

Global Sustainable Tourism Council Destination Criteria  
Rapid Assessment and Gap Analysis Evaluation



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## Special thanks

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# Introduction

Tourism is very important to the Järvsö economy with a focus on the winter and summer seasons. Alpine and cross-country skiing, downhill cycling, fishing and heritage are the main tourism segments with most visitors coming from Stockholm and the Mälardalen region.

With a desire to grow the Destination's tourism industry in a sustainable manner Järvsö has brought together key local leaders and stakeholder to debate and shape future policies based on Global Sustainable Tourism Council Destination Criteria.

This collaborative approach offers the Destination an opportunity to formally adopt GSTC Destination Criteria as a policy and planning framework.

This Rapid Assessment of the Destination's readiness to comply with GSTC Destination Criteria is a step on the way to the implementation of a Destination Programme designed to benchmark and continuously improve the Destination's environmental, cultural, social and economic performance.

## Destination Profile

The 'Destination' for this report is defined as Järvsö Parish.

Järvsö Parish is part of Ljusdal Municipality in Hälsingland, covering 740 square kilometres and has approximately 4600 residents.

It is located 320 kilometres north of Stockholm and can be accessed from Stockholm or Arlanda International Airport in about 3 hours by rail or road.

Järvsö as a destination has rich culture, a celebrated UNESCO heritage and a varied, nature rich landscape. There are many "unique" and "authentic" reasons to visit Järvsö and Hälsingland with the overseas market offering considerable potential due to the Destination's USPs and close proximity to Stockholm.

Destination Järvsö AB was established in 2007 and today has 10 employees, about 150 member companies and approximately 2000 beds available through a portfolio of hotels, hostels and rental cabins.

Järvsö Destination's main tourism company is Järvsöbacken, one of Sweden's largest ski resorts with 20 slopes, 8 lift systems hosting over 212 000 winter guests. Stenegård in Järvsö is one of Hälsingland's most important tourism attractions and hosts a Visitor Center for the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage. Other important attractions are Harsagården, Järvsö mountain bike park, Rovedjurscentret De 5 Stora and Järvzoo.

## Map of Ljusdal Municipality



### Map of Järvsö Parish boundary



## Methodology, Activities, and Consultations

Rogers & Co AB (“Assessor”) conducted a rapid assessment evaluation of Järvsö’s compliance with GSTC Destination Criteria under a contract from Destination Järvsö. The Assessors work was supported by Dan Jonasson, Projektledare Hållbar Export Region Västerbotten Turism.

The Assessor attended a full day workshop and round table meeting organised by Destination Järvsö and mediated by Märit Andersson and Dan Jonasson on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The round table meeting was held in Järvsö and included over 50 representatives of the DMO, Parish, Municipality, Länsstyrelsen, NGOs and private sector. Round table sessions were held to discuss each of the 4 GSTC Destination Criteria sections allowing collaborative evaluation and discussion to generate a snapshot of sustainable performance and compliance with the GSTC criteria.

In addition Destination Järvsö conducted an on-line survey of its members (split between all Destination members and those members who are located within the Parish boundaries) in order to provide membership/community feedback on destination governance and performance issues related to GSTC Criteria. This survey along with other supporting documentation is available on request from Destination Järvsö AB.

Rapid assessment and desktop research of Järvsö’s compliance with GSTC Destination Criteria took place during the month of January 2018.

## Sustainability and Good Governance - Background

Documentation evaluated from Parish (Järvsö), Municipal (Ljusdal) and Regional (Gävleborg) authorities have established that developing tourism in a sustainable manner is of a high level of importance. This commitment to principles of sustainable practices and planning has led to a public debate in Järvsö relating to appropriate policies and management systems for sustainable destination development.

The Järvsö Sustainability Forum is a group of destination stakeholders that came together in 2016 to produce a *vision* document entitled *järvsö\_hållbarhetsforum\_vision utkast\_170219*. This working group were also responsible for initiating Järvsö’s interest in working with GSTC Criteria. The Municipality of Ljusdal have also developed a sustainable strategy for tourism for the period 2013-2020 called Lokal Strategi för Besöknäringen i Ljusdals Kommun that included Järvsö as the municipality’s main tourism hub. These documents and initiatives aim to explore the establishment of long-term sustainable development at the heart of the Destination’s development and management strategy.

The destination of Järvsö aided by policies and legislation enforced by government agencies is already at a fairly high level of GSTC Destination Criteria compliance and has started to focus on how to implement a fully integrated sustainable destination planning and management process that may over time lead to Sustainable Destination Certification that is GSTC Accredited.

If the Destination's stakeholders can turn goals and ambitions into publicly endorsed policies and action plans along with appropriate monitoring and management systems the destination can make significant progress over a five-year time horizon. In addition if the Destination chooses to move towards Sustainable Destination Certification that is GSTC Accredited it will over time become a national leader and much studied benchmark model for sustainability in Sweden.

Work with sustainability in many sectors is already well underway within the destination. The scope, control and implementation of much of this work should be conducted under the authority and coordination of a publicly endorsed and adequately funded *Destination Authority* that will seek opinions and gather facts from a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders to create an informed and collective view on destination specific policies, actions and management system.

Tourism is one partner in the overall Sustainable Destination process and therefore the establishment of a publicly mandated *Destination Authority* organisation (Destination Järvsö) that is supported by a *Destination Green Team* comprised of representative stakeholders from private, public and NGO sectors including Järvsö Parish/Järvsörådet, Ljusdal municipality and Länsstyrelsen is critical.

Laws that protect and monitor natural and cultural heritage are under the jurisdiction of the County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen). They have the funding, experts, archaeologists, game wardens and other specialists to survey and monitor nature and culture conservation. Länsstyrelsen issue permits and decides on restrictions related to the protection of natural and cultural assets. Some of this work is also done at a municipal agency level and coordinated with Länsstyrelsen. Destination Järvsö as the destination management organisation (DMO) is rarely involved in this work. The government agencies set the rules and tourism complies. In this way the public sector have the responsibility and the funding allocated for programs related to:

- Climate change issues
- Protected area management and regulations
- Emission reduction programs
- Waste handling and energy reduction
- Water quality and usage
- Safety and security
- Social issues
- Cultural heritage and protection
- Hunting and fishing management
- Employment (also a union and employers responsibility).

In most of these fields Swedish governmental agencies have developed regulatory and management structures that are highly compliant with international sustainability monitoring, standards or ratings. Yet without a more joined up way of thinking that reflects an inclusive, holistic methodology these agencies and their indicators will fail to fully comply with GSTC Criteria at a destination level.

Pressure to grow rapidly can mean municipality civil servants feel an increased in their workload due to the impact of strong lobbying to obtain building permits faster. In addition Länsstyrelsen would seem to be underfunded if it is to play a more robust partnership role in management, monitoring and mitigation at a destination level.

The challenge is now for Destination Järvsö to play a more active and influential role in order to reflect the views and aspirations of all tourism and local stakeholders so they take more local responsibility for key sustainability and development issues that impact their community.

Destination Järvsö must now move from discussions, workshops and documentation to a Destination that has policies and a framework to manage, monitor and improve the Destination's environmental, cultural, social and economic performance.

This rapid assessment gap analysis highlights areas of good practice as well as gaps where action is needed in order to move towards full compliance with GSTC Destination Criteria.

Report recommendations are focused on the gaps and what the destination should consider improving in order to build a destination that can become a leader through gaining GSTC Accredited Sustainable Destination Certification.



# Summary of Rapid Assessment Results

The primary purpose of the Destination Round Table meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and the desktop research during January 2018 was to determine the destination of Järvsö's readiness to demonstrate adherence to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council Destination Criteria.

Adherence was graded on a four-tiered colour-coded system.

0 (Red) = no documentation or evidence of implementation.

1 (Pink) = documentation exists (e.g. laws, regulations, policies, plans, strategies).

