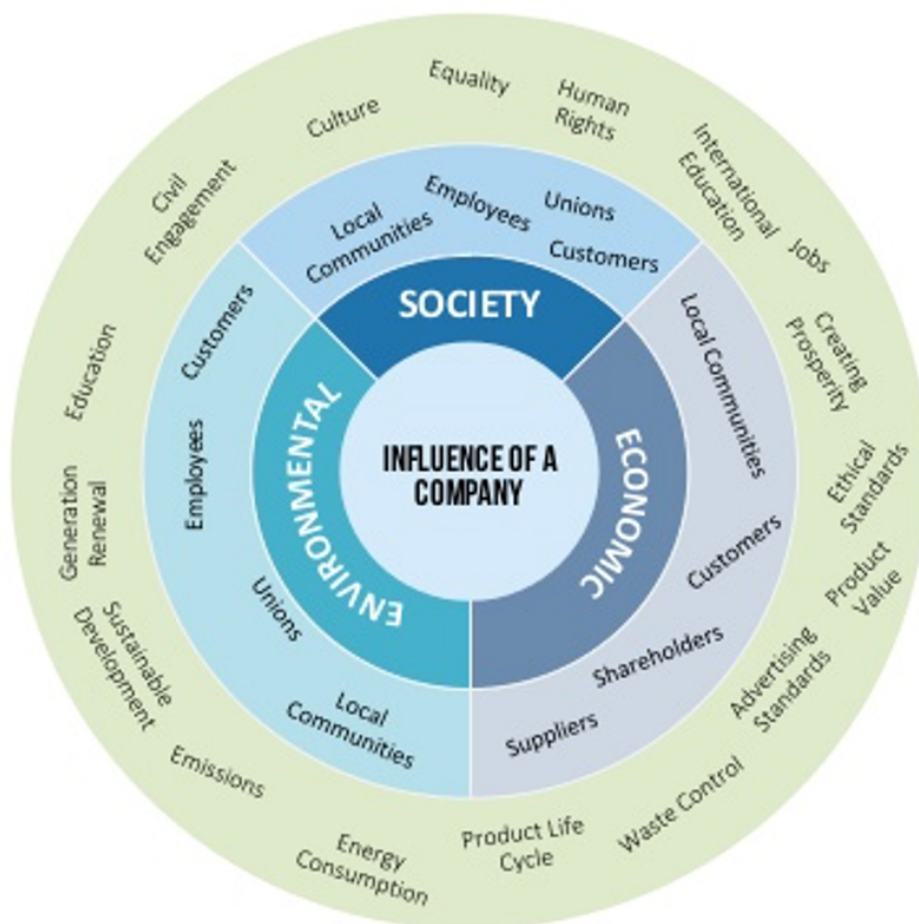


## Socio-Cultural Sustainability, Social Responsibility and Cultural Integrity in Management Practices



### 3 ECOT B5 Indigenous Communities

Culture is often one of the attractions that brings visitors to an area and the money from tourists can provide the financial resources required to allow residents to continue cultural activities which may not be affordable otherwise as well as building community self-esteem. Tourism can also lead to traditional skills being relearned (as in the case of Juhl's Silver Gallery, just over the border in Norway), or interest even be re-awakened in cultural activities and skills because they seem to be of 'value' to tourists – for instance, northern 'superfoods'. Another good aspect of cultural tourism products is that they usually show little economic leakage in the north where leakage from other tourism sectors may be rampant.

However, there can be something of a Pandora's box effect. From the visitors' point of view, 'culture' has become a commodity which they have purchased and have the right to demand in a certain location and at a specific time in the same way they might have purchased a boat ride or a hotel room. Traditional practices do not exist, and should not be expected to be perpetuated, for the sake of tourism entertainment. Cultures undergo a constant process of change, and it is this process of genuine culture change and exchange that is a fundamental component of ecotourism. 'Genuine' in this sense may be read as synonymous with sovereignty.

We have provided links to, for example, the [Reindeer Husbandry Act](#) and other information about Saami on our website and, since most of the information available about the Saami and the ILO convention is from the popular press or from a Saami perspective, (and super easy to google), we provide bigger picture viewpoints from the blog of Enontekiö's mayor, Mikko Karna, [here](#) and through a variety of other [reference blogs](#) for the sake of objectivity.

We try, in our daily work, to work co-operatively with other tour companies who work in the area – particularly the foreign-owned ones - and the wider community including local reindeer people (whether Saami or Laps) to foster mutual understanding, to spread financial benefits from the business amongst local people and operators and to minimize the negative aspects that can be associated with tourism since this is to everyone's benefit. We aim to show on a day-by-day basis through our standard actions, the positive benefits which tourism brings to the region; for instance by using locally-owned accommodation and transport providers for our own products.

