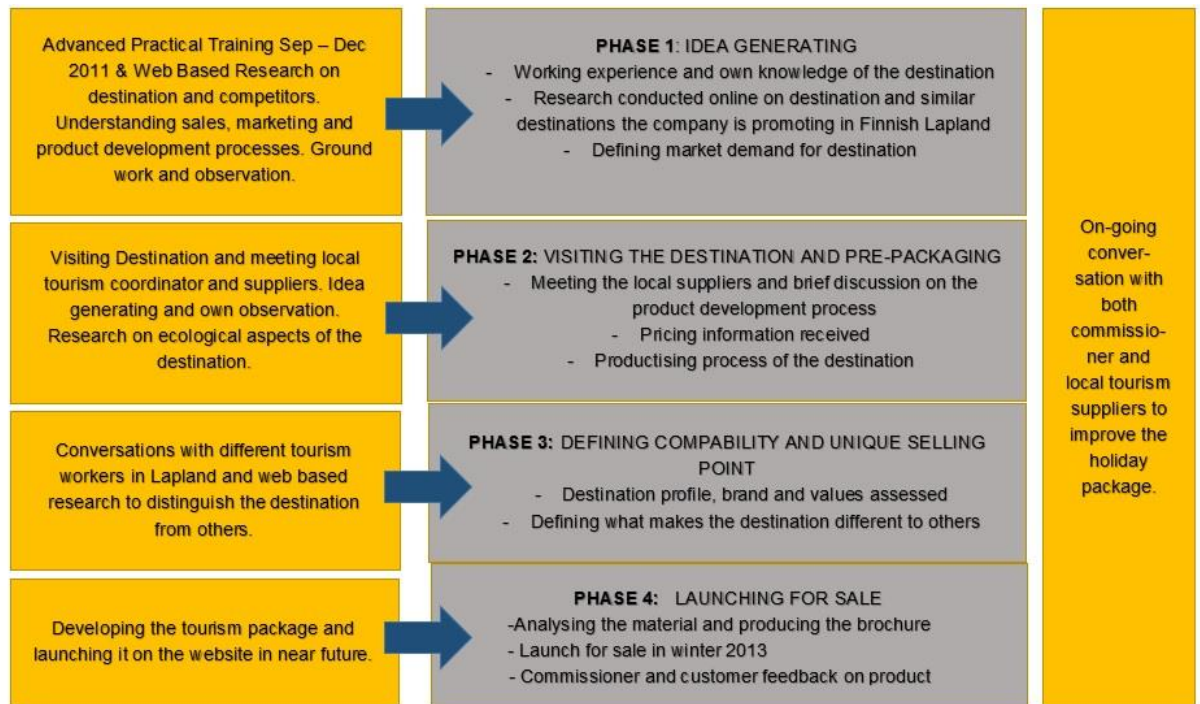
The main development tasks were:

1. Where can the suppliers / transportation / activities/ accommodation be found and how can these elements be used in building a new product (for specific use)?
2. How can these elements be sold as an ecological holiday package?
3. Who are the competitors or is there competition?

For confidentiality reasons the pricing of the packages is excluded of this thesis. Also the supplier information will remain anonymous.

The schedule for thesis process:

Table 2. Schedule



The process evolved from a general idea of product development into a finalized holiday package, which will be launched at the Magnetic North Travel website for sale. The process could be divided into 4 phases (see Figure 7). The first phase started during my advanced practical training at Magnetic North Travel Ltd in the United Kingdom. During the practical training I participated in sales, marketing and product development processes, all of which built a solid base on the development process I was assigned to start on destination Salla. The product development process of Salla package already started during the practical training in the UK with idea generating and a web based search on the destination. The idea of the destination derived from my personal interest in and connections to the destination Salla, which helped me in building a connection to the local suppliers and community. Most suppliers I have met through this process, I have known before for personal or professional reasons. The process got positive feedback from the commissioner, who encouraged me to take the idea generating into practical processes and create a holiday package that could be launched and sold on the tour operator's website.



The product development process began with ground work. First, there was an evaluation process of the destinations Magnetic North Travel is already selling in Finnish Lapland. This study was conducted during the practical training period. The process included evaluating the possible competition; whether the destination chosen could compete with other destinations the company is selling in the international markets and evaluating the possibilities the destination has in terms of creating an example package that can meet the markets and satisfy customer needs, especially if being able to promote the ecological options, because there is a demand for sustainable tourism options.

The second phase included a visit to the destination and a meeting with the local people working in tourism. This phase introduced me to the actual locations, services and people. The ideas generated in the first phase combined with the core services introduced in the destination, which helped the productizing process. The third phase included an evaluation of the product as it was at the time, defining the compatibility of the product with the commissioner needs and finding a unique selling point for the product to distinguish it from the already existing, comparable products in the markets. The suitability of the destination in terms of what the commissioner is looking for in a destination; destination profile, brand and values the locals and tourism industry have concerning the sustainability of tourism and use of nature was also looked into. The local ecotourism values are explained in chapter 3.2 Perceptions of ecotourism in destination Salla.

The fourth phase, which is still on-going, is the launch of the product to the markets and to Magnetic North Travel website and getting feedback of the product both from the commissioner and the customers. The product is yet to be tested, which is why no feedback is available.

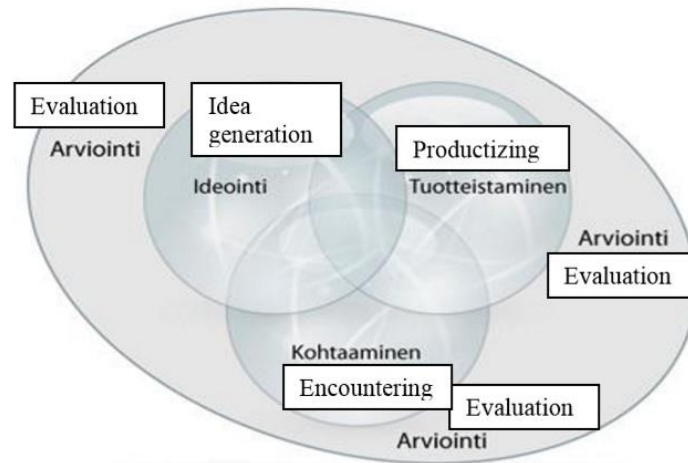


Figure 7. Product Development Process (Garcia-Rosell et al. 2010)

The research work conducted for combining the holiday package included research on the destination and tourism in the destination, brief research of the history of tourism in the destination, supplier information gathered mainly from the websites during my stay abroad, brief research on similar types of destinations in Lapland as competitors or as possible co-competition and research on ecological tourism perceptions and trends. The qualitative methods also included conversation with the commissioner about commissioner needs and ideas about the destination, a meeting with the local tourism coordinator and local suppliers, own observations in the destination and internet based material search and conversations with tourism offices in Lapland region.

The material choice concerning the holiday package was mostly determined by the commissioner need of the information from the destination. The material gathered for the thesis is a result of defining and ruling the subject under specific headings, which forms the contents list. During the research it was found there is very little to no useful combined literature about tourism and development of tourism in Salla, which is why previous thesis works were used as material.

The information describing the competition and co-competition of the destinations was mainly gathered from each destinations website and then verified by calling tourism offices in person. These offices included Kuusamo tourist info in Matkailukeskus Karhuntassu (governed by Metsähallitus and Ruka-Kuusamo Matkailuyhdistys ry), Ylläs tourist info in Luontokeskus

Kellokas (governed by Metsähallitus and the municipality of Kolari) and Pyhä-Luosto tourist info in Luontokeskus Naava (governed by Metsähallitus). I also contacted two local entrepreneurs in Ruka area by phone to ask about the current state of the ecological issues.