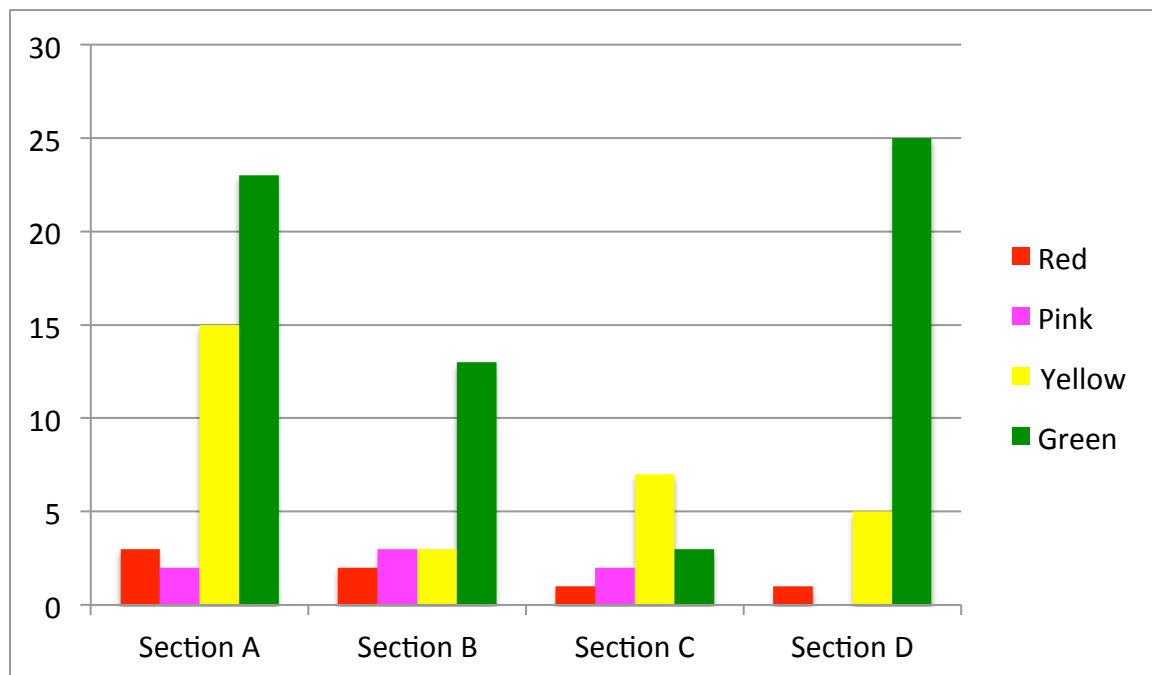
2 (Yellow) = documentation exists and there is evidence to demonstrate/verify implementation exists (e.g. management systems, monitoring systems etc.).

3. (Green) = evidence of documentation and implementation exists and the destination is demonstrating improvements.

## Evaluation Coverage

GSTC-D Sections	Section A – Destination Management	Section B – Economic Benefits	Section C – Community, Visitors & Culture	Section D - Environment	Total # of Indicators (%)
Total Indicators Scored - Red	3	2	1	1	7 indicators (6.67%)
Total Indicators Scored - Pink	2	3	2	0	7 indicators (6.67%)
Total Indicators Scored - Yellow	15	3	7	2	27 indicators (25.71%)
Total Indicators Scored - Green	23	13	3	25	64 indicators (60.95%)
Total Indicators	43	21	13	28	105

## Table of Results



## Readiness for GSTC Destination Criteria compliance

As can be seen from the graphic on page 9 of the report the dominant colour is green (64 of 105 indicators rated which represents 61%) followed by yellow (27 of 105 indicators which represents 26%). This shows an overall high level of compliance with the GSTC Destination Criteria.

Compliance with Sections A, B and D was comprehensive despite a general weakness in implementing a systematic destination approach, the adoption of sustainability standards, tourism awareness, as well as support for the community and local entrepreneurs. Compliance with Section C remains weak and needs considerable improvement.

However, Järvsö Destination is currently at the beginning of its sustainability journey. The destination has started to take ownership of its sustainability goals with a wide range of stakeholders coming together to discuss the implementation of sustainable outcomes.

Destination Järvsö has taken responsibility to coordinate destination sustainability efforts and along with the Järvsö Sustainability Forum has started the process to bring together private, public, community and NGO sector stakeholders to discuss policy aims, procedures and outcomes based on compliance with GSTC Destination Criteria.

As yet the assessor is not aware of any formal written declaration of support (political or financial) supplied by the Parish Council nor has a Destination 'Green Team' been publicly mandated or officially formed to support Destination Järvsö in its proposed role as 'Destination Authority'.

# Areas of Good Practice

Please refer to the GSTC Destination Criteria and Indicators supporting document for a full definition of Criteria and Indicators, or click on this link to view the document -

<https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/gstc-destination-criteria/>

## **Section A**

A2 – Destination Management Organisation (IN-A2.b.)

A3 – Monitoring (IN-A3.a. IN-A3.b.)

A5 – Climate Change Adaption (IN –A5.a. IN-A5.b.)

A7 – Planning Regulations (IN-A7.a. IN-A7.b. IN-A7.c. IN-A7.d.)

A9 – Property Acquisitions (IN-A9.a. IN-A9.b.)

A10 – Visitor Satisfaction (IN-A10.a.)

A12 – Safety and Security (IN-A12.a. IN-A12.b. IN-A12.c. In-A12.d. IN-A12.e.)

A13 – Crisis and Emergency Management (IN-A13.a. IN-A13.b. IN-A13.c. IN-A13.e.)

A14 – Promotion (IN-A14.a. IN-A14.b.)

## **Section B**

B1 – Economic Monitoring (IN-B1.a. IN-B1.b. IN-B1.c.)

B2 – Local Career Opportunities (IN-B2.a. IN-B2.b. IN-B2.c. IN-B2.d.)

B4 – Local Community Opinion (IN-B4.a. IN-B4.b.)

B5 – Local Access (IN-B5.a.)

B7 – Preventing Exploitation (IN-B7.a. IN-B7.b.)

B9 – Supporting Local Entrepreneurs and Fair Trade (IN-B9.a.)

## **Section C**

C1 – Attraction Protection (IN-C1.a.)

C4 – Cultural Heritage Protection (IN-C4.a.)

C6 – Intellectual Property (IN-C6.a.)

## **Section D**

D1 – Environmental Risks (IN-D1.a. IN-D1.b.)

D2 – Protection of Sensitive Environments (IN-D2.a. IN-D2.b. IN-D2.c.)

D3 – Wildlife Protection (IN-D3.a. IN-D3.b.)

D4 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions (IN-D4.a. IN-D4.b.)

D5 – Energy Conservation (IN-D4.a. IN-D5.b.)

D6 – Water Management (IN-D6.a.)

D7 – Water Security (IN-D7.a.)

D8 – Water Quality (IN-D8.a. IN-D8.b. IN-D8.c.)

D9 – Wastewater (IN-D9.a. IN-D9.b. In-D9.c. In-D9.d.)

D10 – Solid Waste Reduction (IN-D10.a. IN-D10.b. IN-D10.c.)

D11 – Light and Noise Pollution (IN-D11.a. IN-D11.b.)

# Risks - Areas needing improvement

There are specific areas of risk related to the following Criteria and Indicators:-

## **Section A**

- A1 – Sustainable Destination Strategy (IN-A1.a. IN-A1.b. IN-A1.c. IN-A1.d.)
- A2 – Destination Management Organisation (IN-A2.a. IN-A2.c. IN-A2.d. IN-A2.e.)
- A3 – Monitoring (IN-A3.c.)
- A4 – Tourism Seasonality Management (IN-A4.a.)
- A5 – Climate Change Adaption (IN-A5.c.)
- A6 – Inventory of Tourism Assets & Attractions (IN-A6.a.)
- A8 – Access for All (IN-A8.a. IN-A8.b.)
- A10 – Visitor Satisfaction (IN-A10-b.)
- A11 – Sustainability Standards (IN-A11.a. IN-A11.b. IN-A11.c. IN-A11.d.)
- A13 – Crisis and Emergency Management (IN-A13.d.)

## **Section B**

- B3 – Public Participation (IN-B3.a. IN-B3.b.)
- B5 – Local Access (IN-B5.b.)
- B6 - Tourism Awareness and Education (IN-B6.a.)
- B8 – Support for Community (IN-B8.a)
- B9 – Supporting Local Entrepreneurs and Fair Trade (IN-B9.b. IN-B9.c. IN-B9.d.)