The only culturally sensitive activity in which we take part as a company are reindeer gatherings. These are open meetings and many reindeer herders want to open them to a larger audience but, not surprisingly, there is rarely a uniform voice on the subject. We only attend these with our staff and we ask permission from the heads of each area in advance. Staff are fully briefed as to appropriate behaviour beforehand and one of the owners or an experienced guide is always in attendance to monitor the interactions and ensure that it is positive in both directions.

When local people, often inherently resistant to the potential infringement upon their traditional ways of life that tourism can cause, come into contact with companies that do not understand the importance of communication, unnecessary hostility results. When, by comparison, there is an increased knowledge and awareness of other cultures and the mutual benefits that can arise, direct and meaningful interactions occur and local peoples can even support their household livelihood strategies through financial benefits and direct employment possibilities gained through tourism-related activities.

Almost everyone in a small community experiences some impact from tourism although it is quite possible that not everyone feels they are benefiting from it. An improved community economy and linked construction of public infrastructure benefits everyone, but this fact may not be obvious to the individual resident. What residents do take note of is the need to share resources, such as parks, campgrounds, beaches, and parking spaces with visitors.

Clearly many local people are now reliant upon tourism as their means of survival. Indeed, tourism is clearly of absolutely critical importance, now, to an otherwise fairly poor municipality as you can see by the table below, which compares first the direct income from tourism, direct employment from tourism, the contribution of the tourism industry and wage tax revenue for each of the municipalities in Finnish Lapland.

AREA	Direct tourism income in EUR (Väliltön matkailutulo euroa)	Immediate income from tourism in man-years of employment. (Väliltön matkailutulo työllisyys htv.)	The % of tax income for the municipality which comes from travel tourism (Matkailun osuus toimialoista %)	Tax from Tourism-related Salaries (Palkkaverotulo vaikutukset euroa)
Enontekiö	21,620,277	155,2	49,9	488,105
Kittilä	11,602,9421	869	27,3	2,778,479
Muonio	27,129,874	200,3	32,5	669,261
Sodankylä	27,797,819	203,8	10,9	790,168
Rovaniemi	174,866,965	1224,8	7,8	5,186,283
Peikoseniemi	10,405,220	76,5	45,7	260,256
Ranua	7,089,527	43,6	8,5	150,538
Inari	75,961,398	511,1	41,5	1,703,032
Kemijärvi	15,826,607	98,2	9,3	394,331
Salla	8,084,630	59,7	15,1	212,634
Utsjoki	6,841,682	42,7	18	178,414
<b>Altogether</b>	<b>544,387,751</b>	<b>3858</b>		<b>14056040</b>

Tourism is here to stay. It has been identified as a central part of the long-term sustainability / viability strategy of the region which supports not only the traditional Saami peoples but also so-called Lapps, foreigners and 'Southern' Finns who have either married into the community or journeyed north to stay.

Tourism counters rural-urban migration – and this could of course increase land-use pressures. However, globally anything that counters decades of urbanization should be considered positive. According to the UN State of the World Population 2007 report, 2007 was predicted to be the 'tipping point' year / Urban Millennium after which the majority of people worldwide would be living in towns or cities, for the first time in history. Many believe that this is unsustainable and therefore re-energizing rural areas is of geographic importance.

Whenever a new product is being considered, we assess its possible impacts on both the environment and the local community. Judgements are made based on the scope and duration of the activity, the size of the group targeted and the area covered. Cumulative impacts that would arise from the product being executed multiple times are considered, to see if there would be any detrimental impact on other activities in the area. The technology and procedures available for environmentally safe operations are identified and we make a decision as to whether we have the capacity to monitor key environmental parameters and ecosystem components to identify any early warning signs of both predicted and unforeseen potential adverse effects of the activity. Operating procedures are modified accordingly<sup>5</sup>.