The meeting with the local tourism coordinator in Salla was held in April-May 2012, until which supplier information was gathered mainly from websites. During this meeting I visited the local suppliers, which was also the first introduction of this product development process to them. At this point it was not yet clear the project was going to develop to be my thesis project. Thus, I was meeting the suppliers as a representative of the company Magnetic North Travel Ltd.

Collecting supplier information from the local companies was not a success at first, as there were delays on retrieving the information. Some of the suppliers were never heard back from. The information needed for putting together the example holiday package was gathered ready in summer 2012, after which the work on combining the holiday package started.

#### 4.2.2 Visiting the Destination and Pre-packaging

The people working in tourism sector in destination level in Salla were contacted via the local tourism coordinator, who I first met to introduce myself, the commissioner and the idea of product development and to gather ideas from the destination perspective. This meeting was held in April 2012. During this meeting, the already existing ideas were discussed with a brief introduction of commissioner practises. Example holiday packages from different destinations in Lapland were introduced to the tourism coordinator in order to give her an idea of the final form the holiday package would be given when the tour operator is selling it on their website. The research on supplier information and possibilities of the destination done during the practical training period in the United Kingdom, together with personal connections to the destination helped me built a general outline of the example holiday package before the meeting with the tourism coordinator as a representative of Magnetic North Travel Ltd.

The meeting with the local tourism coordinator spawned short meetings with the local suppliers, which could be called “an introductory round”. After introducing the idea to the local tourism coordinator, she suggested we would go and meet the local suppliers together, as she could then introduce me to them all at once. Each supplier meeting took approximately 15 minutes, which was enough to have a general idea of the service they provide and to have a few questions about their operations and equipment and vice versa.

The material gathered from these meetings was mainly own observations and written tourism information, such as brochures of the destination and services provided by the suppliers. During the visits I noticed an interesting phenomenon of the Finnish suppliers and people working in tourism expecting the tour operator being the one responsible of introducing itself and selling their business to the suppliers, instead of the suppliers promoting themselves to the tour operator’s direction. When having conversations with the suppliers, questions such as “Why do we want to work with you?” and “What do we gain from the cooperation?” were asked of me as the representative of the tour operator. There seemed to be a common misinterpretation of the tourism promoting processes (seller-buyer), where commonly it is the supplier or the destination that promotes itself to the tour operators in order to sell their services and products to the tour operator, who then sells them forward to the customers. In these processes the tour operator acts as an intermediary between the suppliers and the end customer.

Same types of misinterpretations were present at the World Travel Market 2012, held in London during the practical training period. The WTM collects tourism specialists from all over the world in a market, where numerous supplier-operator meetings are happening in a relatively small, closed space. Compared to the Norwegian suppliers, for example, the Finnish representatives seemed more eager to know what the tour operator could do for them, instead of what can they give to the tour operator. The misinterpretation of the processes seems to be on a national level of tourism workers, based on my own observations of meetings with various Finnish suppliers, which is why the suppliers in destination Salla are not exceptionally deviate. Nevertheless, it is important to create a common understanding and trust between the two parties, supplier and tour operator, which is why the

questions and worries that arise from the supplier side of the cooperation are not to be ignored or belittled at all.

The pre-packaging phase started with another idea generation spawned from the conversations between suppliers and the tourism coordinator. New ideas were brought up along the development process by colleagues, the supervisor and fellow students. First the idea was to create a package that would satisfy most customer needs, but as it turned out during the planning seminar, creating an ecological holiday package and including elements of motorised transportation is a complex combination. Because of the pendulous interpretation of the concept 'ecotourism', including motorised transportation can be problematic. The snowmobiles used in Salla are mainly replaced with the new more ecological ones that are proven to create less pollution in the nature. However, these are still (yet more ecological) motorised vehicles, so I had to think carefully about ruling them out of the package to ensure the example holiday package that was created would be entirely ecological and could therefore be sold on websites focused solely on selling packages that are purely ecological. To prevent having to rule out the activities offered including the motorised transportation, I chose to divide the example package into two, one of which is made for the so called 'main markets' and one of which is focusing on the 'niche markets'.

The product development process in a destination level is a complex combination of people, services and products. When combining the three, it is crucial for the success of the process to take into consideration the most common problems the destination and product development can bring to the process during it. These problems include the sustainability elements, such as finding the kind of suppliers that can be trusted in their actions and who are willing to create a personalised service for both the tour operators they are working in cooperation with but also to each customers they are encountering. These kind of connections, "trust binds", are vital for the tour operator to be able to create, as they are sending their guests out there in the sometimes even harsh conditions of the Arctic.

#### 4.2.3 Defining Compatibility and Unique Selling Point

In the third phase of the thesis process the compatibility of the destination and the tour operator was defined, as well as finding a unique selling point of the example holiday package. Magnetic North Travel sells similar types of holiday packages elsewhere in Finnish Lapland, which helped in finding the elements the tour operator would be interested in in the holiday package made for destination Salla.

Salla markets itself with the slogan “In the Middle of Nowhere” (in Finnish Salla – Erämaassa). In Finland, this slogan is seen as one of the key selling points in the area, because it creates a promise of silent and stress free environment (Lapinliitto 2013). Internationally, however, the slogan does not always create positive feelings in the minds of the customers. This is partly due to cultural differences but the problem is also the customer coming from a more hectic environment with higher population density. Being amongst other people and having services easily available creates an illusion of safety. Therefore, “being in the middle of nowhere” is often seen as the opposite of being safe. (Magnetic North Travel 2012; Niemelä, harjoitteluraportti 2012).

Due to the possible negative impact of the slogan in international markets, my commissioner encouraged me to look for an alternative selling point (Magnetic North Travel 2012; Niemelä, harjoitteluraportti 2012). Together with the commissioner we came up with the idea of using the silence of the destination in marketing it to the international markets. Matkalle Sallaan ry also uses the silence in their marketing and it has proven to have positive impacts on the image of the destination. Matkalle Sallaan ry has also created an event called “Ei tapahtu mitään- viikko / Nothing happens –week”, which promotes the silence of the destination. (Matkalle Sallaan ry 2013)

I wanted to keep the theme of the holiday package Lappish, which is why the new Lapland brand “Above ordinary” was chosen to represent the holiday package. The Lapland brand development process started in 2011 by the Regional Council of Lapland. Its aim is to create a target vision and brand image for Lapland to stand out from other regions (Regional Council of Lapland – Lapland Brand 2011). The Regional Council of Lapland was also behind the development of the brand Salla – in the Middle of Nowhere. (Regional Council

of Lapland 2011) Lapland – Above ordinary together with selling the silence were selected to as the unique selling point to distinguish the destination from others in Lapland. Moreover, the destination's high interest in promoting and developing the ecological tourism options and individual customer service add to the uniqueness of the destination.

#### 4.2.4 Finalizing the Tourism Package

The challenge with the first development task was that in the beginning of the process I was afraid the project would fail because of the lack of interest from the supplier / destination part. There was a challenge of a local representing an international company. Approaching the local tourism workers might have been easier, had I not been a local. In my experience, trusting an outsider is occasionally considered easier than counting on the experience of someone familiar. Evaluating the destination, locations and services was demanding because of the lack of ability to see the destination as a person visiting it for the first time would experience it.

