

Strategy for Nature Tourism in the Archipelago Sea



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Strategy for Nature Tourism in the Archipelago Sea



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ABSTRACT	<p>The Archipelago National Park was established in 1983 and is administrated by Metsähallitus. Contrary to other national parks in Finland, the aims of the Archipelago National Park are not only to preserve the area's nature but also its cultural values and to safeguard the traditional utilisation of the nature and maintain an inhabited archipelago. Traditional livelihoods have a less significant economic impact nowadays but on the other hand service and tourism companies are being established. All of these livelihoods support each other and add to the region's attractiveness. The strategy for nature tourism presented here is of the utmost importance to preserve the archipelago environment with its significant natural value and biodiversity as well as to maintain the area's cultural values, while enabling tourists to visit the area on a sustainable basis. This strategy is also part of the verification process for membership in the PAN Parks network (www.panparks.org).</p> <p>The Archipelago National Park is the core subject in this strategy and has the potential to function as a drawing card for nature tourism in the region. The national park is uninhabited and therefore the more expanded Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve is also taken into account in this strategy. A large number of businesses are already registered within the Biosphere Reserve. To ensure the diversity and sustainability of both local businesses and the product offering, planning is needed in addition to monitoring of the impacts of tourism. Follow-up is also required to protect the nature and the area's biodiversity. By continually conducting e.g. visitor and market surveys, potential new customer groups can be found and their expectations for visiting the area can be assessed.</p> <p>At the moment, most visitors arrive at the national park in their own boats, mainly in July. The Archipelago Trail runs through the Biosphere Reserve and has brought in the largest number of visitors, so the road will undoubtedly continue to have great significance for regional tourism. To allow visitors to experience sustainable, high-class nature tourism, a joint quality management system is required for local businesses, and interest groups need to arrange training for tourism operators and guides. Tourism will continue to be small-scaled also in future.</p> <p>Local businesses which offer visitors nature tourism experiences and related services in the archipelago region (in and outside the national park) and meet a number of criteria defined in this strategy, can become PAN Parks Business Partners, i.e. benefit from the international PAN Parks marketing services. Applications will be verified by the Local PAN Parks Co-operation Group which also monitors continued adherence to the defined standard of certified business partners.</p> <p>Several improvements are required for the Archipelago National Park to be profiled as an international PAN Park: for example, updated information such as maps and nature trails, especially in English. Marketing and visibility can be improved e.g. through websites together with co-operation businesses, the Town of Väståboland, Kimitoön Municipality and Metsähallitus. The Local PAN Parks Co-operation Group, which has drafted this strategy, will be responsible for updating it. The strategy shall be reviewed and updated in 2011 and then again at regular intervals.</p>		
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TIIVISTELMÄ	<p>Saaristomeren kansallispuisto perustettiin vuonna 1983 ja sitä hallinnoi Metsähallitus. Saaristomeren kansallispuiston tavoitteena on luonnonsuojelun lisäksi ylläpitää saaristokulttuuria sekä turvata perinteisiä luonnonkäyttömuotoja ja säilyttää elävää saaristoyhteisöä. Perinteisillä elinkeinoilla on pienenevä taloudellinen merkitys saaristossa, kun taas palvelu- ja matkailualalla perustetaan yhä enemmän yrityksiä. Kaikki elinkeinot tukevat toisiaan, mikä osaltaan myös lisää alueen vetovoimaa. Tämän luontomatkailusuunnitelman avulla pyritään lisäämään kävijöiden mahdollisuuksia tutustua saaristoluontoon ja -kulttuuriin tavalla, joka varjेलisi myös alueen ainutlaatuisia luontoarvoja ja saaristolaiskulttuuria. Suunnitelma pyrkii edesauttamaan alueen kestävästä luontomatkailukäytöstä ja on osa PAN Parks -verkoston jäsenyyssprosessia (www.panparks.org).</p> <p>Saaristomeren kansallispuisto on suunnitelman ydinalue, ja sillä on potentiaalia toimia alueen luontomatkailun vetovoimatekijänä. Koska Saaristomeren kansallispuistossa ei ole asutusta, suunnittelualueeksi valittiin Saaristomeren biosfäärialue, jossa on useita rekisteröityä yrityksiä. Jotta alueen matkailuyritystoiminta ja -palvelut säilyvät monipuolisina, tarvitaan sekä suunnittelua että matkailun ympäristövaikutusten seurantaa. Myös luonnon ja sen monimuotoisuuden säilyttäminen edellyttää seurantaa. Lisäksi esimerkiksi säännöllisesti toistuvilla kävijä- ja markkinatutkimuksilla saadaan tietoa nykyisistä ja uusista mahdollisista kävijäryhmistä sekä heidän odotuksistaan.</p> <p>Nykyään suurin osa kävijöistä saapuu kansallispuiston alueelle omalla veneellä sesonkiaikana, heinäkuussa. Biosfäärialueella Saariston rengastiellä liikkuu suurin osa kävijöistä, ja sillä on varmasti myös jatkossa suuri merkitys alueen matkailulle. Jotta kävijöille voidaan tarjota mahdollisuus kestävästä luontomatkailuun, yritykset tarvitsevat laatu järjestelmän ja yhteistyötahojen tulee järjestää kursseja sekä matkailuyrittäjille että oppaille. Alueen matkailu säilyy myös tulevaisuudessa pienimuotoisena.</p> <p>Paikallisilla matkailuyrityksillä, jotka tarjoavat kävijöille luontokokemuksia tai siihen liittyviä oheispalveluita kansallispuistossa tai sen ulkopuolella, on mahdollisuus hakea kumppanuutta PAN Parksin kanssa (Local Business Partner) ja sitä kautta hyötyä PAN Parksin kansainvälisestä markkinoinnista. Edellytyksenä on luontomatkailusuunnitelmassa esiteltujen kriteerien täyttäminen. Hakemukset käsitellään paikallisessa yhteistyöryhmässä. Kyseinen ryhmä myös valvoo kriteerien noudattamista.</p> <p>Tarvitaan useita parannuksia, jotta Saaristomeren kansallispuisto voi profiloitua kansainvälisenä PAN Parks -puistona. Opastusmateriaalia, kuten karttoja ja luontopolkuja, pitää päivittää ja englanninkielistä materiaalia tulee lisätä. Markkinointia ja näkyvyyttä voidaan tehostaa esimerkiksi yhteistyöyrittäjien, alueen kuntien ja Metsähallituksen verkkosivuilla. Paikallisen yhteistyöryhmän vastuulla on suunnitelman päivittäminen. Suunnitelma päivitetään vuonna 2011 ja sen jälkeen tasaisin väliajoin.</p>		
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SAMMANDRAG	<p>Skärgårdshavets nationalpark grundades år 1983 och förvaltas av Forststyrelsen. I motsats till de flesta nationalparker i Finland är målsättningen med Skärgårdshavets nationalpark förutom att skydda naturen även att upprätthålla skärgårdskulturen samt att trygga det traditionella nyttjandet av naturen och bevara en levande skärgård. Traditionella näringar har i dag en allt mindre ekonomisk betydelse i skärgården medan olika service- och turistföretag etableras. Däremot stödjer dessa näringar varandra och gör området mer attraktivt. Strategin för naturturism behövs för att bevara skärgårdsmiljön med höga naturvärden och hög biodiversitet samt för att kulturen upprätthålls samtidigt som besökare skall kunna uppleva området på hållbar basis. Strategin är även en del av verifieringsprocessen för medlemskapet i PAN Parks-nätverket (www.panparks.org).</p> <p>Skärgårdshavets nationalpark är kärnområdet i strategin och har potential att fungera som ett dragplåster för den regionala naturturismen. Nationalparken saknar bosättning och därför har även det mer omfattande Skärgårdshavets biosfärområde beaktats i denna strategi. Inom biosfärområdet finns redan ett stort antal registrerade företag. För att trygga mångfalden och hållbarheten av både företagsamhet och produktutbud krävs såväl planering som uppföljning av turistens effekter. Uppföljning behövs också för att värna om naturen och områdets biodiversitet. Genom att kontinuerligt genomföra t.ex. besökar- och marknadsundersökningar finner man potentiella nya kundgrupper och kan reda ut deras förväntningar på besöket.</p> <p>För tillfället når de flesta besökare nationalparken med egen båt, främst under juli månad. Inom biosfärområdet är det Skärgårdens ringväg som har inbringat största antalet besökare och vägen kommer säkert även i fortsättningen att ha en stor betydelse för den regionala turismen. För att besökare skall kunna uppleva hållbar och högklassig naturturism krävs ett gemensamt kvalitetsledningssystem för företagare och att intressentgrupperna arrangerar kurser för turistföretagare och guider. Turismen kommer att förbli småskalig även i framtiden.</p> <p>Företagare som erbjuder besökare naturupplevelser och relaterade tjänster i skärgården - inom och utanför nationalparken - och som uppfyller ett antal kriterier som fastställs i denna strategi har möjlighet att bli PAN Park Business Partners och därmed dra nytta av PAN Parks internationella marknadsföringstjänster. Ansökningarna verifieras av den lokala PAN Parks-gruppen som även följer upp att samarbetsföretagen följer den fastställda standarden framöver.</p> <p>För att Skärgårdshavets nationalpark skall kunna profileras som en internationella PAN Park krävs flera förbättringar: exempelvis uppdaterat informationsmaterial som kartor och naturstigar, i synnerhet på engelska. Marknadsföringen och synligheten kan förbättras t.ex. med webbplatser, tillsammans med samarbetsföretagare, Västabolands stad, Kimitoöns kommun och Forststyrelsen. Lokala samarbetsgruppen som har sammanställt denna strategi kommer att ansvara för dess uppdatering. Strategin ska uppdateras år 2011 och med jämna mellanrum därefter.</p>		
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1 Introduction

