

We work across borders in the project
Regenerative nature tourism - REGGAE

**TOURISM THAT
STRENGTHENS LOCAL
CULTURE, COMMUNITY
AND ENVIRONMENT**

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Reggae Newsletter 1/2024

The project - Regenerative Nature Tourism

Aims to promote accessible and regenerative tourism and to enhance the well-being of entrepreneurs in the project area by building networks and clusters, developing courses, guidebook, and novel thematic tourism experiences. By the increased competence of entrepreneurs and developing thematic tourism experiences co-created together with customers, researchers, local community, and entrepreneurs, tourism firms can attract new customers. Finally, the competitiveness of the tourism firms is enhanced while bringing wider benefits to the travel destination. Cross-border products through cross-branch networks and clusters support the understanding of valuable joint culture and rich history as well as how our prosperous but vulnerable nature is as a resource for all. Thus, the acceptability of sustainable tourism services increases, and tourists take home lessons on how to give back to nature. Regenerative tourism will increase well-being and prosperity for nature, society, culture and a more stable income for entrepreneurs.

The project started 09/2023 and ends 08/2026.

(banner photo: Backfors Gård)

Greetings from the project!

Summer is finally here and it's time for a little update regarding our Regenerative Nature Tourism (REGGAE) project. One of the first tasks in the project was getting familiar with the concept of regenerative tourism – which turned out to be much more complex and diverse than we first thought.

In a nutshell, regenerative tourism can be seen as taking sustainable tourism “to the next level”. Instead of minimizing the negative effects of tourism or aiming for “the zero effect”, the purpose is to positively influence and benefit the host area from the perspective of environment, culture, and local communities. This process has been described as long-term renewal and increasing the capacity of places, communities, and their guests. Concerning this, tourism practices are not seen as business activities, but as *processes of regeneration*.

One factor that differentiates regenerative tourism from other tourism forms is that it is not seen as a tourism type, but rather as a mindset or “inner sustainability”. Hence, the phenomenon is closely related to the values, attitudes, and world views of the companies, customers, policymakers, and other stakeholders involved in “the collaborative process” of regenerative tourism.

The project partners



Gold of Lapland

University of Eastern Finland

SLU, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Centria University of Applied Sciences

Business Kristinestad

Mid Sweden University

Luke, Natural Resource Institute Finland (Project coordinator)

(photo: Lusine Margaryan)

Operation of Strategic Importance



Reggae was selected as Operation of Strategic Importance – higher visibility for how EU funded projects can benefit our daily lives!

The Steering Committees of the Interreg Aurora programme appointed five projects as Operations of Strategic Importance (OSI). The projects will tell the story about the importance of cross-border cooperation funded by Interreg Aurora and the contribution by the European Cohesion policy.

Check for more: [OSI status](#)

Sustainability

Social, ecological, and economic sustainable development is an overarching goal of the Interreg Aurora Programme. The REGGAE project contributes primarily to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. The main targets under SDG 12, for the project, is by 2030 to ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

Check for more: [SDG](#)



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Project updates



- **DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL NETWORKS**

We work both in Sweden and Finland with companies that are interested in developing according to regenerative principles. We have identified 10 companies in Finland and 10 in Sweden that have the role of reference companies. We are going to follow their journey and the communication work with the companies has already started with the production of films etc. The communication takes place in our social media, LinkedIn and Facebook. Also, the work of gathering these companies on their own webpage has started.

- **ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE IN TRANSFORMATIVE TOURISM**

Courses

We have initiated discussions with the Swedish companies about what kind of courses they want to be able to develop their companies. There are, among other things, ideas of a course about how to maintain ancient cultural land and the significance of that. The idea is that visitors can participate in the work and gain knowledge at the same time. Afterwards, the work continues with the Finnish companies. It is exciting to hear about all the ideas that the entrepreneurs have.

A guidebook on how to implement transformative steps into creation of offering accessible and regenerative tourism services

During winter and spring 2024 we have been planning the content of the guidebook produced in the project. The guidebook will be an anthology with text from the researchers in the project mixed with stories from the entrepreneurs participating, following their path throughout the project. The target group are tourism entrepreneurs in the Aurora area and others interested in the subject. Our vision is an inspiring, knowledge-enhancing and graphically nice-looking guidebook. The text will be popular scientific, with storytelling elements showcasing the various entrepreneurs. The guide will be published digitally in English, Swedish and Finnish in 2026.