## Cultural Code of Conduct

We endeavor to maximise the positive effects of tourism on host communities by:

- ☐ using local suppliers whenever possible for food, accommodation and other services
- ☐ committing to training staff to be able to deliver high-performance products
- ☐ educating staff about local cultural heritage, including formal (i.e. registered monuments and archaeological or historical sites like the Struve Geodetic Arc, the Seita stones of Jyppyrä and Ullatieva<sup>6</sup>) and vernacular (i.e architecture, handicrafts, foods, traditional celebrations etc).
- ☐ developing our business sustainably
- ☐ offering access to traditional arts and crafts through our products
- ☐ providing a lot of information about the area, including its culture, geography, culture and activity potential available to our clients in advance of their visit so as to direct them to suitable sites and activities.
- ☐ increasing visitor knowledge of the areas through which we travel, thereby encouraging appropriate behaviour and minimising environmental and cultural impact.
- ☐ effectively communicating a code of behaviour to our multiday visitors as part of our cold safety talks – our short safari clients seldom interact with anyone other than the people designated to be in their programmes.
- ☐ monitoring group behaviours when we have clients with us and ensuring that they are proper and respectful.
- ☐ Not buying, selling, trading or displaying original historical or archaeological artefacts<sup>7</sup>.

## The Social Pillar of Sustainability

The social pillar of sustainability (effectively, social licence to operate (SLO)), takes time to build. Sustainable businesses should have the support and approval of its employees, stakeholders (in our case, our dogs!) and the community in which they operate and provide safe products. In order to secure and maintain this support, employees need to be treated fairly and we need to be good neighbors and community members, both locally and globally. Effectively, to be good corporate citizens. This means evaluating and re-evaluating supply chains, waste management, human resource management, and all the other aspects of a business with a critical eye.

<sup>5</sup> ECOT B5 Indigenous Communities

<sup>6</sup> ECOT C.3. Protection of Sites

<sup>7</sup> ECOT C2 Historical Artifacts: FYI Finnish is among the ten oldest spoken languages in the world. Even though texts written in Finnish exist only from the 16th century onwards, its roots and history are much deeper. Greenkey 4.1 and 4.3 Regarding compliance with local surrounding community rights and standards, the following conditions must, for example, be met: (a) The activities do not adversely affect local access to livelihoods, land and aquatic resource use, rights-of-way, transport, and housing (including involuntary resettlement of inhabitants). (b) The activities do not jeopardise the provision of basic food, water and energy services as well as health and sanitation services to neighbouring communities. (c) The establishment does not prevent access by residents to local historical, archaeological, or culturally and spiritually important properties and sites. (d) The siting, land use, capacity, design, construction, operation and demolition of buildings and infrastructure comply with local zoning and protected or heritage area requirements. It takes account of the capacity and integrity of the natural and cultural heritage surroundings in siting, design, impact assessment and land rights and acquisition. (e.) The establishment identifies and follows the local development codes and architectural management guidelines.

The standards to which companies are held accountable change over time. For instance, whilst acceptable 100 years ago, child labour is now outlawed in many nations. 25 years ago, all-male executives and board members and discriminatory hiring practices were common but are now on their way out. 20 years ago, breeding lots of pups annually and killing off the less good ones was considered acceptable. Today, getting rid of a cow that is not producing milk in a dairy farm is still considered fine but getting rid of a non-running dog is starting to not be, using chainsaws without a licence may no longer be worth the risk and continuing comparable 'old fashioned' cost-saving actions may now cost a company much more in the long run if it endangers their social license.

Existing laws, employee rights and the current economic situation all affect what we consider common, self-evident and normal actions and responsibilities for businesses – and what is seen as value-adding accountability. Corporate social responsibility, at its core, focuses on the company's ability to generate welfare in the surrounding society, community and people. A socially responsible business should be transparent; there are no ambiguities surrounding its assets and revenue. Charity and financial support for worthy causes are strongly linked with social responsibility. However, the point isn't making the best possible financial profit and then channelling funds into charity. Businesses should aim to act responsibly and sustainably in all their processes.

Acts of corporate social responsibility have been shown to create trust in the business behind the service. Companies that have proven themselves to be socially responsible are seen as fair towards their customers as well. A company that has successfully branded itself as socially responsible can reap the rewards of not only general goodwill, but financial benefits as well.

In 1994, John Elkington—the famed British management consultant and sustainability guru—coined the phrase 'triple bottom line' (TBL) as his way of measuring performance in corporate America. The idea was that a company can be managed in a way that not only makes money but which also improves people's lives and the well-being of the planet. In other words, with a focus on profit, social and environmental concerns. (Profit, People, Planet). A TBL seeks to gauge a corporation's level of commitment to, and performance in respect of, corporate social responsibility and its impact on the environment over time. TBL theory holds that if a firm looks at profits only, ignoring people and the planet, it cannot account for the full cost of doing business.

Hetta Huskies has the legal right to operate on the land, water and in the properties in which we work and we comply with local, communal and indigenous rights including their free, prior and informed consent. Regarding compliance with environmental requirements, our activities are managed to avoid negative effects on natural ecosystems and wildlife as far as possible and compensatory practices to reduce pollution from noise and light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and air, water, and soil contaminants are considered<sup>8</sup>.