The demand for nature tourism products and nature experiences is expected to increase in the near future (Ryymin 2006). Organised activities, adventure services and products which further people's well-being are expected to be particularly popular. Finland is able to offer a safe and clean environment with well-organised tourism products. So-called nature tourism products will also increase their popularity among businesses. Nature tourism has been defined in many different contexts and it has been called by a variety of different names. This strategy implements Metsähallitus's definition of nature tourism which has been used in other nature tourism strategies and which is recognised by the Ministry of the Environment in the VILMAT programme, established by the Finnish Government in 2003 (Programme for developing nature tourism and the recreational use of the natural environment).

Nature tourism means all tourism which is based on nature. A somewhat narrower definition for nature tourism is tourism which involves people relaxing in nature. Nature tourism combines recreation with tourism in nature. In nature tourism, nature is the main attraction or operational environment. Nature tourism encompasses all recreation which does not reoccur daily in nearby surroundings. In other words, nature tourism also includes the use of holiday residences and related recreation.

The definition is a broad one and allows for a variety of activities within the sector. In the case of activities in a national park, nature conservation aspects should also be taken into consideration. In practice this means that all activities need to be in accordance with the regulations for national parks and entrepreneurs are also encouraged to abide by Metsähallitus's principles for nature tourism.

The Archipelago National Park became a member of PAN Parks in December 2007 and is the first marine area within the network. PAN Parks is a European network of national parks aiming at qualitative nature conservation which also provides first-class tourism products. This strategy is one of the many requirements and improvements necessitated by membership in the PAN Parks network. The strategy has been commented on by the Co-operation Group for the Archipelago Sea, a Local PAN Parks Group which PAN Parks requires to be set up (see Appendix 1). The Local Co-operation Group was set up in May 2008 and has met six times. Subsequently the strategy has been endorsed by the key entities Metsähallitus, Kimitoön Municipality and the Town of Västaboland as well as by the PAN Parks Verifiers.

For tourism outside the national park area, the strategy can only provide recommendations for tourism activities. However, it is in everyone's best interest to support the sustainable development and utilisation of our shared resource – the archipelago nature. The goal is also to create a competitive image for the archipelago and create opportunities (jobs) through year-round active tourism. This goal is also suitable for the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve which also aims to create concrete models for sustainable operations.