Cultural heritage along our coasts

Cultural heritage is visible everywhere along our coasts. At the REGGAE network meeting in Finland 27th of May, we could see a beautiful old boat at the beach. The special thing about this boat is that it has a double keel, which makes it much more stable if you for example have to drag it on the sea ice. It is also a clinker boat. Did you know that the Nordic clinker boat traditions were inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2021? It is the craftsmanship of building the boats that are inscribed in the list, that is, the traditional knowledge of how you build them. The people of the Nordic region have been building clinker boats for almost two millennia, using the same techniques, with overlapping planks.

Check for more: [Nordic clinker boat traditions](#)

Check for more: [Ostrobothnian clinker boat traditions](#)

- **DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSIBLE, TRANSFORMATIVE, AND REGENERATIVE TOURISM SERVICES**

We have so far interviewed the participant companies regarding their understanding of regenerative tourism. In general, the concept was challenging to understand for many, but, simultaneously, in many cases there already were either planned or already existing activities that could be related to the phenomenon. Some examples of these were restoring or taking care of cultural habitats, reducing alien species, and including the elements of local culture in activities and services. All in all, the discussions with the partner companies were fascinating and it was great to see “the positive interest” towards regenerative tourism.

The interviews with the Swedish entrepreneurs are progressing, and we have interviewed representatives from five of the reference companies. Although it is too early to present results, we see great interest and dedication to issues related to regenerative tourism, which bodes well for the continuation of the project.

At the moment, we are planning the customer research that is going to take place in 2025. In the case studies, we are going to examine how customers experience tourism services that involve regenerative elements. If you would possibly be interested in this, please contact us for more information. Already looking forward to the forthcoming phases of the project!

- **EVALUATION OF PROJECT EFFECTS**

Regenerative tourism aims to change the mindset and not only support the entrepreneur economically but also support the surrounding society and nature. We will study if the introduction of accessible, regenerative, transformative and well-being tourism products developed together with entrepreneurs, local community, researchers and customers have the potential to support the surrounding society and if the services have a positive effect on sustainable behavior amongst customers and entrepreneurs. The research carried out in the project has been launched with company interviews during the spring. Then there is a more detailed case study of the activities of selected companies: the study examines how companies increase well-being at the level of individuals and communities.

Project companies

Company presentation -Brännlandet





Meet a few of the several reference companies taking part in the project!

TO DREAM GREEN - INSPIRING STORIES OF RURAL ENTREPRENEURS

Brännlandet -We want to cherish our fields for the future

Brännlandet is a farm in Perus, on the Finnish west coast, primarily focused on growing potatoes, as well as asparagus and other vegetables. The farm is currently run by the fourth generation of the family.

The farm's roots are in potatoes and it continues to specialize in this crop.

-I am now part of the fourth generation. It was my grandmother and grandfather, who were second-generation farmers specializing in potatoes, says Jonas Lillgäls.

After Jonas took over the farm in 2019, the focus shifted towards future development. Jonas and Mari Lönnqvist wanted to establish a brand while selling their potatoes directly to consumers, leading to the creation of the Brännlandet brand.

Every year, Brännlandet cultivates approximately six different varieties of potatoes, including both waxy and starchy types. The majority of the produce is sold directly to packers.

In addition to potatoes, the farm also grows clover, grains, and peas. Brännlandet is committed to maintaining a crop rotation system that benefits the quality of both crops and soil, ensuring a sustainable future for the next generations of farmers.

Brännlandet sought to introduce a product for direct consumer sales. This initiative led to the cultivation of asparagus, a crop not previously available in the area but well-suited to the farm. A small shed was built for direct sales and pickups, and now Brännlandet offers potatoes year-round. Given existing vegetable production for personal use, expanding production to meet demand was a natural progression, which began last year. During the summer, the variety is even greater, and in the long term, there are plans to offer more opportunities for self-picking flowers.

Sustainability is a key focus for Brännlandet.