This links to the other challenge that was pointed out in the planning seminar; what if the final result does not meet the commissioner needs? Judging the services during the productizing phase turned out to be extremely difficult. I am a Finn and a local, which is why putting myself in the shoes of a foreigner visiting the area for the first time was challenging. Learning to look at the destination from a neutral point of view and to try consider all the possible setbacks the tourists could have in the destination was one of the biggest challenges of the product evaluation process. The challenges a tourist can face include, for example, the problems with transportation, as the location of the destination is considerably remote and the distances are long in Lapland.

One of my main development tasks were the question about the future of the ecological tourism in the area. The commissioner is driven to support ecological tourism, which is why the destination should meet certain standards. One of the challenges listed in the planning seminar was that the created package of an ecological holiday and the destination itself need to meet the promise to customer because you cannot sell empty promises. The destination needs to understand the differences between sustainable tourism

and ecotourism and not to market these in a way that gives the tourist a false impression of the ecological development (and sustainable development) in the area. Putting the word 'eco' in everything in marketing can easily lead to false advertisement, which is giving an empty promise of something that does not exist to the extent of how it is described or seen in the minds of the tourists. Making a destination completely eco-friendly is a challenge that can hardly be achieved, as it requires participation from all parties (country, community, tour operator, tourist), which is why it should be clearly stated which parts of the destination or the product are ecological to avoid misleading the consumers / customers.

The example holiday package was divided into two package options as follows:

A package for main markets:

By main markets this thesis refers to the markets that seek nature-friendly holidays, but are willing to yield in some components of the package. These people, according to my working experience with Magnetic North Travel, are individual travellers, couples, families or small groups that search a holiday above the ordinary and want a tailor-made holiday that takes into consideration the environmental features and the sustainability of the destination but also want some comfort and maybe luxury in the destination. These could include e.g. a luxurious hotel room in the city centre instead of a cabin in the woods or including motorised excursions in their day-to-day travel plan (Magnetic North Travel 2012).

Creating an example package for the main markets was proven to be easier than creating a package for niche markets because there is a good possibility to include more excursions, as also those excursions that include motorised vehicles, such as snowmobiles or cars, can be offered to the customer. Because of the remote location of Salla, reaching the destination (especially in winter time) is extremely hard unless the customer is willing to use motorised vehicles. The nearest train reaches Kemijärvi station, which is 70 kilometres away from Salla. The nearest airports are in Rovaniemi, 160 kilometres away, and in Kuusamo, 120 kilometres away. There are bus connections to the destination, operating 1 to even 5 times a day from all the cities listed above.



Reaching the destination by bus is possible, but requires good planning, as the schedules may vary greatly depending on the time of the day, weekday or season. Building the package for main markets was started going step-by-step from the beginning of the sales process all the way to the evaluation. First, all the possible means of transportation to the destination were listed. As the commissioner was not selling plane tickets at the time when the process started, the best connections to the nearby airports in Lapland were studied and both Rovaniemi and Kuusamo airports were recommended as the possible connection points. Magnetic North Travel Ltd sends the best quote to the flights for every customer.

The train service to Kemijärvi was also studied to ensure the service is still ongoing. There are several car rentals at both Rovaniemi and Kuusamo airports, therefore hiring a car from both locations for the holiday is possible. Should there be a need, hiring a car in Kemijärvi is also possible. The main ways to reach the destination therefore are either by plane or train or by one's own car, then choosing either a rental car option or public transportation (which is highly recommended due to the different driving conditions; snow, darkness and rapidly changing weather, especially in the winter). Finland, as well as Scandinavian countries, also has a great population of large animals, such as elks and reindeer, and these are a cause of numerous accidents on the roads.

The second phase included adding the accommodation options to the package. The idea was the image of the package to remain as what Salla is at its best – a small place with no luxury hotels but comfortable cabin accommodation next to the Natura area and under the starry skies. Three different cabin options were chosen for the holiday package, all of which are similar with small distinctive features, such as the other being located near a pond whereas the other is located nearby a restaurant / pub. Both locations are close to each other, though, so choosing one is not ruling out the possibility to enjoy the attractions the other one is closer to.

One of the main problems that transpired when adding the accommodation to the example package was the need to find the accommodation options creative, selling names. The cabins cannot be named after the suppliers or the current names they are sold under, because the idea of a successful business

is never to give out either supplier information or exact names or locations of any product or service.

The accommodation options are gathered from three different suppliers that provide the services in the area, so there is no unfair favouring of any particular supplier. The suppliers left out of the example package are also listed, in case either the company wants to offer a different option to its client, or the client asks if there are other options. Adding all of the suppliers in the area would have made the package look disorganised, which is why the decision of choosing two or three was in order.

The next step in building the holiday package included adding the excursions and activities the destination is providing to its visitors. These include the typical Lappish activities, such as snowmobiling, snowshoeing, reindeer and husky safaris, Northern Lights excursions and the local spa.

The contents of the package and the price always depends on the duration of the holiday, the accommodation chosen and services selected (excursions, activities, half-board/dinner, extras). Due to the legal issues pricing is left out of this thesis work and will remain unknown, except the prices shown on the example package PDF. The price consists of the price the suppliers give to tour operators (whether or not these include a commission, depends on each supplier and product) and commission the company charges if no commission is added to the net prices. I have provided the commissioner a full list of suppliers with their services and prices and also a list of supporting services, such as restaurants and transportation means available in the area.

The holiday package includes 3 accommodation options, of which the client chooses one to stay in. The chosen accommodation option is the base for the price and the price starts to build up according to the amount and nature of excursions and services attached. Then on the second page of the example PDF (see attachment 1) the client chooses the excursions and activities he/she wants to add to the package. Once these are chosen, the tour operator provides the client a quote of the total package price, which can be calculated by adding the accommodation and the services together and a quote of the best transportation means (with schedules) to the destination.

## Cosy cabin and the Northern Lights in the wild Lapland

SALLA, FINLAND

MN  
MAGNETIC  
NORTH.TRAVEL

Located above the Arctic Circle, the region of Salla has an ideal position for a relaxing stay in the undiscovered parts of Lapland. We offer cosy cabin accommodation next to the local, small skiing centre with access to activities and a possibility of spotting the Northern Lights. Our holidays are tailor made so that you can combine the activities and accommodation that suit you. Cabins are modern with a Lappish touch and come fully equipped for self-catering use.



Figure 8. Salla Holiday Package (Niemelä 2013)

A package for niche markets:

Niche markets, in this thesis work, are the travellers that are willing or even looking to cut the luxurious off their holiday package. These might be people who, instead of flying, would want to travel by train or ship, even if it takes longer, request staying in an accommodation they know is sustainably managed and do not want their holiday to include excursions that can cause a damage to the environment, such as motorised excursions.

The package designed for niche markets is similar to the one designed for main markets, but excludes all motorised or otherwise polluting or nature-disturbing excursions and activities. In most cases, these type of packages can be ready-built, with the duration of the holiday, an accommodation, certain activities and excursions and a quote for price intact, same as for many beach holidays organised by tour operators, e.g. Aurinkomatkat.

This phase also included a brief study of the reputation Salla has in international markets. For the material, TripAdvisor ([www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)) was studied and 66 reviews of the destination and its services were found all together. There was no specific criteria for the search, as it was on people's reactions on the destination. The reviews covered the local skiing centre, the Reindeer Park and 4 accommodation options.

The reviews were mainly either excellent or very good (last updated on August 2, 2013), with a slight minus of drinks costing too much at the local pub in the skiing centre and a long way to the centre of the village for food shopping. I was positively surprised a great number of people, who had reviewed the destination, were British. Salla was described as the forgotten gem of Lapland, at least in the British travel markets. People who had reviewed the destination appeared not to be afraid of the slogan “in the middle of nowhere”. The idyllic atmosphere with plenty of fresh air, no roads and no noise and a somewhat remote location were only seen as a plus. For a collection of reviews, see appendix 3.