1.1 Overview of the strategy's content

The starting point is the Archipelago National Park in Southwestern Finland which is now part of the PAN Parks network which consists of the best European conservation areas and national parks. The STDS (Sustainable Tourism Development Strategies) area, or strategy area (see Figures 1 and 3), includes the whole of the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve, in other words areas that cannot be reached by a permanent road network.

Sustainable nature tourism is an important source of livelihood in the area and has the potential to be developed further.

According to a market survey (Taloustutkimus 2008), the respondents were interested in visiting the archipelago area, but were lacking:

- A boat of their own, making it difficult to reach the national park
- A way to book trips and products
- Sources of information on the area

As will be further specified in Chapter 5, the development of the Archipelago Sustainable Tourism Strategy came to the following result:

Vision for the archipelago tourism strategy area 2015:
The Archipelago National Park and Biosphere Reserve are Finland's flagships among areas providing versatile nature and culture experiences.

The primary objectives are:

1. Development of sustainable tourism in the strategy area

1. Develop means for visitors to experience the archipelago all year round.
2. Create communications between the eastern and western parts of the archipelago.
3. Create means for visitors not travelling by boat to experience the archipelago and the national park.
4. Develop opportunities for visitors to experience the marine environment.
5. Raise awareness of the cultural landscapes, as well as the nature, villages and culture of the archipelago.
6. Develop a number of tourism products suitable for the outer archipelago.

2. A shared, sustainable and high-class brand and a coherent image for the region

- a) Boost companies' sales by way of high-quality sustainable products and business during all seasons. Establish active contact with Finnish and foreign travel agencies that are interested in small-scale nature tourism.
- b) The Town of Västâboland and Kimitoön Municipality will integrate the national park into the marketing of their products and services.
- c) Improve the information material about the area.

3. Developing nature tourism in the Archipelago National Park

- a) Development of zones within the national park by classification (see Chapter 9)
- b) Production of information materials in several languages
- c) Development of a concept and resources for monitoring the environmental impacts of tourism
- d) Co-ordination of the co-operation between Metsähallitus and Korpoström Archipelago Centre. The Archipelago Centre provides information on the national park and is a permanent part of the national park's service offers.
- e) Training and information for partners and entrepreneurs

4. Developing nature tourism and the information offering in other important regions in the strategy area; outside the Archipelago National Park yet inside the co-operation area.

The implementation of these strategy elements (see Chapter 8) will be steered and mainly executed by the Local PAN Parks Group (see Chapter 7). Preceding this, the document provides an overview of the strategy area (Chapter 2) as well as the environmental and tourism situation in the archipelago region (Chapters 3 and 4).

2 Definition of the area and strategy objectives

The archipelago area is geographically expansive: it measures 95 km from east to west and 80 km from north to south, and consists of thousands of small islands. The archipelago has natural and cultural value and is one of the world's largest archipelagos. This strategy refers to the Åboland Archipelago, in other words the islands lacking a permanent road network. This demarcation of the strategy area was motivated by the Local PAN Parks Group, due to the existing plans to expand the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve (see Figure 3) according to this proposal in the near future.

The core area is the Archipelago National Park which also constitutes the PAN Parks area. The land area covers 3,219 ha and the water area altogether 47,000 ha. Part of this area comprises restricted zones which are off-limits to visitors, bird protection areas from 1 April to 31 July and two protected areas on the outskirts of the archipelago with a complete visiting ban from 1 January to 31 December. The larger of these two areas is also a so-called PAN Parks wilderness area (a quality requirement), which, in the archipelago, means that it is off limits to the public and can function as a reference area in certain contexts. Other zones inside the co-operation area have been described in Chapter 9. Divisions into different zones are based on various purposes and activities.



Skärgårdshavets nationalpark och biosfärområdet
Saaristomeren kansallispuisto ja biosfäärialue

The Archipelago National Park is administered by Metsähallitus, which was also the initiator of the membership application to the PAN Parks network. In practice this means that the control measures can only be used to apply the strategy within the national park's borders. However, **through the joint drafting and endorsement of this strategy all members of the Co-operation Group express their commitment to apply and implement this strategy.** The closest surrounding area is the co-operation area for the Archipelago National Park, which is privately owned, with the exception of the areas owned by the Defence Forces or the state. Around 200 people live in the co-operation area, while no-one lives inside the actual national park. The water area is divided into state-owned water areas (marked dark blue in Figure 2), collective water areas (several private and state owners), as well as public water area (outside the co-operation area, on the outskirts of the archipelago, southern archipelago) and private water areas which are not owned collectively. It is usually impossible to distinguish the national park from the surrounding area and often small-scale activities take place side by side with the national park.

Figure 1. The strategy area is located in Southwestern Finland.
© Metsähallitus 2009, © National Land Survey of Finland 1/MLL/09.