-Preserving the fields for the future is a top priority, as maintaining good field conditions is not only sustainable but also enhances crop security, says Mari Lönnqvist.

(photos: Bertils & Jung Ab)

Company presentation - Övermark Bed & Breakfast





Övermark Bed and Breakfast: The idea of “what if”

Övermark Bed & Breakfast is housed in an old building that once served as a hospital. Here, guests can enjoy hospitality, history, and an atmosphere that is hard to find elsewhere. This is a place where even ghosts might become part of the experience.

For many years, the building functioned as a hospital, treating patients with tuberculosis, broken bones, and appendicitis. Sabina and Johan Wickman saw an advertisement that the old Övermark Hospital was for sale. After a while, the idea of "what if" started to take shape.

-It started with this house being for sale, really. We sat at home and thought, since it is a fairly large house, would it be possible to do something with it?

-Then we thought, what could be done? It probably started with a dinner discussion. We began to elaborate, and it all ended with Excel tables and actual calculations. We chose an old hospital because there were many rooms, and rooms are needed for a Bed & Breakfast. Övermark Bed & Breakfast is a place where we hope people will be able to enjoy themselves, spend the night, have a good breakfast, and then head off on new adventures, says Sabina.

When it comes to sustainability, Övermark Bed & Breakfast try to avoid disposable packaging and plastics.

-We use almost exclusively natural materials, with no plastic, except in the bathrooms where vapor barriers are necessary. The whole building breathes, we use biofuel for heating, and recycled materials in the construction, says Sabina.

(photos: Bertils & Jung Ab)

Company presentation - Horses of Taiga





Floriane and Rianne, owners of Horses of Taiga, are nature persons through the tips of their fingers. They are today living their dream – in symbiosis with animals and nature in beautiful Västerbotten. Life brought them slowly to the small village of Svansele, located right next to the north bank of the Skellefteälven. One of many places where people go to experience the benefits of the forest. The horses on the farm are considered family and are looked after with great care. Here, the individual horse's needs are always in focus, which has resulted in horses that are strong, healthy, and agile.

-Here I have been given the opportunity to combine my greatest interests in life, Icelandic horses, and guided tours. For me, it's living my dream, says Floriane. Furthermore, she believes that the strength of the business is rooted in a great respect for both the Icelandic horses and Västerbotten's nature and culture.

-It is important that the guests get to know the area we ride in, get an insight and understanding of how we can protect and preserve it, and that they get an experience that is a clear part of something bigger. With us, it is important to have fun on horseback while at the same time demonstrating the importance of respect for the horses and the environment. In order to optimize the experience on the tours and avoid unnecessary wear and tear on nature, the groups are never larger than five people, explains Floriane.

Floriane and Rianne live by the principle of taking care of their own and those around them. They proudly show off Västerbotten, from the Sami culture to the local Norrland cuisine, with a clear goal in mind – increased knowledge and familiarity with the area.

Check for more: [Horses of Taiga](#)

Events, ideas, research, and good practices

Experiences from Slow Adventure





At the end of April, the Swedish REGGAE team members traveled to Scotland on a study trip to learn from the experiences of Slow Adventure as an interesting model for sustainable tourism business. This was in a way coming full circle. Slow adventure was born as a concept based on the article “Nordic Slow Adventure Nordic Slow Adventure: Explorations in Time and Nature” published by the Scottish researchers Peter Varley and Tristan Semple in 2015 in the Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism. The concept of slow adventure was inspired largely by the Nordic concept of *friluftsliv*. This article, in turn, became later an EU-funded project “Slow Adventure in Northern Territories”, which included universities and businesses from the regions of the northern periphery in Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Finland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, of which Mid Sweden University was also part of. This project's outcomes were directly used to create the Slow Adventure business model. In other words, this is a great example of academia-business cooperation and cross-cultural pollination. Slow Adventure now has partners outside the Nordic context, which further develops this concept into new exciting directions. Friluftsliv, slow, and regenerative tourism are interrelated, with interesting nuances and strengths.