## **Section C**

- C1 – Attraction Protection (IN-C1.b.)
- C2 – Visitor Management (IN-C2.a.)
- C3 - Visitor Behaviour (IN-C3.a. IN-C3.b.)
- C4 – Cultural Heritage Protection (IN-C4.b.)
- C5 - Site Interpretation (IN-C5.a. IN-C5.b. IN-C5.c. IN-C5.d. IN-C5.e.)

## **Section D**

- D10 – Solid Waste Reduction (IN-D10.d.)
- D12 – Low Impact Transport (IN-D12.a. IN-D12.b.)

# Analysis of Criteria that need improving

## Section A – Demonstrate Sustainable Destination Management

### Criteria A1 – Sustainable Destination Strategy

Järvsö as a destination currently lacks an integrated approach to tourism planning and management. Public, private and NGO sector groups are actively involved in planning discussions and workshops in order to define the Destination's sustainability vision and strategy. Destination Järvsö is currently acting as the Destination's coordinating entity for sustainable outcomes yet it lacks official public endorsement as the *Destination Authority* responsible for leading Järvsö's Sustainable Destination planning.

To be more effective there is a need for deeper collaboration between private and public sectors and between actors within sectors if long-term sustainable outcomes are to be achieved based on sound policies, action plans and management systems.

The 'destination' coverage is currently poorly defined by the Järvsö Parish boundaries for the purpose of this Gap Analysis. It is recommended that the local community and Destination Järvsö member companies debate further whether the small geographical area of Järvsö Parish fits the scale and scope for the implementation of a multi-year sustainable destination policy. Further consultation at municipal and county level is advised to determine if Järvsö should proceed as a 'pilot project' that could be expanded if desired to a municipal or county level, or if the 'the destination' should be expanded at the start of the process to cover a wider geographic area and more communities. Expanding the geographical coverage and number of communities involved could significantly slow the process and so the assessor recommendation would be for Järvsö to become a 'pilot project' that could be rolled out at a municipal or county level at a later date.

EarthCheck's work on the Snæfellsnes Peninsula in West Iceland could offer an interesting case study. The peninsula covers 1.500 square kilometres and a population of 4.000 spread across 5 communities. These communities were the first in Europe to receive EarthCheck Certification in 2008 and the Snæfellsnes Peninsula has now received EarthCheck Gold Certification Status. <https://www.west.is/en/west-iceland-regions/earthcheck>

Järvsö as a destination currently has neither a multi-year Tourism Master Plan nor a Sustainable Destination Policy that has an integrated approach to achieving Environmental, Cultural, Social and Economic (ECSE) performance outcomes.

Elements that are key to establishing and implementing a multi-year destination strategy:-

1. Define the 'Destination' boundaries based on stakeholder consultation.
2. Develop a publicly endorsed Sustainable Destination Policy based on complying with GSTC Destination Criteria and which addresses Environmental, Cultural, Social and Economic (ECSE) outcomes.

3. Identify a Sustainable Destinations Programme that provides a relevant framework to benchmark, certify and continuously improve the Destination's environmental, cultural, social and economic performance.

### **Criteria A2 – Destination Management Organisation**

Destination Järvsö is currently coordinating the destination's sustainability initiative, however, a Järvsö *Destination Authority* should be formally appointed and mandated by the local community (including Järvsö Parish) to provide leadership responsibility, and to implement the Destination Sustainability Policy. The Destination Authority should appoint both a *Destination Coordinator* and an advisory *Green Team* drawn from both private and public sectors. A Green Team drawn from a wide cross section of the destination should ensure all sections of the community (including Parish Council and Länsstyrelsen representatives) have the ability to participate in formulating and managing the Destination's Sustainability Policy.

Questions remain about the size and financial ability of Destination Järvsö to lead the development and implementation of the Destination's Sustainable Destination Policy. Participation in a benchmarking programme such as the EarthCheck Sustainable Destination Program would mean finding significant funding over time to continually measure and benchmark performance as well as achieve and maintain certification over time. There is a need to discuss short and long-term funding options at Parish, Municipal and County level as well as with the members of Destination Järvsö (see benefits of certification on Page 34).

### **Criteria A3 – Monitoring**

Although the monitoring and reporting of ESCE and human rights issues is addressed at a national and municipal level the destination lacks an integrated approach to measure and benchmark ESCE destination tourism related performance outcomes at a local level.

The proposed expansion of the tourism industry in Järvsö will undoubtedly raise community concerns for the funding of sustainable tourism management. A growing economy and population will need to take into consideration issues such as land use planning, waste water planning, housing, transport, CO2 emissions and climate change impacts, seasonal water security, retaining a sense of place and visitor management.

The funding and implementation of a Destination Standard such as the EarthCheck Sustainable Destination Standard would provide the framework to ensure constant and consistent measurement and benchmarking of ESCE performance indicators and impacts at a destination level.

### **Criteria A4 – Tourism Seasonality Management**

Destination Järvsö does work with destination stakeholders to create packages and events that are aimed at reducing the impact of lower and shoulder seasons. In addition there has

been some discussion regarding future development and promotional work to help develop Järvsö's attractiveness as a MICE (Meetings Incentives Conferences & Events) sector.

There is, however, limited documentation on policy and strategy to comprehensively address and manage seasonal fluctuations of visitor derived incomes. To fully comply with Criteria A4 a more systematic and comprehensive destination approach is needed.

More needs to be done to identify new trends, travel niches, activities and events along with the development of off-season travel themes and *Signature Experiences*.

As winter season employment grows what will Järvsö do to create year-round rather than seasonal employment? Where will these additional employees be housed and how will they be educated to deliver quality services for new tourism niches and emerging source markets.

The close proximity to Stockholm opens the opportunity to develop Järvsö as a leading *human powered* active and sporting events destination that can host a range of low and shoulder season sporting events and festivals such as walking, road cycling, mountain biking, marathon, triathlon, multi-activity endurance races and events. Ideally these need to be developed and co-promoted with leading outdoor equipment and clothing brands to gain maximum coverage and impact.

One spin-off from Järvsö achieving GSTC Sustainable Destination Accredited Certification would be the Destination's ability to attract many requests from municipalities for educational site visits to Järvsö to learn about how Järvsö initiated and implemented their sustainability model. These educational and technical group visits could bring in valuable low season revenue for the Destination.

The destination also needs to develop and provide capacity building programmes, training and workshops for enterprises and guides within new niche travel segments. Travel Oregon's *Rural Tourism Studio* is a good case study that is designed to help rural communities develop a robust and sustainable tourism economy. It is a professional development programme designed to bolster regional or destination economy by offering hands-on skill-building, planning and product development workshops for niche tourism target markets such as cycling, culinary and cultural heritage tourism. <http://industry.traveloregon.com/industry-resources/destination-development/rural-tourism-studio/>

### **Criteria A5 – Climate Change Adaption**

The destination complies with national legislation and has a policy and system in place relating to climate change and risk assessment. Länsstyrelsen and Ljusdal Municipality do provide reports via the web that can be found if searched for by the public. There is however little evidence of specific efforts to systematically educate and raise awareness amongst the public, tourism enterprises and visitors about climate change.

It is recommended that there is more local dialogue, debate and education relating to future planning issues especially related to the scale of new developments, *sense of place* of tourism infrastructure and how this could impact nature, culture and local quality of life.

Important indicators may include the seasonal availability and quality of local water due to the impact of using snow cannons for an expanding ski tourism industry. How will an expanded ski industry with a projected 500+ new jobs balance the needs of host population, workers and visitors against the impact of an increase in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions due to the additional needs of power, transportation and housing/accommodations for locals, seasonal workers and visitors?

Destination Järvsö and its members should also be encouraged to calculate and off-set their own carbon emissions as well as displaying a carbon calculator on their web pages for clients as a voluntary carbon off-setting mechanism.

### **Criteria A6 – Inventory of Tourism Assets and Attractions**

Despite a basic list of tourism assets and attractions existing much more could be done to identify additional assets and categorise them in a way that helps the destination develop, package and promote unique, authentic Järvsö *Signature Experiences* that differentiate the destination from the competition, increase dwell time and engage a wider range of local stakeholders.