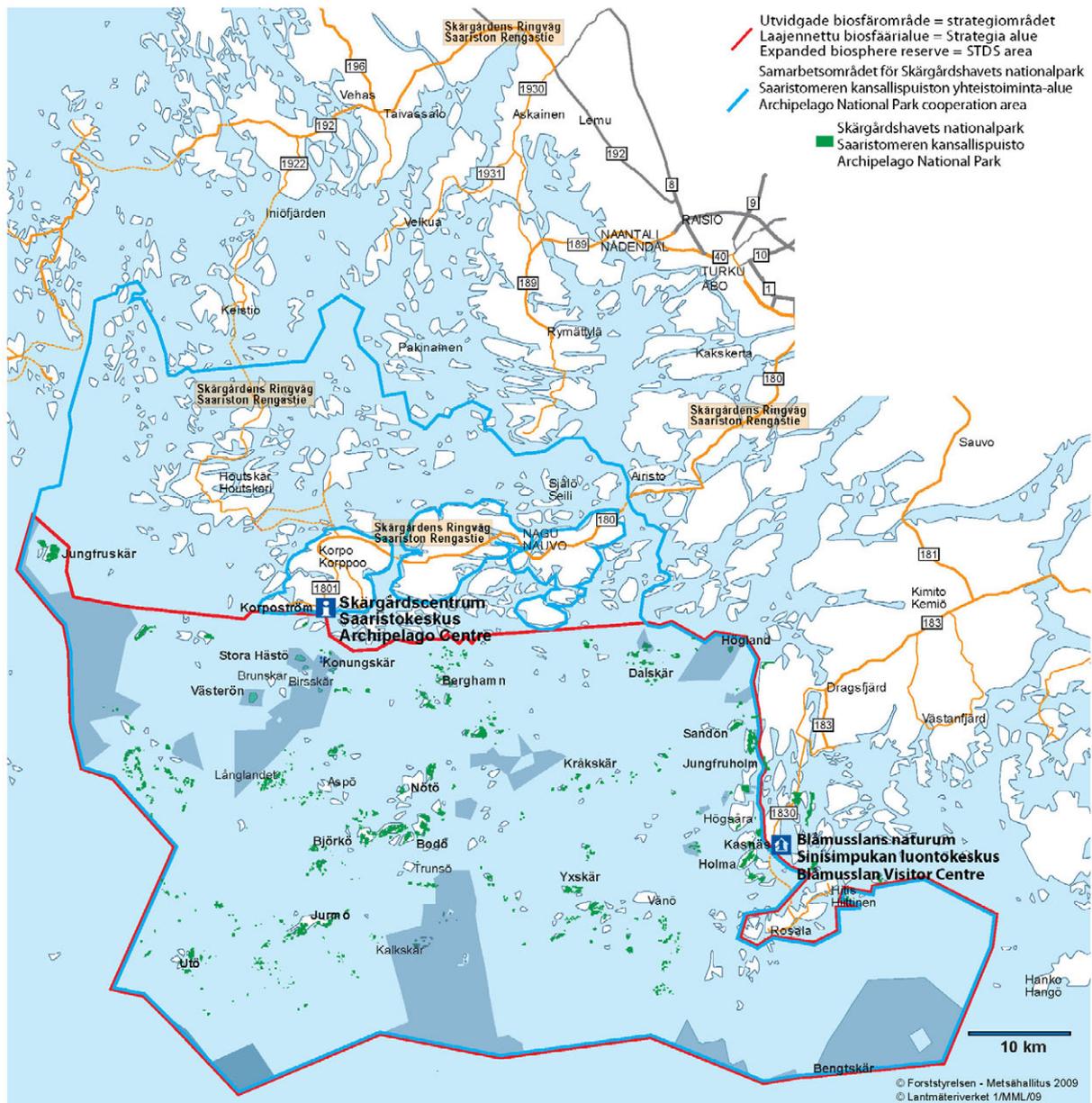


Figure 2. Archipelago National Park (marked green) and its co-operation area (within the red line). The Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve (blue line) also includes the northern archipelago with the exception of the main islands of Korpo and Nagu. © Metsähallitus 2009, © National Land Survey of Finland 1/MML/09.

The Archipelago National Park was established to conserve both the area's nature and culture: it has its own law, the first article of which states that its purpose is to: "protect the Archipelago Sea's nature and culture, to secure the traditional utilisation of nature, to preserve a living archipelago, as well as to further environmental research and general interest in nature". The archipelago's nature and biodiversity are appealing aspects from the tourism viewpoint and can potentially be utilised in a sustainable manner. Maintaining the area's natural values requires uninterrupted resources and annual efforts.

The Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve consists of (2008) the whole of Houtskär, Korpo and Nagu with the exception of the main islands as well as certain islands in Dragsfjärd (except Rosala and Hitis), see Figure 2. The aim of the Biosphere Reserve is, for example, to further sustainable development and function as a local, regional and international network. At present, an

expansion of the Biosphere Reserve is under planning in order to create a coherent archipelago area. The environment, culture and language are uniting factors and the Biosphere Reserve's philosophy can support the area's sustainable development.

Starting in 2009, the area consists of the Town of Västbøland and Kimitoön Municipality, in place of the eight former municipalities. This means that many administrative changes are taking place which will also affect decision-making concerning the development of nature tourism and also indirectly affect actual nature conservation issues.