One basic principle of regenerative tourism is finding ways to ‘leave a place better than it was found’, proactively improving the environmental, social, and economic well-being of a destination. With a regenerative tourism mindset tourism is imagined as an inseparable part of local ecosystems and social networks, rather than happening in an isolated enclave or a bubble. In the tourism sector, short-term thinking and reactionary approaches often prevail over proactive planning for long-term sustainable coexistence of local communities, the natural environment, and tourists. Ecological restoration can be one type of proactive long-term action. How can tourism be part of such activities in the best way? In this picture, a Scottish tour guide demonstrates their tourism-supported restorative efforts of reintroducing the European oyster population, previously harvested to extinction in the region. The effort itself becomes a tourist attraction and an environmental awareness hub. Oysters grow very slowly by their very nature anticipating patience and long-term commitment.

Check for more: [Report](#)

(photos: Floriane Colonnier)

Seminars and Workshops



Reggae's Workshop 27.5. 2024

The project's first workshop for the reference companies was arranged in the end of May, Monday 27th of May, on a warm and beautiful day. We had both Swedish and Finnish project companies participating in the workshop led by Anu Nylund from the company Mood of Finland.

Anu Nylund has a long experience in tourism and education, specializing in sustainability and regenerative sustainability among other things. The workshop got together interested companies from the Swedish and Finnish side.

Regenerative thinking is based on a holistic approach, where tourism aims to increase the overall well-being of individuals, communities, and nature. As Anu pointed out, regenerative is all about learning and a process, a shorter or a long ongoing process!

(photos: Sara Käll-Fröjdö, Lena Enlund)



1 - (photo: Sara Käll-Fröjdö)

Mood of Finland
Creating, inspiring, Remembering - in Good Mood, together with others

MOOD OF FINLAND COMPANY IS A RESPONSIBLE PARTNER AND SERVICE PROVIDER THAT REGENERATES TOGETHER WITH OTHERS IN GOOD MOOD.

MOOD OF FINLAND COMPANY HAS BEEN AWARDED THE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL FINLAND (STF) MARK FOR LONG-TERM WORK FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 2020 AND FOR THE THIRD TIME IN 2024.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL FINLAND

VISIT FINLAND'S STATEMENT: "RESPONSIBILITY IS AT THE CORE OF YOUR OPERATIONS AND MOOD OF FINLAND COMPANY HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED AS A PROMOTER IN REGENERATIVE TOURISM IN FINLAND. THE REPORTING IS COMPREHENSIVE AND VERIFIABILITY ARE WELL TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE MEASURES."

SCANDINAVIAN OUTDOOR AWARDS 2024 JURY HONORARY ECO AWARD: MOOD OF FINLAND

Biosphere
MOOD OF FINLAND COMPANY HAS VERIFIED RESPONSIBILITY WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CRITERIA OF BIOSPHERE CERTIFICATION SINCE 2020. THE SET OF CRITERIA IS BASED ON AGENDA 2030 GOALS.

FINNISH TRAVEL GALA 2024
ANU NYLUND WAS NOMINATED AS A FINALIST FOR RESPONSIBLE OPERATOR OF THE YEAR IN 2023. OTHER CANDIDATES WERE HALTIA LAKE LOOSE Y, HAWNHILL RESORT, SCANDIC HOTELS AND VEST FINLAND.

Glasgow Declaration
Climate Action in Tourism
MOOD OF FINLAND COMPANY WAS THE FIRST IN FINLAND TO SIGN THE INTERNATIONAL GLASGOW CLIMATE COMMITMENT 2020.

MOOD OF FINLAND COMPANY HAS CALCULATED THE EMISSIONS SINCE 2021. THE EMISSION AMOUNT PER SERVICE DAY IS 10 KG CO2E IN 2023.

MOOD OF FINLAND COMPANY LAUNCHED THE FIRST REGENERATIVE TOURISM TRAINING IN FINLAND IN MAY 2023. LOVE FOREST FINLAND - CONCEPT HAS BEEN DESIGNED IN REGENERATIVE WAY.