Identifying local tourism assets and developing a nature and culture attraction site priority list with public input is a first step in creating Signature Experiences that are able to create media interest and *cut through* in the international market place.

Incorporating well known must see *Hero Products* (Hälsingegårdar, UNESCO sites and Rovdjurscentret/Järvzoo for example) into Signature Experiences connects Järvsö's UNESCO and other key attraction sites with the wider community via storytelling, delivering an authentic and unmissable experience for visitors.

A comprehensive list of Destination Supporting Experiences and Products should be put together with public input. This collaborative strategy can help identify little known yet fascinating *insider products and activities* and lead to an increased interest, buy-in and participation from those not directly working in the tourism industry.

### **Criteria A8 –Access for All**

Although there is national legislation covering “accessibility for all” issues for public buildings and accommodations there remains a gap in establishing and communicating a destination policy relating to accessibility and infrastructure for people with disabilities (mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimensions of access). Some good work already exists such as disability access to fishing waters, handicap friendly boardwalks at major attractions, ski and bike lift capability for the disabled.

With quick, direct access by train from Stockholm the large and growing market for disabled tourists (accessible tourism market is likely to grow to 160 million people spending to €88.5 billion if travelling alone or \$132.80 is travelling with a companion by 2025 in the EU) offers significant potential for Järvsö as a sustainable destination.



It is recommended that the destination develop an Access for All Policy that focuses on the 3 dimensions of physical access (wheel chair and with walking aids), sensory access (tactile markings, signs and labels, audio cues), and communication access (for those with difficulties with written word and speech) that includes key natural and cultural sites of interest. Getting between sites and attractions for disabled visitors (in a sustainable way) is also important for destination policy. How is this to be achieved and funded as part of the soft mobility/low impact transport planning?

It is also important to consider that communications of the disability access options that exist (in Swedish and English) are critical during the research, trip planning stages of the client journey, not just during the visitation period - if the destination is to be competitive in this market segment the product must be visible and easy to understand.

### **Criteria A10 – Visitor Satisfaction**

Although there are a number of systems in place (at both destination and enterprise level) that collect data on visitor satisfaction the collection methodology and qualitative reporting of findings can still be improved. Stronger policies and actions are needed to monitor, measure, record and publicly communicate visitor satisfaction levels. Colour coded touch button devices are used at the 8 most important attractions within the Destination Järvsö to monitor customer satisfaction. It is believed these units also have the capacity to record visitor comments via a touch screen. In addition visitors' booking their stay/visit through Destinationbolaget receives a follow up e-mail requesting feedback on their stay although the assessor has no data on how many actually respond to the auto generated request.

Deeper qualitative and quantitative research is recommended including periodic one-on-one research surveys both at and away from the 8 key attraction points within the destination during winter and summer seasons. Questions relating to accessibility and sustainability along with the quality of accommodations, food, hospitality, preferred activities, guiding quality, language, navigation in destination and overall quality of experience should be included. Qualitative data collection also allows destination surveys to ask what services, products, activities and hard/soft infrastructure they missed or would have like to have seen or used in destination. This type of research provides direct feedback on trends and aids future planning based on quality input from existing visitors and what may be bottlenecks or barriers to them making recommendations to family, friends and work colleagues.

### **Criteria A11 – Sustainability Standards**

There is little evidence of a destination effort to promote sustainability standards (sustainability or environmental management certification, or labelling consistent with GSTC Criteria) to enterprises within the Destination.

Although the Destination has started to test performance against GSTC Destination Criteria and it has indicated that it is possibly interested in certification with the EarthCheck Sustainability Solutions for Destinations Programme there is currently no formal policy or commitment from the community in place.

At present Destination Järvsö does not actively monitor, report and promote member companies that have gained sustainable tourism certification or who have environmental certification.

Destination Järvsö should commit to publishing a list of members who have gained sustainable tourism or environmental certification certificate or labelling on the destination web site. A list of GSTC recognized standards and certification systems for Hotels and Tour Operators are listed on the GSTC web site - <https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/gstc-recognized-standards-for-hotels-and-tour-operators/>

Destination Järvsö should also promote member companies who participate in Sweden's Quality Label for Ecotourism, Naturens Bästa or have gained environmentally focused labels and certification systems such as ISO, KRAV and Svanen.

### **A12 – Safety and Security**

The Destination Järvsö web site should include safety and security information relevant to visitors. Currently there is a clear gap in how the Destination communicates safety and security procedures (along with telephone numbers/contact details in case of fire, accident, disaster or crime) with visitors. It is recommended that the Destination web site be provided in English, or as a minimum there be a Safety and Security section along with appropriate information and contact details in English.

At an enterprise level it is recommended that members of Destination Järvsö be required to conduct annual Health and Safety Risk Assessments relating to: 1) safety of transport to/from excursions, 2) safety of facilities used, 3) food hygiene, 4) personal safety and security of tourists on excursions, 5) animal welfare.

The Travel Foundation manual "Are You Ready for Business" has a section on the implementation of H & S systems for enterprise. Naturens Bästa criteria also covers H & S compliance for excursions and activities.

### **A13 – Crisis and Emergency Management**

Although Järvsö as a community does have a Crisis and Emergency Response Plan it is recommended that Destination Järvsö (as the Destination Authority) develop its own plan that is specifically focused on the tourism industry. This plan should be publicly available (via digital communications as well as visible at member businesses) and include how information is shared with the Destination's residents, enterprises and visitors during periods of crisis or emergency.

In addition it is recommended that there should be a tourism sector specific accident and emergency training programme such as wilderness first aid available for the Destination travel sector in order to raise the level of expertise and enhance the response network when faced with accident and emergency situations.

All tourism sector personnel that have been trained to respond to accident and emergency situations or have First Response qualifications should be clearly listed on the Destination Järvsö web site and on relevant social media.

## Section B – Maximize Economic Benefits to the Host Community and Minimize Negative Impacts

### Criteria B1 – Economic monitoring

It is recommended that there be a Destination specific audit that includes all direct and indirect economic contributions of tourism rather than simply relying on SCB and TEM data from the larger service providers and delivered at a municipality level. A more exact breakdown of employment data for the 'destination' that is tourism sector specific would be helpful (age, gender and type of employment i.e. seasonal, year-round, job description) for future benchmarking. Inclusion of data from accommodation providers under 8 beds and for cold beds would also be helpful. More precise destination specific data along with annual (minimum) data on investments made within the destination's tourism sector would allow the destination to prove the positive economic impact and benefits of tourism over time.

### Criteria B3 – Public Participation

Despite strategic tourism planning documentation from Ljusdal and Järvsö emphasising the need to include public participation in destination planning and decision making there is a lack of a published, collaborative system for doing this in Järvsö. There is evidence of a yearly public forum meeting with the DMO but no written evidence was found to document who attended public meetings (it may exist but if so was not found) to specifically discuss destination management issues.

There is a need for a more effective Destination consultative mechanism to encourage community members to meet regularly in order to discuss the destination policy and planning process.

It is recommended that the Destination consider a solution such as the Røros Host initiative. Although this is primarily a 'good host' initiative it creates buy in and participation for sustainable destination management including regular meetings and forums to discuss policy and destination sustainability issues. Participating employees in tourism, commerce and local government undergo a course on local culture and history, so that guests enjoy a quality experience during their stay through the knowledge of 'local ambassadors' for the destination. This mechanism also emphasises building the destination through collaboration and multi-stakeholder experience development cooperation through the *Copper Card* cross-selling initiative. So far 150 companies and 500 employees have enrolled and been awarded the *Horseshoe* good host certification in Røros. <http://www.roros.no/en/certification-program-knowledge-to-be-a-good-host/>

## **Criteria B5 – Local Access**

The destination complies with monitoring, protecting and if necessary rehabilitating or restoring local community access to natural and cultural sites, however, more could be done locally to monitor the behaviour and characteristics of local, domestic and foreign visitors to tourism sites and attractions.