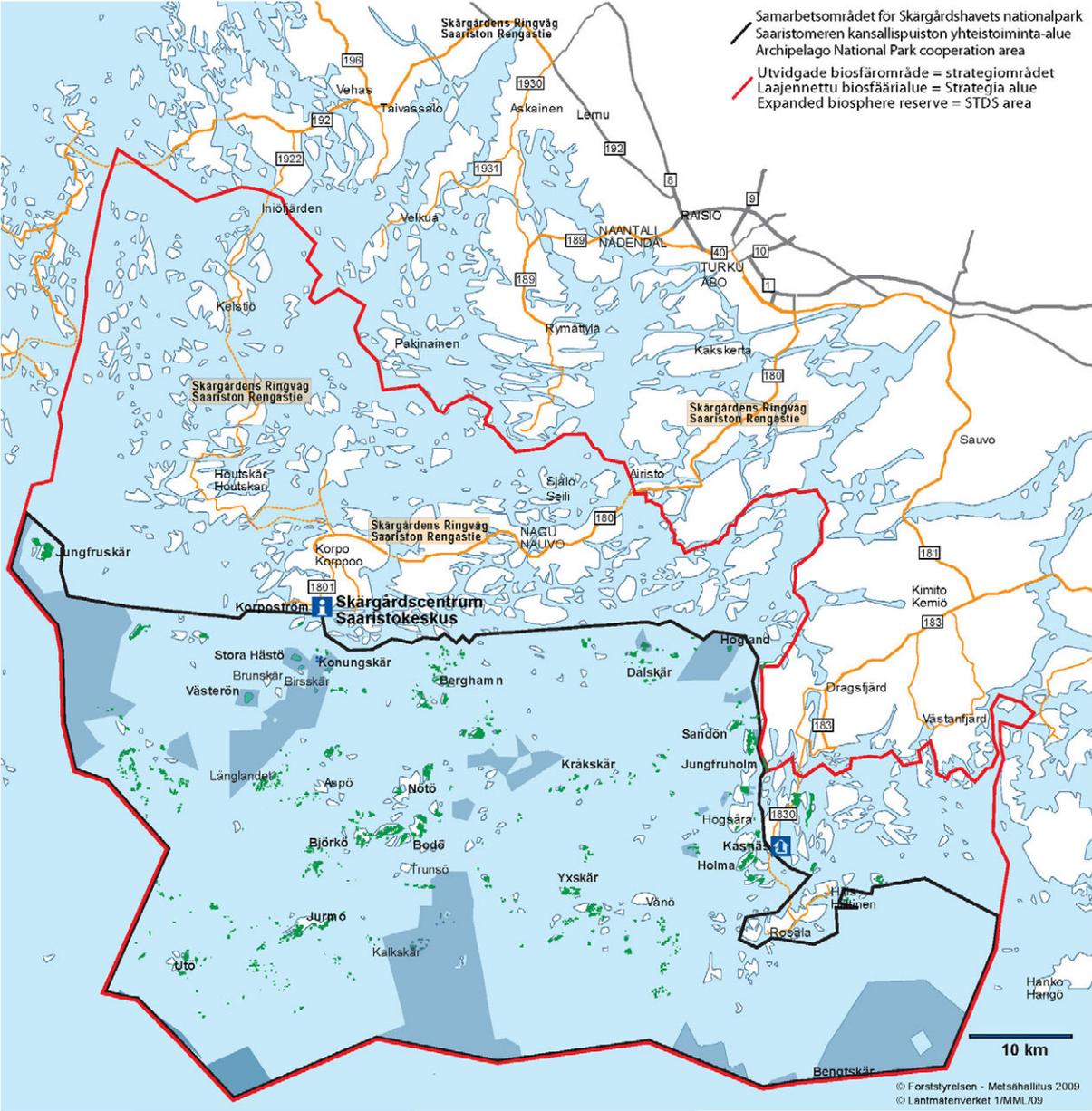


Figure 3. Map of the proposed expansion of the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve. Islands previously excluded from the reserve, which may possibly be made part of it, include Inio, Korpo and Nagu main islands, and Rosala and Hitis to the east. © Metsähallitus 2009, © National Land Survey of Finland 1/MML/09.

2.1 Functional objectives of the strategy

The strategy's objectives aim at creating an image for the area and stimulating the use of the benefits of the PAN Parks membership. In practice this involves the following targets:

- a) The strategy needs to correspond with other strategies in the area as well as with Metsähallitus's management plans.
- b) It needs to function as a shared tool and an initiator for sustainable development and nature conservation in the area.
- c) The strategy needs to encourage parties within the strategy area to analyse the new marketing opportunities and to create a new image.
- d) It needs to **present concrete objectives**, both short-term and long-term ones.
- e) It needs to **encourage businesses to create new nature based products** within the tourism sector which are tailored to the archipelago.
- f) The strategy needs to define **quality criteria** for businesses which operate within and around the national park (business partners).
- g) It needs to present methods for monitoring the environmental impacts of tourism within the national park (LAC = Limits of Acceptable Change).

3 Operational environment

The demand for tourism is growing and the sector is one of the most significant employers on a global scale. Domestic tourism is expected to increase because of higher travel costs (fuel prices). The demand for tourism products as well as nature and cultural experiences has also increased in recent years. The largest Nordic travel fair, Matka 2009, showed an increased interest in domestic tourism products. Although travelling is considered a luxury, which is given up or reduced to a domestic scale in a negative economic situation, the number of foreign tourists has steadily increased. In 2007, 5.7 million foreign tourists visited Finland, seven per cent more than in 2006 (Matkailun edistämiskeskus & Tilastokeskus 2008). The largest tourist segments still come from Sweden and Russia. In Southwest Finland, the number of overnight stays increased by one per cent. In 2002, domestic tourists spent EUR 322 million in Southwest Finland while foreign tourists spent EUR 114 million (Konttinen 2006).

The number of visitors to Finland's national parks has also increased, even when taking into account "Everyman's right", which allows extensive access to the countryside. A total of 1.7 million people visited Finland's national parks in 2008 (Metsähallitus 2009). Furthermore, 350,000 visitors were recorded in state hiking areas and 859,000 at Metsähallitus's Visitor Centres – almost 3 million visitors altogether. Certain areas are gaining in popularity at the expense of others. In general, visitor numbers are growing.

Boat tourism attracts the most visitors to the Archipelago National Park's co-operation area. The high season is in July when most, i.e. more than half, of the visitors arrive in the area, although the spring and autumn also have wonderful nature experiences to offer. Boat tourism provides a large proportion of the net sales of many businesses (shops, fuel sales, restaurants, guest harbours).

Holiday residence is also economically significant to the archipelago area. The municipalities in the area have a total of 8,171 summer cottages (Tilastokeskus 2009). They are all the more significant today because modern summer cottages often function as second homes and are used all year round. Holiday residence supports the municipalities' services and infrastructure, however the increasing need for services also occasionally constitutes a strain on the area, for instance in terms of waste and sewage management and logistics.

The number of permanent residents in the strategy area is 6,630, the total number of residents in the Town of Västaboland is 15,500. Kimitoön Municipality has around 6,600 residents (Tilastokeskus 2009). The interests of the residents need to be taken into account when developing tourism. The area is not suitable for mass tourism and visitors need to be given sufficient information concerning the recreation areas and public areas in order to prevent trespassing on private property. There are almost 8,200 holiday residences (see Table 1), nearly all are privately owned and used. In addition there are some 150 cottages for holiday letting in the strategy area.

People who do not visit the area in their own boat usually arrive by car. Bicycle paths are poorly developed in the archipelago and would probably provide bicycle tourism with a boost. The archipelago's municipalities have been connected by a ferry route between Houtskär and Iniö since 1996. The Archipelago Trail (250 km) quickly gained ground and was the reason that many tourism operators within the accommodation and service sectors started up operations (See Figures 4, 5 and 7). On the whole it is absolutely critical to have functioning traffic connections in order for the archipelago's residents to be able to live according to today's demands and for maintaining and developing tourism.