## 4.3 Competition and Coopetition

### 4.3.1 Competition and Coopetition

The criteria used for defining the possible competitors and coopetition included the ideals the tour operator values. These ideals include nature-based locations and destinations, how important nature and nature preservation is in the destination, the common guest profile of the destination, the size and importance of tourism (in comparison to Salla) and the range of suppliers, services and products that may be interesting from the commissioner point of view. I excluded events, because they are not a part of the core service. Also, the events vary from year to year and their ecological and sustainable value is hard to assess. By core services here, is referred to: location and accessibility, accommodation, catering (especially if local production available) and tourism related products and services. All the destinations listed in Lapland have a strong connection to nature; all of them are located next to National Park areas, which was the main criteria. Finnish Tourist Board (MEK) encouraged areas to work together in coopetition (coopetition is co-operating whilst competing) (Finnish Tourist Board 2010).

The destinations that met the criteria of the connection with a National Park were Ruka-Kuusamo, Pyhä-Luosto, Ivalo and Menesjärvi and Pallas and Ylläs fells. I ruled out Rovaniemi region from the competitors, because of its nature of being internationally more recognised as a Santa Claus winter holiday destination. The region emphasizes the presence of the Santa Claus in its marketing and is more of a city location with top amenities and services, whereas other destinations in Lapland are more focused on promoting nature based activities, e.g. slalom and skiing and also the silence a traveller can find in the nature based locations. Rovaniemi was also the only destination that did not meet the criteria of being in a close distance from a National Park in Lapland.

The material of the different destinations in Lapland was gathered by telephone conversations with local tourism offices, tourist infos and local suppliers. Due to the long distances and a challenging schedule, visiting each location personally for this matter would have been impossible. I have visited

all the destinations in near history, however the visits took place outside the thesis process and therefore did not produce information that could have been used on the thesis process outside of own observations made on location.

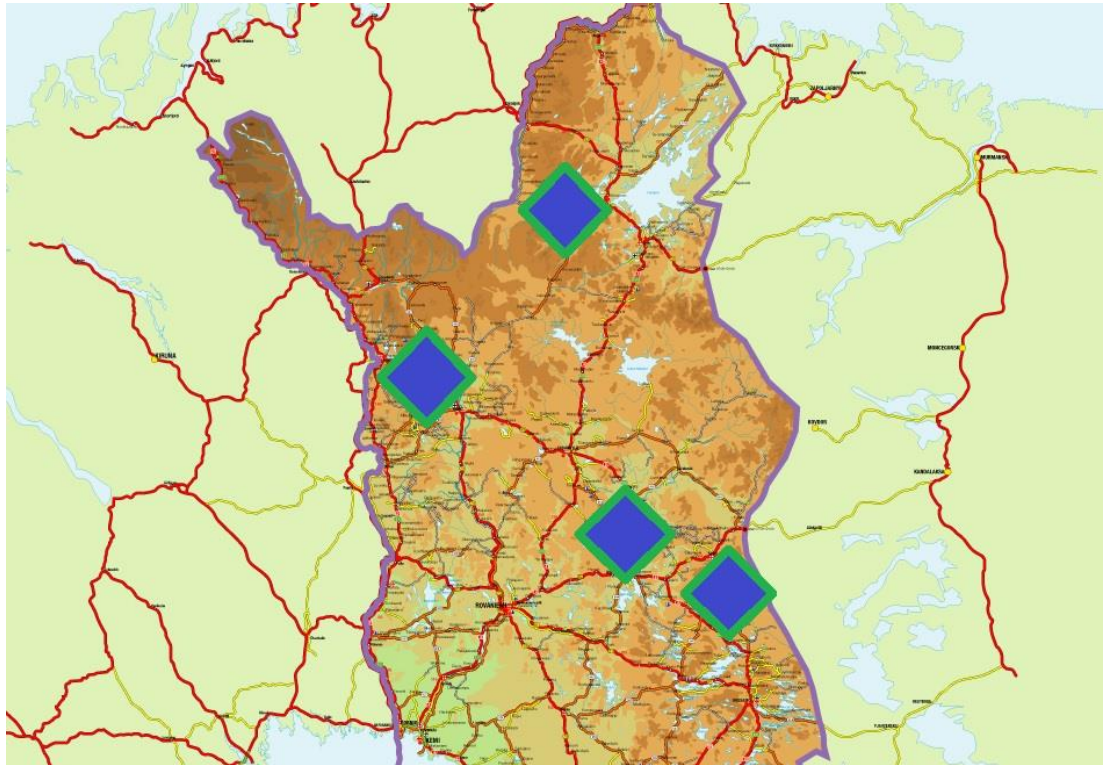


Figure 9. National Parks in Lapland

#### 4.3.2 Finland

Ruka is the second biggest skiing centre in Finland, located in Kuusamo, 100 kilometres from Salla. In the wintertime, Ruka is definitely the biggest pull factor in Kuusamo area, with its skiing centre and all amenities. The core centre of the skiing centre is built in a romanced alpine style, which gives the guests a feeling of an alpine location in Central-Europe. This skiing centre itself includes more than 23 000 beds, 15 restaurants and 10 shops. All together; there are about 40 000 beds in Kuusamo area (Ruka-Kuusamo Matkailuyhdistys ry), which is more ten times more than in the whole area of Salla (estimated 3 800 in 2013) (Matkalle Sallaan ry 2012).

In the summertime, Kuusamo area is very similar to Salla (the two municipalities are sharing a border), with Oulanka National Park and Karhunkierros trail (Bear's trail) being the number one attractions together with beautiful fjells, rivers and landscapes (Ruka-Kuusamo Matkailuyhdistys ry, 2012). This Finland's most popular hiking route covers 80 kilometres of

Oulanka National Park's landscapes and river sides. It has let the nature speak for itself for over 50 years and is known worldwide. (Pan Parks 2012)

Economic, social and environmental responsibilities are shown in hiring the locals; tourism gives work to 790 local people all year round, using the local material and resources in catering; there are local restaurants that serve dishes made from local products, such as mushrooms, berries, fish and game. (Ruka-Kuusamo Matkailuyhdistys ry, 2012). In recent years, the insufficient waste water treatment plant has raised discussion in Ruka area.

Pyhä-Luosto is covering an area of Pyhä-Luosto National Park. These two closely connected tourism destinations work in co-operation. There is an amethyst mine in the Pyhä-Luosto area and also an amethyst spa, both of which can be defined as unique selling points. Pyhätunturi fell has approximately 5 100 beds and Luosto approximately 4 000 beds. The sustainability in destination is considered in hiring locals and using local ingredients in catering. (Pyhä-Luosto Matkailuyhdistys ry 2013) The best connections to the area are either by plane to Rovaniemi, followed by a bus trip to the destination, or a train connection to Kemijärvi, followed by a bus trip to the destination. Also car rental is possible from each connection point. (Pyhä-Luosto Matkailuyhdistys ry 2013)

There are nearly 13 500 beds in Saariselkä and its surroundings. Magnetic North Travel is selling trips to Inari, Menesjärvi and Saariselkä, from which Inari and Menesjärvi also offer an ecological, non-motorised holiday option. Inari and Menesjärvi are close to the Lemmenjoki National Park, which gives good settings for promoting ecological tourism. Also Sami culture is strongly inflected in tourism in this area, which increases the tourism based on indigenous peoples and their lifestyle. (Magnetic North Travel 2012)

Ylläs is one of the fastest growing tourism destinations in Lapland in terms of tourism turnover and currently has a bed capacity of approximately 23 000. The development is based on continuous building planning, general action plans, co-operation between Ylläs and Levi, and the destination development the municipalities are conducting. The National Park around Pallas-Ylläs fell gives its own restrictions into building planning and the use of land in tourism, which drives the destination to work hard on promoting the ecological tourism

options. (Lapin Matkailustrategia 2011-2014.) The National Park and the surrounding areas are popular destinations for hikers.