It is recommended that the Destination develop a year-round system to conduct and publicly report quantitative and qualitative destination research in order to better understand visitor numbers, who they are, their source markets, what they do and where they go when visiting destination natural and cultural sites. Deeper research will help the Destination and its stakeholders strategically plan, mitigate impacts and take corrective actions where required. Current visitation numbers are fairly low to many destination attractions, yet as visitor volume increases learning more about visitors will help mitigate impacts, develop the quality of the experience being delivered and highlight new opportunities or potential barriers or bottlenecks.

## **Criteria B6 – Tourism awareness and education**

The audit found little evidence of a policy or programme to raise awareness of the benefits or impacts of tourism in Järvsö's educational facilities, or in the wider community. Both tourism and its long-term sustainability are of considerable importance to the destination and wider community. How increased tourism will impact the community's planning, climate change policy and environmental performance are also key factors that needs debating so that the community and tourism sector are more educated about potential challenges, benefits, impacts and mitigation strategies. There is also no evidence of tourism courses being taught in school or college despite a large number of local youth working seasonally within the community tourism industry.

The elevation of tourism as a more attractive vocation rather than simply as a seasonal job or a first step on the ladder of employment is also an issue if the destination wishes to retain young, educated and innovative people within the community. Tourism education in schools related to heritage can also help create interest in vocations to protect and conserve built and intangible heritage related to the Hälsingegårdar and related UNESCO World Heritage sites.

It is recommended that the community work more closely with destination educational facilities and local government to better understand where tourism employment opportunities lie and to provide education courses and training within key sectors of the tourism industry. This is especially relevant for new and innovative travel and tourism niches that can help expand the current tourism seasons. Training within specific fields such as hospitality (especially in culinary services), nature and special interest guiding are examples of this.

A good case study is of increasing tourism awareness and education is how Destination Røros (DMO) and the Røros Mining Town and Circumference UNESCO World Heritage site worked together to help conserve protected buildings.

The project educated young people to become guardians and champions of the World Heritage Site and generate ownership, knowledgeable communicators, greeters and decision makers. The headmaster of Røros Primary School worked with Røros Museum to conceive the 'Adopt a House' project where students were given the responsibility of monitoring particular houses in order to combat vandalism. 'World Heritage in Your Hands' was organised by Røros Upper Secondary School and delivered 4 international workshops where students received practical training and skills in heritage guiding and conservation.

<http://whc.unesco.org/sustainabletourismtoolkit/guide-4---case-study-roros-mining-town-and-circumference-norway>

### **Criteria B8 – Support for Community**

There is currently little evidence of a Destination initiative and system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives.

Currently there are no destination endorsed or organised donation strategies that provide support for community, heritage, biodiversity conservation projects or tourism/leisure infrastructure development projects. Any SMEs within the destination that are labelled by Naturens Bästa are required to individually support projects of this nature in order to comply with the labelling criteria.

It is recommended that the Destination conduct research and hold public forums to determine the likely support (or opposition) for the establishment of destination wide voluntary donation strategies and/or volunteerism programmes.

Ideas could include exploring the possibility of restoration of impacted habitats (including habitat regeneration and the replanting of new native trees species that absorb high levels of carbon fast) or the long term protection of old growth forest that keeps carbon locked up and provides healthy, attractive habitat for nature based tourism that may otherwise be lost to the destination by logging. Carbon offsetting and restoration projects supported by destination enterprises can involve local schools and visitors to the destination.

One successful European case study is Nurture Lakeland in the UK - <http://www.nurturelakeland.org>. Nurture Lakeland supports a wide range of local conservation projects and each year they raise over £2 million through a simple way of inviting donations from visitors who feel inspired to put something back into the destination.

Another good example of a strategy that supports communities is Travel Oregon's Philanthropy Fund and their Sustainable Business Challenge. <http://traveloregon.com/see-do/>. The Oregon Travel Philanthropy Fund supports projects that preserve Oregon's natural landscapes and cultural heritage for visitors and locals to enjoy. The web site encourages potential visitors to seek out Travel Oregon Forever participating businesses via a link to them. These businesses make contributions to the Fund and are committed to making Oregon a great destination, now and forever.

Closer to home the Kungsleden trail maintenance donation strategy and the Hemavan Tärnaby Mervärde model offers inspiration. <http://www.ilovekungsleden.se>  
<https://www.hemavantarnaby.com/om-oss/mervarde-hemavan-tarnaby/>

These types of strategies help to build brand loyalty for the destination, however, trying to implement any strategy that is not led by a well respected local/regional 'champion' or organisation with broad based grass roots support will lead to a lack of acceptance and impact the success of any donation based strategy. Further analysis of the funding needs of projects relating to heritage and nature access (trail systems etc.) is required along with potential joint funding with Länsstyrelsen. The analysis should be coordinated by the Destination Authority bringing together the Järvsörådet, Länsstyrelsen and all active stakeholders including activity clubs, conservation or culture based organisations and local landowners.

### **Criteria B9 – Supporting Local Entrepreneurs and Fair Trade**

Although there is evidence that the destination has a system to support SMEs and there is good evidence of the destination promotion of some local goods and services the support is rather more organic than systematic. Furthermore there is no evidence that the destination and SMEs have an adopted system, or a preference policy for the locally sourcing of agricultural produce and crafts, for the use of artisan suppliers, or preference for fair trade goods in the local tourism value chain.

There is also no evidence of a destination policy of value creation that encourages destination SMEs to develop, promote or cross-sell local sustainable products or services that are based on local nature and culture.

Destination Røros provides good case studies related to the development of local systems to encourage community based supply and value chains and how sustainable value creation can be leveraged through the development of local pride and knowledge (Good Host Program) along with promotional / distribution strategies (Rørosmat) and cross-selling mechanisms (the Copper Card).

<http://www.roros.no/en/certification-program-knowledge-to-be-a-good-host/>

<http://www.roros.no/en/local-food-in-destination-roros/>

<https://rorosmat.no>

<http://www.roros.no/en/sustainable-value-creation/>

## Section C – Maximize Benefits to Communities, Visitors and Culture; Minimize Impacts

### Criteria C1 – Attraction Protection

Although the Destination has a management system to protect natural and cultural sites through legislation that is administered by Länsstyrelsen and the municipality there is a lack of evidence for destination specific policies and systems to monitor, measure and mitigate the impacts of tourism at sites and attractions.

If the Destination is projecting tourism growth it needs a destination specific policy and management system to minimise and mitigate risks to culture and nature due to the impact of tourism.

A collaborative approach to education and mitigation is advised between public, private and NGO sectors'. The Visitor Center for the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage and Hembygdsförening can play an important role in cultural heritage education; and the Rovdjurscentret De 5 Stora can play a significant role as a 'education gateway' to Destination nature through a wider role in visitor education and guide training for nature-based experiences.

Destination stakeholders have expressed the need for a plan similar to that adopted by Tällberg that regulates development to ensure the Destination remains attractive and retains it's unique character and *sense of place*. This type of community-based strategy can also help to protect important urban and rural *view sheds* and lands that are not legally protected from being negatively impacted by proposed development projects; or from the clear-cutting of environmentally attractive or scenically important view sheds by the forestry industry.

### Criteria C2 – Visitor Management

This is a county and municipal responsibility with the destination involved as a stakeholder in order to add the tourism sectors viewpoint. There does not appear to be any specific policy or documentation related to the destination having implemented a visitor management plan that includes measures to preserve, protect, and enhance natural and cultural assets.

Järvsö is aiming to increase visitation and create 500 new jobs through tourism. In order to maximise the benefits of tourism, while minimising the impact on the local community and environment there is a need to create a destination with the appropriate number of visitors for destination infrastructure. In order to deliver a high quality destination while achieving the goal of balancing the needs of visitors, communities, enterprise and conservation a comprehensive visitor management plan is required.

A successful visitor management plan requires quantitative and qualitative knowledge of visitor numbers and activities undertaken in the destination as well as accurate information on visitors' needs and wishes. The aim of visitor management is not only to observe visitors and report about them, but the management has to deal with the visitor flows and activities

so that negative impacts on culture, nature and the wider environment are minimised. There is a need to improve techniques to gather information about visitors through systematic visitor monitoring.