The Small Archipelago Trail (130 km) ties together Sjalö, to the north of Nagu, with Rymättylä in the northern archipelago (see Figures 6 and 7). The route has become very popular. On the one hand, Sjalö has an interesting past as it used to house a leper hospital and on the other hand it is a handy destination for people on a tight schedule. The route has of course also been useful to permanent residents.

The area’s eastern part does not have a similar road but excursions to Bengtskär lighthouse attract visitors. Transportation is arranged from both Hanko and Kasnäs and during the 2008 season 13,000 people took a trip to the outskirts of the archipelago. Also Öro island, still utilised by the Defence Forces, is open to the public under specially arranged conditions. Two charter companies took a total of 1,154 customers to Öro island in summer 2008. 17,000 people visited Blåmusslan Visitor Centre in the national park in 2008. It would probably be possible to increase visitor numbers to the national park by offering transport and charter services for car and bicycle tourists into this area. A connection (transportation by boat) between the eastern and western archipelago would also benefit both tourists and residents. One possible concept that has already been suggested is “island hopping” which is facilitated by a circle route ferry service. Local businesses would be advantaged if visitors could be tempted to stay in the area for several days and if they could be offered e.g. guide services, accommodation, restaurants as well as transportation.

Table 1. Number of holiday residences in the archipelago area in 2007. Sources: Statistics Finland 2008, City of Pargas 2008.

Southern Pargas	260
Dragsfjärd	2,432 (partly in area with permanent road network)
Houtskär	945
Iniö	523
Korpo	1,707
Nagu	2,304
Total	8,171

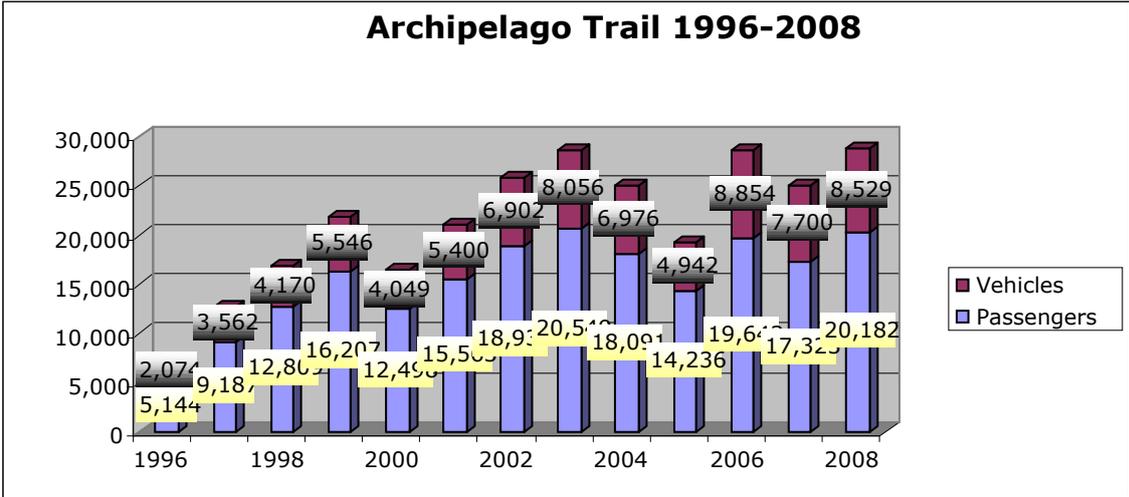


Figure 4. Development of the Archipelago Trail since 1996. Weather conditions affect visitor numbers. Source: Finnish Maritime Administration 2009.

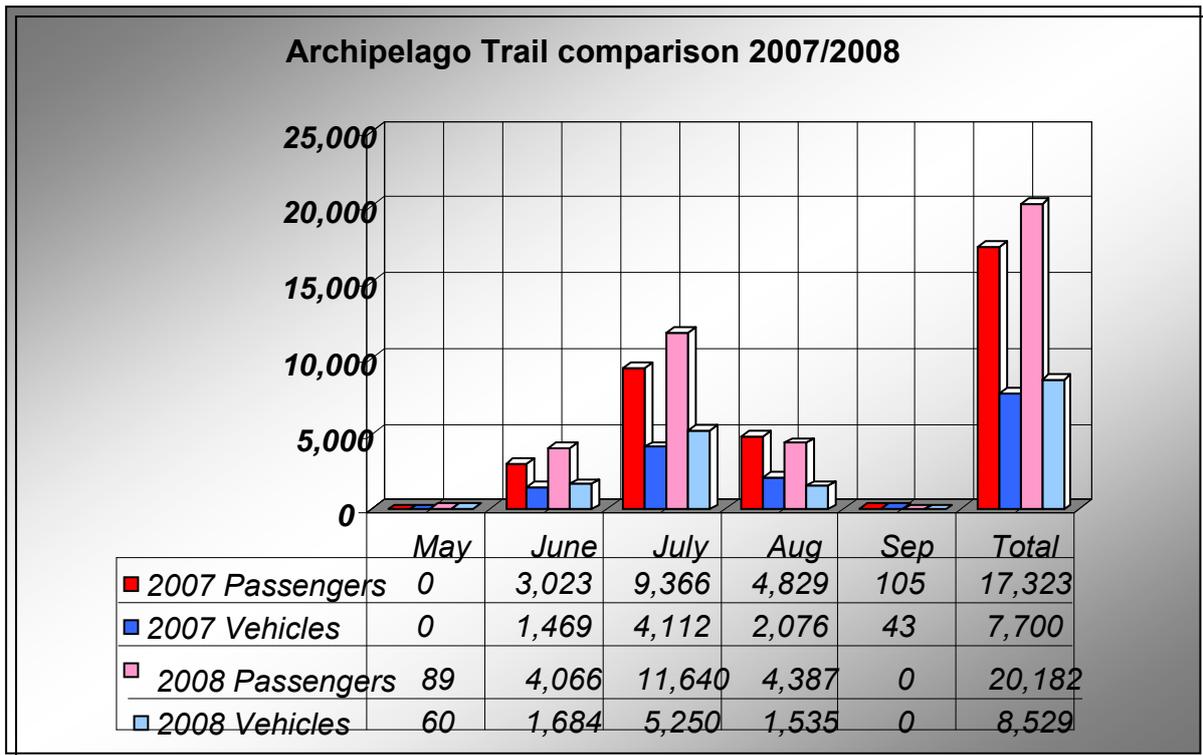


Figure 5. The table below shows the increase in traffic over the past year. When the archipelago municipalities were merged in 2009, the aim was also for the road network to function all year round, another factor which will benefit tourism. Source: Finnish Maritime Administration 2009.