## Giving Back

Each year, local school children come to us on work practice placements as much to learn how to work with the dogs as to experience an international working culture (and to practise their English!). Many return to help us out at key parts of the season or simply come back from time to time to feed or play with the dogs or to have fun with family and friends<sup>9</sup>. Similarly, we choose one or two local groups of people annually (for instance, school children of a certain age, those who work in the supermarket or health centre or hotels, MLL groups<sup>10</sup>, retired groups, etc, to visit the farm for free or for a token payment and to participate in one of our products<sup>11</sup>.

We have given free and subsidised visits for school children who also have the chance to take part in nature-based activities when visiting. This gives the area's children a chance to interact with and become open towards dogs, to see some tourist enterprises at work, and to have some fun in the process. Some teachers have asked for curriculum support materials linked to sled dogs and we have therefore produced a pretty extensive range of products linked to the farm on educational key stages as diverse as maths, science, ecology, values, PE and literacy. In these kinds of ways, we try to make the farm as accessible to possible to locals and attempt to break down any barriers in perception that there might be between locals and the tourism operations in the area and to culture an understanding of huskies in the area that was maybe lacking previously<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Green Key 4.1 (I)

<sup>9</sup> ECOT B1 Community Development

<sup>10</sup> Mannerheim League for Child Welfare group

<sup>11</sup> Green Key 1.5 (I)

<sup>12</sup> ECOT B5 Indigenous Communities



In the summer months we have a couple of days, each season, when we also invite folk with younger kids to come out on a family canoeing and kayaking session free of charge. In that way, we try to give youngsters from families who don't have water equipment themselves (or from families who would be maybe unsure about taking their children out on water without more experienced people around) the chance to experience the fun of being active when outside in nature during the warm summer days and a chance to explore the nature of their own landscape by a new means<sup>13</sup>.

Farm visits and free safaris have also been offered to all that want it from both our local old folk's home and disability training centre and those days have been a lot of fun all round. We have also tried simply visiting the old folk's home with some dogs to provide alternative stimulation / dog therapy and we open our farm, free of charge, to the local dog club whenever they want to practice agility with their dogs or simply to work with their dogs to socialise them with others. In other words, we make every effort to make our farm and its resources accessible to the community in different ways through the year.

Similarly, when there have been calls for people to participate in fixing things in the community (for instance the old buildings in the ski centre when it was under development, building a climbing wall for the local school children, etc) we have always been one of the first companies to volunteer time, money or expertise<sup>14</sup>.

From a personal perspective, we both have a number of motivational and inspirational talks that we give in addition to team-building and management training-focused events that have been designed around corporate and incentive groups. At least 50% of these talks and at least 50% of the group events are given pro bono, or for a minimal contribution to cover costs, for nature-based, charitable and youth-centred organisations, particularly those in our local community.

One target in the next two years is to increase direct interaction and communication on these subjects, with local people. Whilst our general community commitment and involvement is pretty extensive (particularly in respect to our efforts to build regional capacity), we do not have as much day-by-day interaction with local people as we would like and we are working to remedy this by, for instance, encouraging visitations by locals through free open days, and encouraging access to our dog agility trail to locals with dogs / the local dog walking club.

We have also been instrumental in encouraging Lapland Safaris - who organise the large mass-tourism day-break products in the area - to facilitate the participation of local children, once per year, in the arctic activities that the charter clients fly in to try, in one of their daybreak locations. In that way, local families get to experience the same reindeer, dog-sled, snowmobile etc activities as the clients and that increases local area insight into the importance of tourism for these regions.

We have created protocols that have enabled inclusion of physically and mentally less able client groups on safaris up to 2 days in length and provide training to guides in how to facilitate less able groups so as to provide them with a means of exploring nature by these means.

We were instrumental in setting up an association in which local people could volunteer to provide support to old folk who want to keep dogs for companionship but might have periods in which they cannot look after them properly in terms of walking them etc (eg in case of illness). The association also gave support got more basic life needs like chopping wood or stacking wood in winter, gardening etc and our guides were encouraged to be active in this regard. This came to a stop during Covid but continues in an ad hoc fashion.

Our dog-hotel service acts as a community resource and is also, sometimes, a free temporary shelter for dogs when owners find themselves in need. By also being the dog rescue centre for the region, we house lost dogs until they can be reunited with their owners and as such, increase goodwill of reindeer herders towards dog-owners in general and sleddogs in particular, since loose dogs are not appreciated in a reindeer herding community.