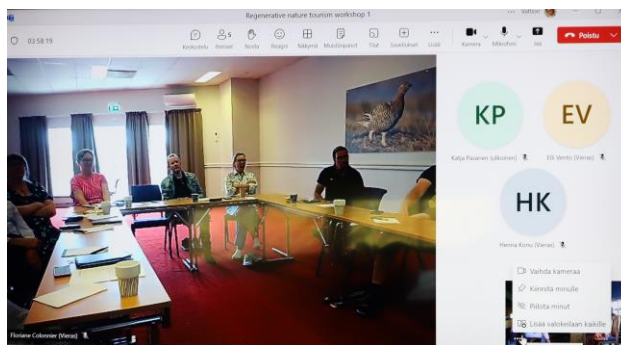
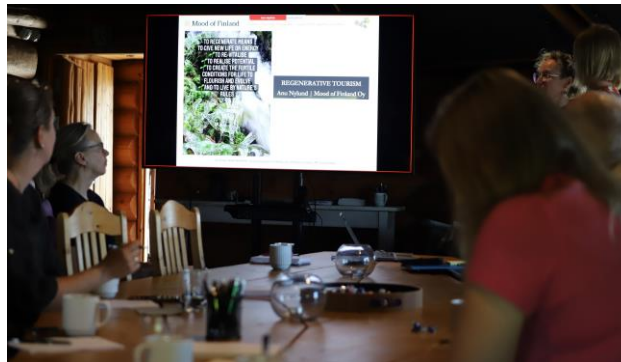
ANU NYLUND
OWNER & FOUNDER
MOOD OF FINLAND OY
ANUNYLUND@MOODOFFINLAND.COM
WWW.MOODOFFINLAND.COM
WWW.LOVESFORESTFINLAND.COM

Mood of Finland

Anu Nylund | Mood of Finland Oy | www.moodoffinland.fi | Twitter @Anu22 | IG @mood_of_finland | FB - Mood of Finland



2 - "We always go back to where we once "loved life"!"





The workshop was arranged as a hybrid and on site workshop in the beautiful archipelago of Vasa and [Kalle's Inn Resort](#)

In Sweden, the reference companies and project team gathered at Hotell Lapland in Lycksele, where they stayed one more day to participate in Västerbotten's tourism forum. There, REGGAE researcher Henna Konu presented an introduction to regenerative tourism to all present tourism actors of the region.

Mood of Finland *Creative, Inspiring, Responsible - in Good Mood, together with others.*

REGENERATIVE THINKING

REGENERATIVE TOURISM FINLAND - HOW TO UNITE TOURISM AND REGENERATIVE FARMING

With which gaze do we perceive the world, what we see and what we feel. How much we care about others and what surrounds us

- **Changing our mindsets** – the way we see and act
- Exploring and expressing what it means to **be fully human, fully alive and living in harmony with nature**
- **Coming together in communities** to break down the barriers that isolate us from other sectors.
- Regeneration moves us from “doing less harm” past “doing more good” to **becoming partners-servants of nature** to help life thrive and evolve.
- Indigenous people can guide us and teach us how to reconnect with nature

Anna Pollock

Mood of Finland *Creative, Inspiring, Responsible - in Good Mood, together with others.*

Regeneration cannot be defined, at least briefly (Daniel Wahl)

- Regeneration is community-based learning, where diversity and different ideas enrich thinking, and where the goal is not even to reach the finish line
- It's really about the process.
- You shouldn't start with a problem, but with an opportunity
- Focus on the questions rather than the answers
- You have to be able to tolerate incompleteness
- You have to find the desire to stop repeating the same thing, to stay in the comfort zone and if necessary, even to stop the whole business, “burn it to ashes” and rise again like the Phoenix
- Try to understand the biocultural uniqueness of the place (Bioculture is a combination of biological and cultural factors that influence human behavior)



RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOP





- **UPCOMING REGGAE'S COMPANY WORKSHOP IN AUTUMN 2024**

SAVE THE DATE: Tuesday, 8th of October - Friday, 11th of October, 2024

The Swedish and Finnish companies will get together for the first time, visit each other's companies, and learn from each other in a cross-border manner!

Project details and contacts

Social Media Channels of the Project

Follow us on our Social Media Channels:

[LinkedIn](#)

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Contact details for the Project Working Group can be found on the [project website](#)

Project Administration Personnel at Luke

Pia Smeds

Project manager

pia.smeds@luke.fi

+358 40 1795309

Lena Enlund

Research & Development, Communication

lena.enlund@centria.fi

+358 44 7250594

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REGGAE



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