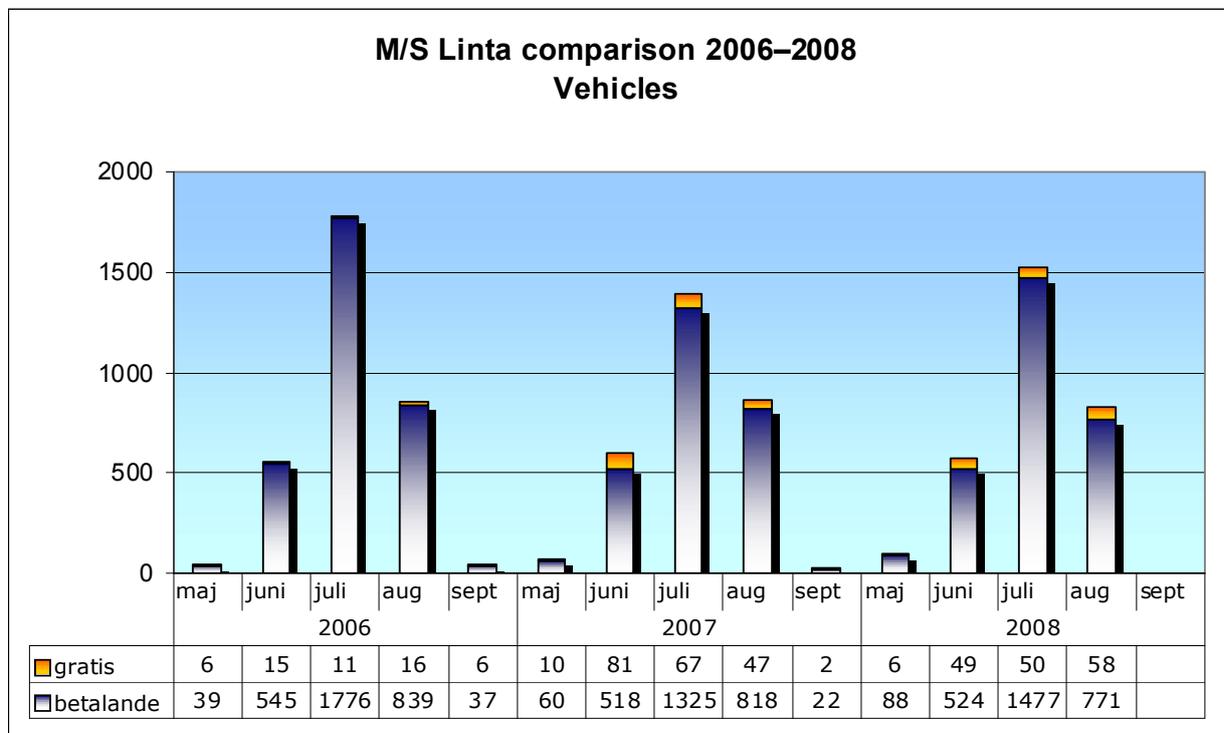


Figure 6. A shorter version of the Archipelago Trail was opened in 2005 which caters to traffic between Nagu and Rymättylä in the northern archipelago. Permanent residents receive free transportation. Source: Finnish Maritime Administration 2009.