There is a train connection to Kolari, which is close to Ylläs and an airport in Kittilä. These two transportation means provide good access to the area and are also more ecological than using a private car. However, the public transportation in the area is not sufficient, which is why the tourists need to use taxi services to get around. The destination also provides catering that is made of local products and production nearby. Landscaping in building takes into consideration the surroundings, which is why for example the hotel and cabins areas located on the fell side do not have green grass yards. There is an on-going debate of a mining scheme taking place near the area of Ylläs and Levi, which can be harmful for tourism and the nature around the area. (Ylläs Tourist Info Kellokas 2013)

Destination comparison in ecological tourism between the different destinations in Lapland (Table 3) shows that despite being similarly located in close distance from National Parks in Lapland, each destination has their own types of focus points in ecological thinking. The remote locations of the destinations bring a challenge of providing ecological travel options to the customers travelling to the destinations from outside of Finland. When having a conversation with the local tourist info in Ylläs, they mentioned the problems of the public transportation not being sufficient in the area. This is a common problem throughout Lapland and unfortunately has an effect on being able to call a destination eco-friendly.



Table 3. Destination comparison in ecological tourism

	Salla	Ruka-Kuusamo	Ivalo&Menesjärvi	Pallas-Ylläs	Pyhä-Luosto
<b>National Park</b>	Oulanka	Oulanka	Lemmenjoki	Pallas-Ylläs	Pyhä-Luosto
<b>Capacity</b>	3 800	23 000/ 40 000	13500 including Saariselkä	23 000	9 100
<b>Main connections</b>	Bus or car from Rovaniemi or Kuusamo Train to Kemijärvi (bus connection)	Airport Local bus	Airport in Inari	Airport in Kittilä Train to Kolari	Bus or car from Kemijärvi Train to Kemijärvi
<b>Unique selling point</b>	Selling the silence	"Nature's own amusement park"	Authenticity and Sami	Seven fells	Two fells Amethyst mine & Spa
<b>Eco-thinking</b>	Eco-friendly heating solutions need to be found, newly built Pan village	Recycling well planned in Ruka centre, recent sewage problem	Purely ecological holiday options available	Centres in a National Park which brings challenge to building	Centres in a National Park which brings challenge to building

### 4.3.3 Sweden and Norway

Sweden and Norway are Finnish Lapland's biggest competitors. The services and attractions all three provide are similar (Northern Lights, snow activities, reindeer and husky, Sami to mention but a few), which is why the competition in the area is tough. Norway has a great advantage in ecological tourism, as it is internationally seen as an ecological, nature-friendly destination. The advantage especially Norway has in tourism marketing is the closeness of the sea, which provides the possibility for attractions and excursions that are not possible to conduct in Finland (such as whale-watching and sea kayaking). Magnetic North Travel sells Norway successfully, and also the destinations in Sweden are a growing trend. (Magnetic North Travel 2012)

## 5 Discussion

The goal of this project was to discover a new destination in Finnish Lapland and to create an example winter holiday package in the chosen destination for tour operator Magnetic North Travel to sell on their website. The holiday package was designed to be used on its own with the possibility of being moderated as a purely ecological holiday package, or used as a tool for developing a holiday package for this destination for different seasons. The process was based on written material, personal observation and knowledge of the destination and supplier information.

Creating the example holiday package to Salla for the commissioner Magnetic North Travel was both challenging and educating. Even though the destination was familiar, I had to learn to look at it from a new perspective, as a tourist. This helped me to identify the possible drawbacks a tourist could face while visiting the destination. The tour operator and the destination can work on these issues in the future either together or separately, in order to create even better holiday experiences to their guests.

The limitations of the project included sharing pricing information, which was discussed in a general sense during the process. The pricing is one of the business secrets of the tour operators and therefore cannot be further explained in the thesis. The process was limited on developing a holiday package for winter season, due to a greater demand for winter holiday package options in the international markets. Selling the destination is easier to start with products and services that are interesting to majority of tourists already travelling or thinking about travelling to the region. If successful, the holiday package can be further developed for different seasons.

The process started with idea generation during the time spent in practical training in the UK, after which a meeting with the local tourism coordinator and suppliers followed. The meeting was brief but rouse enough information to start the product development process. The process of assembling the package was slow, as the information from suppliers was delayed or missing. The next steps of the process included destination evaluation, defining the unique selling point of the package and defining the competition or possible

coopetition. Due to challenging distances, this study was conducted over the telephone and by online search.

There is competition on Finnish Lapland scale, as several destinations are based on National Park setting, just like Salla is. What makes Salla unique is its ability to promote the silence of the destination, which makes it a good family and couple holiday resort. Despite being silent, the destination is neither dead nor dying, but is increasing its beds to 3 800 in the next few years. The Salla skiing centre started to develop at the same time with the Ruka skiing centre, but has remained as a small destination that is able to provide unique and individual service to its customers. Many people who go to Salla usually go back again. It is a relaxing destination without too much noise or too many people. In the past years, Salla has been discovered by the Spanish winter travellers and the Russians, who stop by in Salla all year round, as it is the first stopping point on the Finnish side of the border. The border crossing point is approximately 25 kilometres from the village centre.

A brief study about the reputation Salla has as a destination in international markets was conducted by studying the reviews of the destination on Tripadvisor. The study showed there is a lack of international tour operators operating in Salla, which means there is demand and a great opportunity for Magnetic North Travel to sell the destination through its networks. Otherwise, the destination was seen as a unique, peaceful location, good for families with children and for people who seek the quietness of nature and a feeling of authentic Lapland. These descriptions well support the need of the destination the commissioner Magnetic North Travel is looking for.

No product testing was possible during the assembly of the example holiday package due to late spring conditions and the rapidly melting snow and ice. The possibility of an outsider testing the product instead of me as a local was discussed during the planning seminar and it is my intention to suggest this to the commissioner. This would be in order for both the commissioner and the destination to get fair feedback from of the services from a person, who experiences them differently than a local would.

I had little knowledge of product development processes prior to this project through the courses held at RAMK and also through the practical training in

the UK. However, this project was one of a kind because of its nature versus my talents as a product developer. A great support was received both from the commissioner and the destination side, which helped in developing the product to its current state.

The product is an on-going process and needs to be altered to suit the current market needs to keep its attractiveness in the mind of the customers. It is also a product that can be tailor made to suit each customer individually, which is why we cannot talk about a finished product or its final form. The process produced a PDF of an example holiday package for the commissioner to use as a brochure in their selling operations. Also, a complete list of supporting services and suppliers were provided to the commissioner.

No commissioner feedback of the development process is received yet, as the PDF with its supporting files is only just sent to them. According to the discussion between the developer and the commissioner during the process, the development of the product is following a desired pattern and will most likely satisfy the commissioner needs of the new product. The commissioner has seen an unfinished PDF-file of the product development and was pleased with the work completed. Also the product testing will have to be delayed until snow conditions improve.

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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1. The example package PDF.