The more the destination understands about its visitors i.e. monitoring their profiles (age, interests, place of residence, nationality etc.), where they go, what they do and what infrastructure and services they lack/require to maximize their experience the more the Destination can do to restore and enhance natural and cultural attractions and sites of interest.

It is recommended that the Destination look at enhancing cultural and natural sites and attractions through investing in niche specific educational materials, signage and guiding for interested destination stakeholders. This type of initiative will improve quality and help to enhance the Destination experience for visitors. NGO partners can play a significant role in developing educational materials, and helping with guide training.

### **Criteria C3 – Visitor Behaviour**

Although there are basic cultural and environmental guidelines available through Länsstyrelsen and the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage, the destination does not currently have a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for regulating visitor behaviour at sensitive natural or cultural sites throughout the destination. This is in part due to the lack of a visitor management strategy. There are few if any cultural and environmental guidelines related to visitor behaviour at sensitive sites and the destination lacks codes of practice for tour guides and tour operators.

It is recommended that the destination should develop a single destination policy relating to the visitation to cultural and natural sites in relation to visitors, tour guides and tour operators. This task should be coordinated in collaboration with Länsstyrelsen, the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage, Rovdjurscentret, relevant NGOs and the municipality as they have experts working in the fields of cultural and natural heritage protection and risk assessment.

### **Criteria C4 – Cultural Heritage Protection**

The Destination complies with national legislation for protection and enforcement in relation to cultural heritage and related artefacts.

Destination Järvsö also have a strong track record in the conserving cultural heritage and promoting the Destination's Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage and associated cultural heritage.

It is recommended that additional strategies should be developed to better communicate the unique cultural experiences that can be enjoyed within the Destination. The development of Signature Experiences for the Destination could be enhanced through the incorporation of intangible cultural heritage such as song, dance, music, art, literature and crafts.



## **Criteria C5 – Site Interpretation**

It is recommended that a natural and cultural site of interest priority list be developed once a full inventory of all destination sites of interest is compiled. The list would be compiled in consultation with public and private sector experts (tourism, special interest and conservation) and cover key cultural and natural sites of interest where interpretive information and guiding is provided in Swedish, English and where demand requires in German.

Information is available in English at the Destination's key attraction sites of Stenegård at the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage Visitors Center, Rovdjurscenter the Big 5 and Järvzoo as well as on their web sites.

There is, however, a lack of a destination policy to provide more comprehensive information and communications in English and other foreign languages. The lack of an English version of the Destination Järvsö web site (with appropriate content compiled with community collaboration and translated into English) is currently a barrier to attracting and engaging with non-Swedish clients. If Järvsö has aspirations to grow and meet local as well as national tourism growth targets it should plan to attract and communicate efficiently with overseas visitors during their entire "path to purchase" journey (advocacy, awareness, research, planning, booking, exploring).

## Section D – Maximize Benefits to the Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

### Criteria D10 – Solid Waste Reduction

Despite a very effective Destination waste management policy and system overseen by the municipality and implemented by Ljusdal Energi more could still be done to reduce solid waste created by tourism.

Destination Järvsö has arranged training workshops in environmental policy and waste management through Kristina Kylin and from 2018 food waste from individuals and businesses will be separated and collected for biogas and fertilizer production.

It is recommended that Destination Järvsö should have its own Destination solid waste management policy for tourism with a focus on recycling for individuals and companies that wish to rent their properties out to visitors through its on-line booking system. Policy should also be extended to minimization and recycling of solid waste created by pass through traffic and by husvagn/husbil owners who stay overnight in the destination. Improved facilities, recycling options, the collection of waste at all key attraction sites and a visitor awareness campaign would help create a positive view of Järvsö as a clean, green and sustainable destination.

There is currently no Destination Policy or strategy that focuses on reducing or eliminating the use of bottled water by tourism stakeholders although some Destination stakeholders have already replaced bottle water for more sustainable drinking water delivery methods. The adoption of a Destination refill station system for personal water bottles should be considered with refill points being promoted via web, social media and Destination Apps.

### Criteria D12 – Low Impact Transportation

Public transportation is under the authority of regional and national authorities with Region Gävleborg having a regional transport strategy with coordinated investment through Trafikverket.

The Destination has fast and efficient rail links from Stockholm and Arlanda Airport and increased rail traffic has been added regionally between Ljusdal and Järvsö.

Destination Järvsö recognises the need for a coordinated and systematic approach to low impact transportation and have completed an analysis and project plan for low impact transportation based on a workshop with stakeholders – *Sammanställning Strategier för hållbara transporter*.

Linking low impact transportation solutions with *Slow Tourism* and the development of Destination Signature Experiences can provide the Destination with an attractive and sustainable reason to visit the destination. Destination Järvsö is already focusing on biking tourism strategy that will be coordinated with regional partners. Developing walking and leisure cycling Signature Experiences that link the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland

World Heritage sites and provide authentic cultural, heritage and culinary experiences would help the Destination's visibility and international appeal (UNESCO and National Geographic are currently developing a new World Heritage Journeys of Europe project and held a workshop for European UNESCO sites on the route in Falun during the early summer of 2017. The workshop was coordinated with Visit Dalarna).

Inspiration can also be drawn from the award winning soft mobility project Alpine Pearls - <https://www.alpine-pearls.com/en/about-us/alpine-pearls/> .

Alpine Pearls is based on inter-model soft mobility transport options. Alpine Pearl destinations focus on active, slow adventures promoting environment, nature & culture, outdoor activities, wellbeing and culinary arts. A sample of activities they promote include hiking, walking, Nordic walking, mountaineering, climbing, bicycling, mountain biking, swimming, rowing, water sports, horseback riding, horse-drawn carriages, paragliding, cross-country skiing, biathlon, Alpine skiing, snowboarding, ski touring, ski mountaineering, ice skating, snowshoeing, sledding.

It is recommended that Destination Järvsö focus on a policy of promoting human powered soft mobility options in destination and the ease of use and low impact of an inter-model chain of transport (train, taxi, collective bus services, walking, cycling) from Stockholm / Arlanda Airport.

# Summary of Key Recommendations

## Section A

- Officially delineate destination boundaries that fit the scale and scope of Järvsö's sustainable destination goals and development strategies.
- Pursue a formal letter support from Järvsö Parish / Järvsörådet and all leading destination stakeholders, including Ljusdal Municipality for the formal adoption of the GSTC Destination Criteria as a policy and planning framework.
- Continue to build community buy-in and financial support for:
  - i. Long-term participation in a planning system and framework to benchmark, certify (GSTC Accredited) and improve the Destination's environmental, cultural, social and economic performance
  - ii. The funding of projects to include (but not limited to): development of interpretive guidelines and materials; for a range of qualitative research; compiling an inventory and prioritisation of assets list; for the development of new niche tourism segments, associated infrastructure and guide training; and for the planning, testing and launching of destination Signature Experiences based on the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage 'theme'.
- Officially nominate and confirm Destination Järvsö as the *Destination Authority*.
- Bring together (with public consultation) a Destination *Green Team* drawn from all parts of the community including private, public (Parish and Regional) and NGO sectors.
- Create a policy and management plan focused on development, training and a promotional strategy to address tourism seasonality variability and niche tourism segments.
- Create and publicly publish a destination specific white paper on the impacts of Climate Change and how Destination Järvsö tourism sector is working to minimize and mitigate the impact of climate change.
- Nurture *Destination Stewardship* by tapping into local knowledge, passions and special interest expertise. Connect community and tourism entrepreneurs to discuss the DNA of Järvsö along with the development of key tourism niches and signature experiences that help sustain or enhance the geographical character of the 'place' – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and well being of residents.
- Integrate Järvsö's sustainable tourism 'story' into the destination branding, marketing and story-telling and improve international visibility by providing digital content, print materials and relevant signage in English as well as Swedish.

