

# SUSTAINABLE HUNTING TOURISM

## BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY IN NORTHERN EUROPE

### - A SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT -

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Hunting tourism is today a little known and hence an insufficiently utilized resource for regional development in Northern Europe. Hunting tourism has however been identified as one potential form of tourism in the Northern periphery that is important for regional development.

Those reliant upon hunting and who have had it as a traditional way of life are becoming fewer and fewer partly due to rural depopulation. As a result hunting has been increasingly a hobby of urban dwellers but has as yet to realise its potential as a business opportunity.

The development of hunting tourism requires objective information on the sector before actual development can be successfully launched by SMEs. There has been a wide interest in this information among SMEs and other actors in the sector. The lack of information has been one of the main reasons for failure in many development activities in the past. The sector has in many cases been developed from the basis of presentiments and the problems confronted in development processes have not been solved. To develop innovative enterprises and entrepreneurship in hunting tourism, business ideas need to be created along with activities in training, market analysis, marketing and product development.

In addition there is a perceived lack of social acceptance for hunting tourism as a business in some regions of the North. Lack of successful and sustainable business models in the sector and lack of information on the management of game population fluctuations, are also constraints in the development of hunting tourism. At the moment relevant information for hunting tourism companies concerning these issues is scattered or does not exist at all. There is a clear need for objective business-orientated information, new solutions and better dissemination of existing research results so that they can form a basis of practical business concepts for sustainable (ecologically, socially and economically) rural entrepreneurship. The same kind of problems has been clearly identified in other relatively similar nature tourism sectors e.g. concerning fishing tourism.

There is very little training or education material available concentrating on hunting tourism as a business. This has resulted in the lack of interest by this sector of tourism in general training courses offered e.g. to rural entrepreneurs.

#### **THE PROJECT**

Sustainable hunting tourism – Business opportunity in Northern Europe (North Hunt) is a three year, €1,1 million, international project that has been awarded funding by the European Regional Development Fund within the Northern Periphery Programme. It began in January 2008 and will run until December 2010. North Hunt involves a partnership of ten organisations from Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Scotland and Canada. These are governmental agencies, research bodies and industry related organisations along with entrepreneurs in each of the countries. North hunt will be led and managed by the University of Helsinki, Ruralia Institute, Finland.

## OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the project is to support the development of sustainable hunting tourism that will diversify the economic activity of peripheral regions in Northern Europe. To be able to reach the overall objective, the project has 6 sub-objectives, which are to:

1. Develop and enhance sustainable and competitive national and transnational business concepts, based on hunting cultures of Northern Europe.
2. Develop the operational environment of hunting tourism by reducing obstacles for entrepreneurship and lowering entry-thresholds for start-up companies in the sector, without jeopardising ecological and social sustainability of hunting.
3. Strengthen the co-operation between different stakeholders in developing hunting tourism nationally and transnationally.
4. Strengthen the connections between the hunting and tourism sectors nationally and transnational.
5. Evaluate the possibilities for cross-country co-operation to develop a 'Northern brand' for sustainable hunting tourism.
6. Create and analyse knowledge required for directing future hunting development in the Northern periphery area.

## OUTCOMES

The project results will help the development of existing hunting tourism companies and enhance the viability of new companies in Northern Europe. The results will also bring valuable information to support decision making at both administrative and entrepreneurial levels and also assist in creating social acceptance in the operational environment of the enterprises. In addition the results will benefit training and advisory activities by providing suitable tools and material and enhance the co-operation networking and marketing of sustainable hunting tourism in Northern regions.

For more information, or to sign up to receive the project e-newsletter, please visit [www.north-hunt.org](http://www.north-hunt.org).