## Cosy cabin and the Northern Lights in the wild Lapland

SALLA, FINLAND

MN  
MAGNETIC  
NORTH.TRAVEL



Located above the Arctic Circle, the region of Salla has an ideal position for a relaxing stay in the undiscovered parts of Lapland. We offer cosy cabin accommodation next to the local, small skiing centre with access to activities and a possibility of spotting the Northern Lights. Our holidays are tailor made so that you can combine the activities and accommodation that suit you. Cabins are modern with a Lappish touch and come fully equipped for self-catering use.

### ARCTIC WOLF CABINS

These newly built, semi-detached cabins are within a short distance from the slopes, hiking routes and all amenities. The small but functional cabins are of a high standard and are designed for self-catering purposes with a kitchen equipped with a stove, a microwave oven and a refrigerator-freezer. Also a private sauna and WLAN is available in the cabins.

Activities are available from a short drive (around 2 miles) away - slopes, restaurants and the spa hotel are located less than half a mile away.

#### Cabin prices:

£82 per cabin per night  
£246 per cabin per 3 nights  
£498 per cabin per week

Each cabin sleeps up to 2 adults and 2 children in one double bedroom and a sofa bed.



### NORTHERN FOX CABINS

Located near Sallatunturi fell, these cabins are conveniently close to all services. The cabins have a private sauna and are fully equipped for self-catering. The Lappish delicacy restaurant Kiela, awarded with Chaîne des Rôtisseurs seal of excellence in 2008 and a house pub, Papanä pupi, within a walking distance will ensure your stay with them is memorable! This location also has a breakfast and a half board possibility.

Activities are available from this location and less than a mile away.

#### Standard cabin prices (1 to 2 bedrooms)

£106 per cabin per night (sleeping up to two people)  
£157 per cabin per night (sleeping up to four people)  
£859 per cabin per week (sleeping up to four people)



#### Otava (2 bedrooms)

£175 per cabin per night (sleeping up to two people)  
£260 per cabin per night (sleeping up to four people)  
£899 per cabin per week (sleeping up to four people)

This still needs updated prices from the hotel!



Pictures: Salla In the Middle of Nowhere 2012.

## Design your tailored holiday

### Car hire

We can organise car hire for you from Rovaniemi or Kuusamo Airport. Prices start at £80 per day for a Group A standard car.

Add extra nights and activities including our recommendations attached to create your custom itinerary. You can also combine your stay with one or more nights in the city of Rovaniemi or Kuusamo. This is particularly useful if you are arriving or departing on a late/early flight.

### Activities

Day and evening activities and excursions are available within walking distance or a short drive away. Choose excursions from our list below to tailor your trip.

### Northern Lights Excursions

Optimise your chances of viewing the Northern Lights by participating in one or more of our evening excursions below.

#### About the Northern Lights

We cannot guarantee that you'll view the lights. Many different factors come into play such as weather and cloud cover. However, we'll endeavour to ensure you have the best opportunities to see the Northern Lights as possible.

On the snowmobile excursions an excess in case of accidents is £400 per snowmobile.



#### Reindeer Sledding & the Aurora - €140 per person

- Harness your reindeer and learn how to steer the sleigh. Travel through a snowy forest and round the icy islets of marshland to a kota hut, where you will receive a traditional amulet and hear stories about the reindeer while enjoying hot beverages and sausages by an open-fire.



### Whole day excursions



#### Relaxing Day with Reindeer

€140 per person

- Enjoy a slide show about reindeer in our Reindeer Park and get to meet the lovely animals in person. This trip will take you to the frozen forest where you will have a lunch made by an open-fire, get to feed the reindeer and calves and will find out if you've got what it takes to be an arctic cowboy!



#### Whole Day Husky Trip

€200 per person

- Let the huskies take you through the snowy Lapplish landscape: wonderful woods, magnificent marshlands and a spacious, silent scenery. Experience riding your own sleigh and have a picnic with home-baked pastries in the middle of the wilderness while the dogs rest.



#### Moonlight Snowmobile Safari

€79 per driver, €42 per passenger

- Travel through the beautiful night scenery of Sailatunturi on a snowmobile with guide. If you're lucky, you might see the magnificent Northern Lights!



#### Snowshoe safari and Ice-fishing

€59 pp

- Learn the fun, traditional way of moving in the snow! The guide will lead you near a pond where you will see a beautiful ice wall, formed by the constantly dripping icy water. Make sure you have your camera with you! Enjoy a reindeer burger in a kota hut and learn how to do ice-fishing on a frozen lake.



#### Glance Over the Border

From £130 / driver, £70 / passenger

- This exciting day trip will take you through the fell area along the Russian border. You will have a picnic lunch and a coffee in the wilderness. This safari can also be conducted with a reindeer ride and a chance to try a reindeer lasso.



Pictures: Salla In the Middle of Nowhere 2012.

## Daytime Excursions

Make the most of your time in the Arctic and choose from our exciting range of daytime excursions.



### Snowmobiling to Suomutunturi Fell

£175 / driver, £90 / passenger

• A guided tour with beautiful scenery of Sallatunturi via Ruuhitunturi and Lake Suomu to Suomutunturi. This trip is a whole day driving experience with almost 100 miles to go! Lunch and coffee is included.



### 3-Hour Reindeer Tour

£75 per person

• Sit in the sleigh and off you go! The route will take you to a traditional koto hut, where you can enjoy hot beverages and sausages while the guide will tell you the beliefs related to reindeer bones and gives you an amulet to take home. Return to the main building and receive your own Reindeer Riding Permission.



### Snowmobile Safari to a Real Lappish Reindeer Farm

£92 per driver, £49 / passenger

• Drive your snowmobile to a real Lappish reindeer farm where you can truly feel the wilderness amongst hundreds of reindeer. You'll have a chance to feed the reindeer around you and enjoy a Lappish black pot coffee in a koto hut.



### 2-Hour Snowmobile Safari Ruuhitunturi Fell

£80 per driver, £40 / passenger

• A guided snowmobile excursion from Sallatunturi Fell to the Reindeer Park or Ruuhitunturi Fell. You will stop for a break with hot beverages.



### Dog-sledding by Day

£90 pp

• Steer your own team of dogs to the wilderness with a guide. You will learn the basics of working with the dogs and enjoy coffee and sausages by an open-fire while letting the dogs rest before the snowy ride continues.



### Winter Wonderland Photo Trip

£60 per adult, children £40

• The guide will give you brief instructions on how to choose right shoes and sticks. The trip starts with a snowmobile sledding to the hills, from where the guide will take you through a beautiful wintery Wonderland. You will climb on a Lappish fell to take photos and have hot drinks and sandwiches before heading back to snowmobiles.



### Revontuli Spa

£10 pp

• Enjoy an afternoon in a small, cosy spa with a panoramic view to the ski centre. The spa offers a great way to relaxation, no matter how cold it is outside!



### 'Saparo Safari' to a Lapp's Hut

£85 per driver, £45 / passenger

• A guided snowmobile safari to a Lapp's Hut near Ruuhitunturi Fell, where the guide will make you hot beverages and a 'reindeer burger'. This trip is about 20 miles on a snowmobile and lasts for 3 hours.

## CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

We pride ourselves on offering a committed and responsive customer service at every stage of the booking process. To view our latest client testimonials visit our website at: [www.magneticnorthtravel.com/client-feedback](http://www.magneticnorthtravel.com/client-feedback)

## FLIGHTS

The price of this holiday excludes flights to Finland. Flights can be booked directly with the airline to give you access to the best value fares. We'll be happy to provide you with recommended flight schedules based on your preferred departure airport. Visit the following airlines to book flights:

[www.finnair.com](http://www.finnair.com)

[www.norwegian.com](http://www.norwegian.com)

## YOUR FINANCIAL PROTECTION

In order to provide clients with complete peace of mind, Magnetic North Travel Ltd is a member of Protected Travel Services. Your money is held in a trust account and is used for the purpose of fulfilling your booking. Any money you pay will go into the Protected Travel Services client account at HSBC. This is an account which we cannot access directly. The only people authorised to sign on the account are the Trustees from a highly respectable firm of chartered accountants. The money stays in the account until you've returned from your holiday. So your money is completely safe from start to finish. You will be able to see any money you have paid to us by following the booking link which we will send to you immediately after you have booked your holiday. For more information visit [www.protectedtravelservices.com](http://www.protectedtravelservices.com).



## Booking this trip

Telephone

+44 (0) 845 5195 242

Email us at

[arctic@magneticnorthtravel.com](mailto:arctic@magneticnorthtravel.com)

Visit us online at

[www.magneticnorth.travel](http://www.magneticnorth.travel)



[www.facebook.com/magneticnorthtravel](http://www.facebook.com/magneticnorthtravel)



[@magnorthtravel](https://twitter.com/magnorthtravel)

**MN**  
MAGNETIC  
NORTH TRAVEL

## About your trip

### WHY BOOK WITH US

- ✗ Booking your holiday with Magnetic North Travel Ltd gives you 100% peace of mind that your money is safe.
- ✗ We offer a personalised and attentive service from the moment you get in touch with us to the moment you return. We're here to answer all your questions and to ensure your trip goes smoothly. You can leave home knowing that we're at the end of the phone ready to help if necessary.
- ✗ We are experts at travel to Scandinavia and northern destinations. Our team has travelled (and even lived) in the places we include in our trips. We're constantly updating our holidays and we can choose the right itinerary for you based on our first hand experience.
- ✗ We respond to your needs. We impose no constraints on when you travel and what you do. We can offer the best value for money because you choose the activities and accommodation that you want. We're here to offer inspiration and advice.
- ✗ Our clients say nice things about us. You can read some of their feedback on our website at [www.magneticnorthtravel.com](http://www.magneticnorthtravel.com).



Innovation Norway

### RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

- ✗ Booking your holiday with us re-assures you that you are treading lightly on the planet and supporting local economies and livelihoods.
- ✗ Our partners, suppliers and providers in all of our destinations offer not only offer a high quality experience, but they care deeply for the place they live in. When you visit them in their home or surroundings, you'll see this attachment to place for yourself. From the time you spend in nature to the food served on your plate, our aim is to give you a true insight into the local culture and stunning natural scenery. This starts with the desire to protect it.
- ✗ The activities and excursions that we select are provided by local people. You are doing your part to support them and to support rural-based economies in remote areas. Wildlife watching trips are selected for their sustainability. We work with providers which protect vulnerable species and have exemplary levels of welfare standards.
- ✗ Our itineraries aim to reduce the consumption of non-renewable energies. We encourage low carbon transportation and will continue to include these as options whenever we can.
- ✗ Sustainability is an ongoing process and we ask for your help to ensure that the planet and people come first.



Arctic Hotel Samnary

### ARCTIC CLIMATE

- ✗ The presence of the Gulf Stream in the Arctic region creates wide variation in temperatures and humidity. In particular the Lofoten Islands and Tromsø in Norway benefit from the slightly higher coastal temperatures, whereas inland the average temperatures drop dramatically. The lowest temperature ever recorded in Tromsø is around minus 18 degrees centigrade, whereas in Ivalo, Finland, temperatures frequently drop to minus 20 degrees.
- ✗ Snow fall tends to arrive in late October, early November for the majority of the Arctic region although this can also vary from year to year. In some areas snow doesn't ever leave the tops of mountains. Usually snow settles until April, or early May, making ski conditions in March and April very favourable.
- ✗ The sun disappears below the horizon at the start of the Polar Night at around the end of November and returns again mid-to-late January. There's a beautiful blue twilight at this time of the year which makes it very special. When the sun returns properly in February, you'll need to bring sunglasses with you!
- ✗ We will advise you about what to bring to stay warm in the Arctic. For many excursions and activities warm outer clothing is provided. However, layers are essential to stay warm. You'll receive a full kit list with your trip notes.



Visit Finland Image Bank

## Booking conditions Magnetic North Travel Ltd

Company number: 07163418

These booking conditions form a contract between you and Magnetic North Travel Ltd. So we ask that you read through them carefully.

Magnetic North Travel Ltd (the "Company", "us", "our" and "we") accepts bookings subject to the conditions below. These conditions apply only to tour arrangements booked by the client with the Company and which the Company agrees to make or provide as part of their contract with the client. All references to "tour", "booking", "contract" or "arrangements" in these booking conditions mean such tour arrangements unless clearly stated otherwise.

### 1. Your contract with Magnetic North Travel Ltd

The contract is between the Company and the client ("the client" and "you" in these conditions), being any person travelling or intending to travel on a tour operated by the Company including any person who is substituted after booking. We agree that this contract, and any other claim or dispute arising from or related to this contract, will be governed by English law and the courts of England and Wales shall have exclusive jurisdiction over any claim arising out of it. No promise of a discount or refund will be binding on us unless we confirm this in writing.

### 2. Making a booking

To make and confirm your booking, the Company must receive payment of the minimum deposit of 30% of the total tour price, per person (or full payment if booking within 60 days of the start of the tour). The applicable deposit will be confirmed when booking. We will confirm in writing acceptance of your booking. Our contract comes into existence on the date shown on that email or letter. The booking conditions are binding when your booking is confirmed in writing to you or your travel agent.

Payment of the deposit will form acceptance by you of these booking conditions. We will send you an invoice for the remainder of the cost, which you must pay not later than 60 days before departure. If you do not pay the balance by the due date your booking will be cancelled and you will forfeit your deposit.

All clients will be deemed to have agreed to the following four conditions:

- I. They and all persons named on the booking have read and accepted our booking conditions.
- II. They or anyone else named on the booking does not suffer from any pre-existing medical condition or disability which may prevent them from actively participating in the tour. Please contact us if any person suffers from a condition which may prevent them from actively participating in the tour at the time of booking or before departure.
- III. They and all persons named on the booking understand and accept the risks involved in adventure and outdoor travel.
- IV. The person making the booking confirms that he/she is at least 18 years of age and has full authority to enter into a contract on the basis of these conditions on behalf of all persons named on the booking and confirms that all such persons are fully aware of and accept these conditions.

If you book via our website at [www.magneticnorth.travel](http://www.magneticnorth.travel), we will communicate with you by email. It is your responsibility to regularly check your emails for correspondence from us. We may also contact you by telephone and/or post.

### 3. Your tour with Magnetic North Travel Ltd

Magnetic North Travel Ltd sometimes operates trips in remote regions. Occasionally standards of accommodation, transport and other facilities may be lower than you are normally used to. We ask that when you book and travel with us you take this into consideration. Our trips require a certain amount of flexibility to allow for changes in weather conditions and other aspects of the itinerary. All itineraries are subject to change at late or no notice, due to circumstances beyond our control. By agreeing to these Booking Conditions, you agree to Magnetic North Travel making any changes it reasonably deems necessary.

All our trips, particularly those involving outdoor activity will expose you to the possibility of injury, psychological trauma, loss or damage to property, inconvenience and discomfort. By agreeing to these Booking Conditions, you agree to assume all risks associated with the trip to the maximum extent permitted

by law.