- Develop a destination policy for those visitors with disabilities or those needing physically impaired access to key destination natural and cultural sites of interest and attractions. The policy should also include the delivery of interpretive materials for those with visual and hearing impediments, both in Swedish and English.
- Develop a policy and management system for qualitative and quantitative research related to the behaviour and characteristics of visitors to the destination's natural and cultural sites of interest and attractions. This information would help determine source markets, socio-economic data, interests and niche tourism segments and transportation patterns as well as spend and dwell time data. Data collection on visitor perceptions on sustainability and Järvsö's sustainability performance would also be informative.
- Develop a Destination policy to encourage and promote enterprises that participate in sustainable tourism certification or environmental management systems. Certified enterprises (indicating those that have achieved GSTC recognised certification) should be listed in a new sustainability section of the Destination Järvsö web site.
- The Destination should conduct an annual training course in crisis and emergency response for tourism enterprises. Destination crisis and emergency planning information should be available (Swedish and English) on the Destination Järvsö web site along with individuals and companies that have Wilderness First Aid certification or are trained First Responders.
- Destination service providers that offer biking, hiking, riding, skiing and other outdoor activities should be required to conduct an annual Health and Safety Risk Assessment and SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for all their excursions, activities and guide training. Foreign visitors are not always aware of local etiquette on ski slopes or on roads or trails and overseas tourism partners often require annual risk assessments along with SOPs.

## Section B

- As part of the Sustainable Destination Policy create a *Sustainability Charter* for private, public and NGO sectors as well as other community stakeholders. The Charter would outline a number of key sustainability principles that signatories pledge to adhere to. Charter signatories can meet regularly and liaise with the Destination Authority on Destination management issues.
- Create a policy and educational strategy (including for use in schools and higher education facilities) to communicate the local socio-economic benefits of tourism and provide opportunities for the host population to contribute towards goals and concerns.

- Develop a stakeholder endorsed donation strategy that provides support for heritage projects, biodiversity conservation projects or tourism infrastructure development projects.
- Create a Destination development policy, system and promotional/sales mechanism to supporting local SMEs in developing preferred supply chains for local sustainable products and services. Participants could include local artisans, farmers, public sector, NGO sector and suppliers in the tourism value chain.

## Section C

- Conduct comprehensive visitor behaviour research (qualitative and quantitative) and develop a visitor management plan and system to help minimize destination impacts whilst maximizing the visitor experience. If funding is limited key visitation or attraction 'hot spots' can be initially focused upon.
- Create a pro-active destination policy and education system to support sustainability standards for enterprise that are consistent with GSTC Criteria. This may take the form of workshops designed to educate local enterprise on the benefits of sustainable tourism or environmental certification or labelling along with an insight into the various options available and which are GSTC recognised.
- Develop a single set of destination codes of conduct for visitors, as well as operational guidelines for guides and tour operators.
- Conduct public consultation to identify local intangible tourism assets that can be integrated into the destination sustainability story and signature experiences.
- Conduct a public review of the interpretive information that is available to visitors at the Destination's cultural and natural sites of interest. Ensure that the approved information is available in Swedish, English and where appropriate other target group languages.
- Develop training materials and arrange courses in the use of interpretive information for guiding at key sites of interest and for future niche activity segments. Ensuring that the delivery of knowledge by local guides is available in Swedish, English and other relevant languages.

## Section D

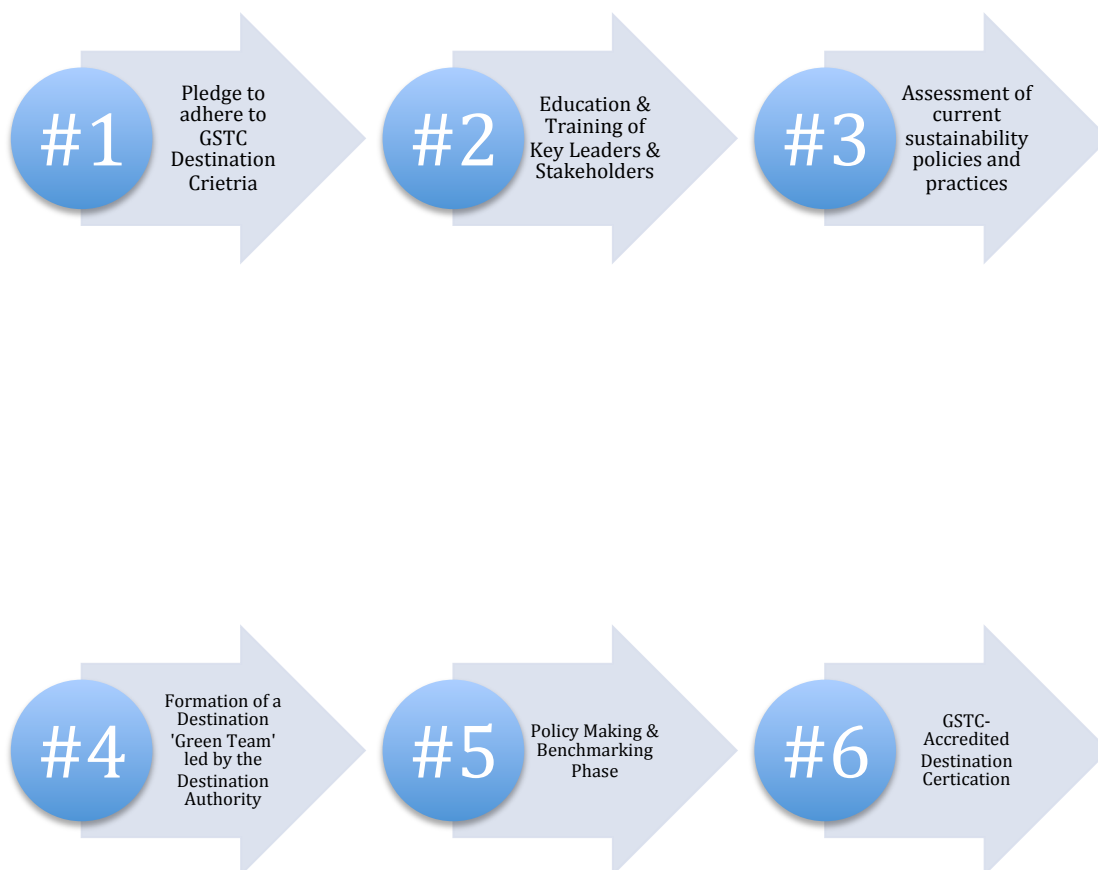
- Develop a pro-active (rather than discretionary) destination policy for the education of enterprises relating to the measurement, monitoring and minimization of energy consumption and green house gas emissions.
- Establish a destination wide policy for the phased reduction and eventual elimination of the use of bottled water within the destination's travel and tourism sector. Policy would also include designated water refill stations throughout the destination.
- Develop a strategy for using and promoting soft mobility and intermodal transport options (collective bus services, walking, cycling) to and within the destination, especially focusing on the promotion of fast, efficient and low impact train travel to reach the destination from Stockholm / Arlanda Airport.

## Next Steps

The key challenge and next step for Järvsö as a destination relate to the funding and implementation of a community wide, stakeholder approved sustainability policy, action plan and planning framework that will allow the Destination of Järvsö to measure, monitor and report its ECSE performance.

The implementation of a Sustainable Destinations Program and planning framework would help empower the local community to develop a collective vision, create policy and develop an action plan to achieve sustainable outcomes while addressing social concerns and protecting destination cultural and natural assets.

Access to public funding to develop policy, benchmark and certify is of course critical to the long-term success of any Sustainable Destination Programme.





# GSTC Standards for Destinations

There are a number of destination standards that are recognised or accredited by GSTC.

## GSTC Accredited

*“Being certified sustainable by a Certification Body that is GSTC Accredited means that your destination complies with the highest social and environmental standards on the market. As public concern grows about the harmful effects and the positive impacts of travel and tourism, certification provides you a credible solution to complex environmental and social issues...Travel providers should proudly display information regarding their certification and the certifying body that issued it. Doing so informs your stakeholders – from customers to ownership and to your supply chain – that your business/destination is operated with sound management that looks to the future and not merely today” – GSTC.*

Currently EarthCheck is the only GSTC-Accredited Certification Body for Destinations, allowing certified destinations’ to use both EarthCheck and GSTC logos in their promotion.

<https://www.gstcouncil.org/certification/become-certified-destination/>

## GSTC Recognised

A number of Standards for Destinations are also Recognised by GSTC.