We also support a number of organisations including Leave No Trace Centre for Outdoor Ethics and MUSH with pride as well as volunteering time and effort towards a pretty large number of committees and projects (see our community document) which are working towards the general development and 'health' of the region.

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<sup>13</sup> ECOT B1 Community Development  
<sup>14</sup> Green Key 1.5 (I)

## Challenges

By law, husky mushing – whether privately or with clients - is an ‘everyman’s right’, which means that we have the same access rights to trails and open huts, in general, as walkers, skiers and bikers powered by non-mechanised means. In other words, there is no legal need to seek special route permissions for training safaris or even client safaris unless they are supported by snowmobile. However, in the interest of local harmony, we try to consult with local reindeer herders through the Ministry of Forestry and try to come to compromise solutions as to the routes that they believe impact least on their reindeer herds. This is made slightly more difficult in that there is a great amount of existing dissent about everything in the region between differing groups of reindeer herders. The argument centres over the definition of indigenous – whether the Sami or the local herders who lived the same lifestyle as the Sami but actually settled here hundreds of years before. The Sami, as an official ‘indigenous people’ are granted rights to support the same lifestyle that the other reindeer herders are not and that, not surprisingly, causes a lot of discord<sup>15</sup>.

Ironically, in the process of trying to come to the table and ask permissions, we lose access to the wide network of maintained trails both near to our farm and in the wider Municipality that are driven by locals with their own dogs and by non-local companies with dog teams who follow everyman’s rights. Most reindeer herders would prefer for there to be no need for shared access to any land (by anyone, including reindeer herders of other clans) and therefore try to put very stringent restrictions upon where they do and don’t want us to go. We have frequently had our 3- and 5-day multiday safari routes, for instance, restricted to just one circular route on established snowmobile trails and they often apply additional restrictions to this from time to time, sometimes without real need (or they simply forget to mention when a detour is no longer necessary) - but we have no choice but to comply if we want to create a culture of cooperation<sup>16</sup>.

This is definitely to the detriment of the mental and physical wellbeing of the dogs, guides and the business as a whole as well as to, ironically, to the ultimate safety of the reindeer. The dogs become bored and many stop pulling as well as they could. At the same time, the leaders are not stimulated to respond to command since they simply memorise the routes. Both of these factors impacts on their usefulness as sled dogs and in most companies it would also mean that their lifespan would be reduced since few companies choose to keep non-contributory animals.

This is all part of taking a long-term view on this, since, if we don’t keep trying to come to the table with them, there will be no change of attitude and our company is in the best position to show how these two stakeholding groups can coexist comfortably. We believe that once people understand how committed we are to our dogs and the local community, an understanding of huskies will grow, fear of the unknown will subside and we will be able to negotiate wider trail access for, for instance, times outside of calving seasons.

Having said this, our area is a frontier zone and there is a great deal of disharmony between local groups bubbling under the surface and a history of a lack of compromise / lack of desire for anything innovative or new, so we understand that we probably have a hard road ahead<sup>17</sup>. Land ownership, land use and national borders have caused such pain and conflict within both the indigenous and local populations of our region that it will take time to bring down the cultural and psychological fences between the Saami and the other stakeholder groups in Enontekiö. Most indigenous nations want to be recognised as people, understood and respected for their traditions and culture and made part of the geopolitical realities and histories of the past, present and future. What we can do is to consider their beliefs, prejudices and assumptions, acquire information and learn from them. Of course, that assumes that there is a desire on both sides for an open exchange of ideas and interaction and yet when there are opportunities to come to the table to talk, many stakeholders in this area simply do not show up.

Lapland’s regional agenda for 2018–2021 includes a section on Sámi culture and a vision for 2040, which states the following on the Sámi people’s means of livelihood and tourism: “The traditional Sámi trades, such as reindeer husbandry, fishing, hunting, foraging and handcraft, are still vital and practiced according to their cultural traditions. Coexisting means of livelihood, such as culturally and ethically sustainable tourism, offer additional support for their traditional trades. Sámi culture values respect, and they want to be respected in tourism as well; they wish to have their own active role in regional travel. They want to end the exploitation of their people and culture as passive props, regional colour and exotic, primitive objects in the gears of tourism.

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<sup>15</sup> ECOT A6.1 & A6.2 Local Zoning & Design and Siting

<sup>16</sup> ECOT A6.1 & A6.2 Local Zoning & Design and Siting

<sup>17</sup> ECOT A6.1 & A6.2 Local Zoning & Design and Siting