We are able to provide some basic advice to clients with regard to passports and visa requirements. However you should also contact the appropriate Embassy, Consulate or British Foreign Office for the exact requirements for your chosen tour and date of travel. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have the correct passport and visas to gain access to any country/region included in the travel arrangements which you purchase from us. If you fail to do this, we have no liability to you for any cost, loss or damage which you suffer, nor will we be able to refund you the cost of any unused portion of your travel arrangements.

### 4. Changing your booking

We will charge an administration fee of £15 per booking plus any additional costs or charges incurred by us or by any of our suppliers if a confirmed booking is changed or transferred to a different departure date or tour, up to 60 days prior to departure. These changes are subject to availability.

If a client is unable to travel, in circumstances which the Company considers to be reasonable, the booking or that client's place on the booking may be transferred to another person (introduced by you). However, the original tour arrangements must stay unchanged. If we are able to transfer the booking, an administration charge of £40 will be made per person to cover our administration costs.

### 5. Cancelling your booking

If clients wish to cancel their booking, cancellation charges will be payable. Notification of cancellation must be made in writing to Magnetic North Travel by letter or email. The date when written confirmation of cancellation is received by Magnetic North Travel will determine the charges applicable as follows:

#### Number of days before departure Charge applicable

56 days and more before the tour start date  
Retention of deposit

55 - 42 days before the tour start date

Loss of 30% of total booking cost

41 - 26 days before the tour start date

Loss of 50% of total booking cost

27 - 14 days before the tour start date

Loss of 90% of total booking cost

Less than 14 days before the tour start date

Loss of 100% of total booking cost

Depending on your reason for cancellation, you may be able to recover these charges under your insurance policy. All claims must be made directly with the insurance company.

We are unable to make any refunds if you leave a trip for any reason after the trip has begun.

### 6. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is mandatory for all clients whilst on a tour organised by Magnetic North Travel. Clients together with their personal property including their baggage are at all times solely their own risk. Clients are responsible for arranging their own travel insurance.

### 7. Cancellation or change by Magnetic North Travel

We reserve the right to cancel your booking or change any of the facilities, services or prices described in our brochures, marketing materials or website. We will endeavour to inform you of any changes that we know about at the time of booking.

Where possible, any changes we have made will be contained in the Trip Notes that are sent to you with your Final Confirmation. It is your responsibility to read the up-to-date Trip Notes that we send to you with the Final Confirmation. If you make a booking less than 56 days before departure you must ensure you are fully aware of the contents of the Trip Notes. The information and conditions in the Trip Notes will be considered to be part of the contract with us.

Occasionally we will have to make changes to your tour, sometimes at short notice. Most of these will be minor changes. Changes may occur because of Force Majeure, poor road conditions, weather, availability of tickets, vehicle breakdowns, changes in transport schedules, or other circumstances that are beyond our control. Magnetic North Travel does not accept any responsibility for loss of enjoyment, delays or compensation resulting from changes due to Force Majeure or any reasons beyond our control. Group sizes may also vary. If a major change becomes necessary, we will advise you of the change as soon as possible. In this case, you will have the option of either accepting the change, or

accepting a replacement tour from us of equivalent or closely similar standard and price, or cancelling your tour, in which case we will refund you in full. In all cases, except where a major change arises from circumstances amounting to force majeure or consolidation, we will pay you compensation as appropriate.

Compensation will not be payable if we are obliged to cancel, or in any way change your tour for reasons of consolidation due to minimum numbers not being attained or force majeure. Operation of all tours is dependent on a minimum number of persons booking places on the tour. If that number is not attained, we reserve the right to cancel the tour.

In no circumstances will we cancel your tour less than four weeks before the scheduled departure date except for reasons of consolidation, force majeure or failure on your part to pay the final balance. We recommend that you make no travel arrangements to your point of departure, make any connecting travel that is non-refundable or non-changeable or incur penalties or incur any costs in respect of visas or vaccinations until such time as your travel itinerary has been confirmed. If you make such arrangements which you are then unable to use due to a change in your itinerary we shall not be liable to you for the cost of those arrangements. If we are obliged to cancel your tour after departure we will, wherever possible, make suitable alternative travel arrangements. If we are unable to make such alternative arrangements, or you reject these for good reason then we will return you to your point of departure and refund you for any unused services, if appropriate.

### 8. Complaints

If you have any complaint about your trip, you must make it known at the earliest opportunity to the leader and/or Magnetic North Travel local representative, who will normally be able to take appropriate action. If at the end of the trip you feel your complaint has not been properly dealt with you must notify us in writing within 35 days of the end of your trip.

### 9. Force Majeure

"Force Majeure" means (without restriction) any event which Magnetic North Travel could not, even with all due care, foresee or avoid. Force Majeure covers events such as, but not limited to, war or threat of war, riot, civil strife, terrorist activity, industrial dispute, disease, industrial or nuclear disaster, adverse weather conditions, fire and all similar events beyond our control. In the case of Force Majeure Magnetic North Travel will not accept liability, and reserves the right to change and cancel trips.

### 10. Our responsibility for your tour

Magnetic North Travel is responsible to you for the proper performance of our obligations under the contract whether those obligations are provided directly by us, or by third-party service providers engaged by us and acting within the proper course of their employment and we will provide these services with reasonable skill and care.

We are liable to you for any damage caused to you by our failure to perform the contract or by our improper performance of the contract, unless that failure is

- a. attributable to you;
- b. attributable to a third party unconnected with the provision of services to you;
- c. due to unusual and unforeseeable circumstances beyond our control that could not have been avoided even if all due care had been taken;
- d. due to an event which even with all due care we could not foresee or forestall.

Magnetic North Travel will not accept responsibility or liability for any passenger who contravenes any law or regulation of any country visited.

Any independent arrangements that you make that are not part of the holiday are entirely at your own risk.

Should you or any member of your party by misadventure suffer illness, injury or death during the period of your holiday from an activity which does not form part of the arrangements made by us or an excursion purchased through us, we shall at our absolute discretion give you every assistance including advice and guidance

## Appendix 2. Email permission for Salla In the Middle of Nowhere photos.

Hei Noora,

Sallan kuvapankissa olevien kuvien käyttöoikeudet ovat Matkalle Sallaan ry:llä ja voit käyttää niitä Sallan markkinointiin, kunhan kuvan yhteydessä mainitaan aina Salla tai Salla- in the middle of nowhere.

Kuvapankin käyttäjätunnus on : ja salasana:

Terveisin

Paula

Salla- in the middle of nowhere

Sallan kunta/ Matkalle Sallaan ry



## Appendix 3. Salla destination review 2013.

Salla - Destination review 2013	
Positive +	Negative -
<p>Absolutely brilliant place Kept in excellent condition Friendly and helpful Peaceful yet fun Staff spoke perfect English Slopes quiet quiet even during high season Idyllic with clean fresh air Wonderful atmosphere with fantastic views One of Lapland's forgotten gems Cottages nice and clean Friendly service Nothing like Austria or Switzerland Private lessons in ski school No roads, no noise, no noisy drunks Worth a visit Brilliant wildlife excihition Staff always on hand for extra questions Good food at reasonable price Well equipped and decorated Beautiful and peaceful Perfect to avoid cheesy Christmas package tours Real Lapland Staff goes beyond expected 'good' service Quiet was the word For families with children</p>	<p>Slightly smaller than others in Lapland Town is 10 km away Need a car to go to Taxis are expensive Nothing like Austria or Switzerland Difficult for self-catering No supermarket in the skiing centre Not a cheap destination Could not find a tour operator going to Salla</p>

Source: TripAdvisor 2013.