<https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/gstc-recognized-standards-for-destinations/>

A Recognised Standard is one that adheres to and are equivalent to GSTC Criteria. These standards include:

Biosphere Responsible Tourism  
EarthCheck Community Standard  
Green Destinations Standard  
Mountain IDEAL Destinations Standard

## GSTC Recognised National Standards

In addition a number of countries have developed their own destination sustainability standards that are based on full compliance with GSTC Destination Criteria. Destination Järvsö could wait and hope that Sweden establishes a National Standard that is aligned to GSTC Criteria for Destinations and gained Recognised status by GSTC. Although this is a logical step for Sweden there has as yet been little interest in implementing GSTC Criteria at a national level.

# EarthCheck Certification

## Sustainable Destinations Programme

The EarthCheck Sustainable Destinations programme requires destinations to measure performance using quantitative benchmarking indicators that are based on Agenda 21 Principles.

A participating Destination will be required to measure, monitor and make on-going improvements in the following key performance areas outlined below. Benchmarking takes place in Phase 1 of the Destination Certification Process. The benchmarking period is 12 months for which Benchmarking data is assessed. The Benchmarking period may be any 12 months period but must be the same period for each annual benchmarking assessment.

### Key Performance Areas

1. Energy efficiency, conservation and management
2. Greenhouse gas emissions
3. Air quality protection, noise & light pollution
4. Management of freshwater resources
5. Waste water management, drainage and streams
6. Ecosystem conservation and management
7. Land use planning and development
8. Transport
9. Solid waste management
10. Management of environmentally harmful substances
11. Cultural and Social Management
12. Economic management

### Benefits of EarthCheck Benchmarking, Certification and being a GSTC-Accredited Destination

Benchmarking with EarthCheck performance indicators provides feedback on relative performance and demonstrates to stakeholders a responsible commitment to high standards. It can also provide the means to:

- Reduce costs;
- Meet sustainability requirements and targets;
- Assist in compliance with government regulation;
- Support internal management reporting on performance;
- Promote external performance reporting;
- Accelerate certification and quality assurance; and
- Enhance destination public image.

Certified Destinations can also benefit substantially by telling their destination sustainability story in marketing, media outreach and social media.

GSTC-Accredited Certification and metric based outcomes also provides credibility for award submissions such as the World Travel & Tourism Council's *Tourism for Tomorrow Awards* and the National Geographic *World Legacy Awards*.

# Annex 1

## Glossary of Terms

**DMO** - Destination Management Organisation  
**ECSE** – Environmental, Cultural, Social, Economic (Performance)  
**GAP** - A comparison of actual performance with potential performance  
**GSTC** – Global Sustainable Tourism Council  
**H & S** – Health and Safety  
**MICE** – Meetings Incentives Conferences & Events  
**NGO** – Non-Governmental Organisation  
**SCB** – Statistics Sweden (Statistiska Centralbyrån)  
**SME** – Small and Medium Sized Enterprises  
**SOP** – Standard Operating Procedure  
**TEM** – Statistical survey - Tourism in Sweden  
**USP** – Unique Selling Proposition that allows a product, service, company or destination to stand out from the competition.

## Definitions

**Path to Purchase** – the stages a visitor interacts with inbound destination content & marketing before they become a client: advocacy > aware > on dream list > on consideration list > planning & research > booking & travel arrangements > exploring.

**Destination** – a defined area or region that is under the authority or jurisdiction of a local appointed or elected body.

**Destination Authority** – typically the designated collector and authoriser of all information used for meeting annual benchmarking and/or certification requirements.

**Green Team** – a local or regional team drawn from a range of representatives from public, private and NGO sectors that help support the Destination Authority.

**Hero Products** – An authentic and iconic tourism attraction or experience that represents the essence of the Experience and will be a 'must see or do' experience for visitors to the destination.

**Signature Experiences** – Destination specific experiences that combine products, activities, attractions, stories and the interaction between them; connecting the visitor with the local area and delivering on the destination (brand) promise. A Signature Experience must be a compelling story and should have at least one hero product at its heart.

**Soft Mobility** – Sustainable, climate friendly, energy efficient transport solutions (often human powered) that are specifically relevant to the outdoors tourism and recreation sector.

## Annex 2

### Stakeholder Mapping

Round Table Workshop attendance, 13th November 2018, Järvsö.

<b><u>Deltagare</u></b>	
	personer
<b><u>Ljusdals kommun</u></b>	
Kommunstyrelsens ordförande	Lars Mohlin
Oppositionsråd	Markus Evensson
Kommunchef	Niclas Bremefors
Samällutvecklingsutskottets Ordförande	Jonny Mill
Turismansvarig	Jenny norberg
Näringslivschef	Stefan Wennerstrand
Samhällsutvecklingschef	Lars Norin
Gata-parkchef	Emma Nordebo snygg
Miljöstrateg	Henrik Numelin
Kommun Ekolog	Niklas Svensson
Informationsstrateg	Per Jonsson
Ljusdals energi	Lena Bergsten
Ansvarig Tillgänglighet	Maria musito West
<b>Länsstyrelsen i Gävleborg</b>	
Miljömålsamordnare	Paula Lenningeröld
<b>Region Gävleborg</b>	
Näringslivsstrateg	Lena Lejerström
<b>Destination Järvsö AB</b>	
Styrelse	Olle Fack
Styrelse	Katharina Svender

Styrelse	Jens Larsson
Ledningsgrupp	Maria Christensen
Ledningsgrupp	Anna-Lena Wallin
Ledningsgrupp	Maria Rosén
Ledningsgrupp	Filip Högberg
Projektgrupp+Styrgrupp	Roland Hamlin
Projektgrupp+Styrgrupp	Lena Aune

<b>Företag- Boende</b>	-
JärvsöBaden	Inger Ångström
Bergshotellet	Anders Bucht
Alpus	Jan Österman
Gästgivars/Hälsingegården	Andreas Lönnmo
Alpbyn	Sara Malmqvist
Öhmans fastigheter	Johanna och Julia Öhman

<b>Företag- Aktiviteter</b>	
Järvsöbacken	Peter Augustsson
Järvzoo	Jens Larsson
Upplev Järvsö	Pelle Nyberg
Rovdjurscentret De 5 stora	Benny Gävfert
Harsa	Veronica Snaar
Stenegård	Pia Hedblom
Projekt Hälsingegårdar	Charlotta
järvsö bergscykelpark	lars Lööv
<b>Företag- Matproducenter</b>	
Bredänge tomater	Magnus Hedin
Teve kvarn/tevsjödestilleri	Anna Larsson Jonas Larsson

Jarsemål	Monika Björklund
Ljungströms kök	Jenny Sundqvist
Eftertanken	Sune och Marie Frost
Järvsö Crepperie	Malin Näsman
<b>Övriga Intressen</b>	
Järvsö hållbarhetsforum	Anna Esbjörnsson,
Järvsö hållbarhetsforum	Carina Frost
Järvsörådet	My fransson
Stosskifteslaget	Gisela Bergman
Projektledare	Märit Andersson
Handelsbanken i Järvsö	Niklas Persson
Järvsörådet	Jakob Silen
Järvsö rotary/föreningar	Anne Tessman

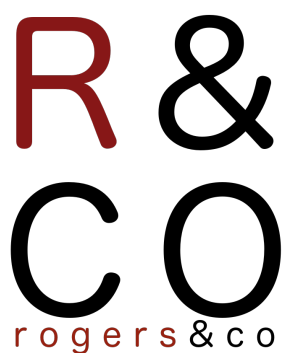
## Assessor Profile

Neil Rogers is an international tourism consultant living in Stockholm, Sweden.

He has previously worked with Dan Jonasson to deliver Rapid Assessments of the Readiness to Comply with GSTC Destination Criteria for Åre Destination and Kiruna in Swedish Lapland / KLEF.

He is a member of the GSTC and the past-Chairman of the Destinations Working Group at the Global Sustainable Tourism Council <https://www.gstcouncil.org>

He has been a past Judge and Assessor for the World Travel and Tourism Council's *Tourism for Tomorrow Awards* <https://www.wttc.org/tourism-for-tomorrow-awards/> and is a current Board Member of the Adventure Travel Conservation Fund <http://adventuretravelconservationfund.org>.



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