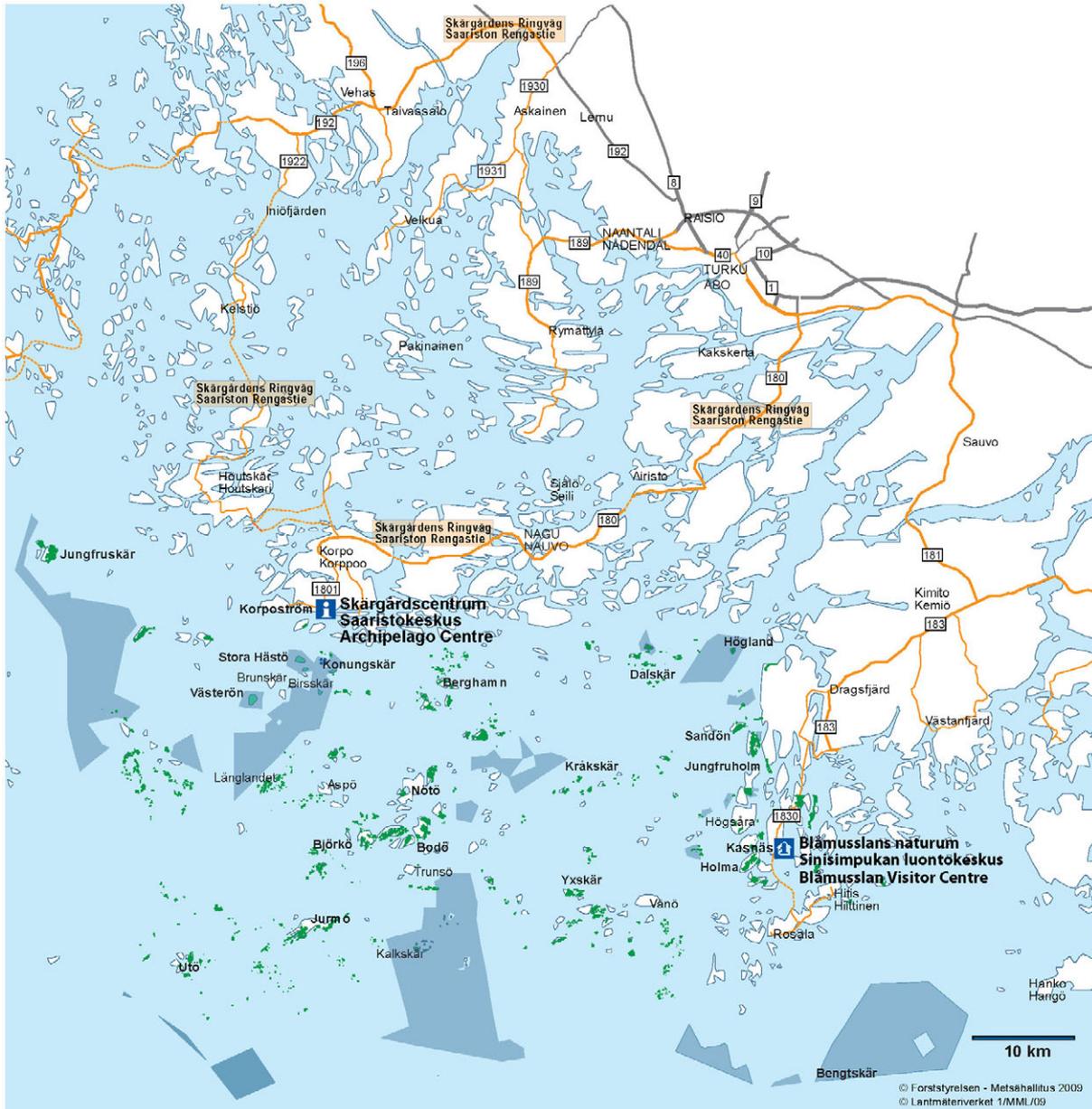


Figure 7. The Archipelago Trail has attracted more tourists to the area. The ferry between Houtskär and Iniö will operate throughout the year from the beginning of 2010, a crucial improvement for both residents and the tourism business. The ferry for the Small Archipelago Trail carries passengers between Nagu and Rymättylä. © Metsähallitus 2009, © National Land Survey of Finland 1/MLL/09.

3.1 Central actors in the area

The archipelago is not only geographically vast, but is also home to many different interested parties. In addition to recreation and tourism, which is the strategy's theme, the area is, above all, a home to many people and provides a variety of livelihoods.

The area's tourism and development were formerly administered by the Region Åboland organisation. The organisation has been at the centre of development efforts and has implemented many projects which have benefited the archipelago. From year 2009, the Town of Väståboland will be in charge of tourism while tourism in the eastern archipelago will be co-ordinated through Kimitoön's tourism department. On the whole, the tasks remain unchanged: marketing, participating in travel fairs, contacts with customers and the area's tourism operators. In future, various projects will also be central to developing the tourism sector. Both municipalities need a business plan, which could benefit the nature tourism strategy. The numbers, however, speak for themselves: tourism accounts for an increasing share of the municipalities' tax incomes (Berghäll 2005).

Turku Touring is the main tourism organisation in Southwest Finland and is responsible for marketing and tourist information. They have more resources for specific marketing campaigns and are able to distribute information all year round. The archipelago is also a trump card for the City of Turku as it is nearby and offers unique experiences in addition to what the city has to offer.

The Regional Council of Southwest Finland has its own representative for dealing with archipelago issues. The Regional Council also recommends EU funded projects which benefit the archipelago. The Regional Council of Southwest Finland also functions as a significant financier of projects in the area.

Sustainable Tourism Development Strategies are intended to act as a tool alongside other programmes and strategies. The principal challenge is to find financing for certain investments and studies, marketing as well as the co-ordination of operations.

The following strategies exist at present and this strategy is not in conflict with them. Overall these mainly point out common objectives and visions, both on the national and regional levels. Local strategies highlight sustainable development and the utilisation of local resources.

National:

- Finland's Tourism Strategy 2020 (Valtakunnallinen matkailustrategiatyöryhmä 2006)
- Archipelago Programme 2007–2010 (Skärgårdsdelegation 2007)
- Principles for sustainable nature tourism (see Appendix 2)

Regional:

- Southwest Finland's archipelago programme 2006–2008 (Varsinais-Suomen liitto 2006)
- Southwest Finland's tourism strategy 2005–2011 (Varsinais-Suomen liitto 2005)
- The landscape plan for Southwest Finland is being drafted at present (Regional Council of Southwest Finland)

Local:

- Management Plan for the Archipelago National Park 1999 (Metsähallitus 2000)
- Strategy for the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve 2009–2011.

3.2 Archipelago environment

The Archipelago Sea is a combination of various biological, geological and cultural components. The archipelago has been described in various instances, for example *Skärgårdens betesmarker* (Pastures of the Archipelago) (Lindgren 2000) and *Skärgårdshavets nationalpark* (Archipelago National Park) (Lappalainen 2004).

Its unique marine characteristics result from the Baltic Sea's brackish water and the lack of a tide phenomenon. The sea is also periodically covered by ice. The Baltic Sea's average mean depth is only 60 metres and the Archipelago Sea is even shallower. Water exchange is slow, in the Baltic the process takes all of 30 years and it is dependent on the saltwater pulses which stream in from the Danish Strait.

The archipelago is divided into the inner, intermediate and outer archipelago. The farther out into the archipelago one goes, the fewer trees and the hardier the vegetation one can find as the land surface area diminishes. However, the total surface area is increasing continually: The Earth's crust is still rebounding following the last Ice Age 11,000 years ago. Land uplift in Southwestern Finland occurs at a rate of 0.42 m every one hundred years. The archipelago in Southwestern Finland is geologically interesting. At 1,900 million years old the bedrock is some of the world's oldest visible bedrock.



Example of the Archipelago Sea's marine biodiversity. Typical species in a hard bottom environment: Bladderwrack (*Fucus vesiculosus*), the Red algae *Polysiphonia fucooides* and the Green algae *Enteromorpha*. The Blue Mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) is one of the Baltic Sea's key organisms. Photo: Metsähallitus 2007.



The archipelago consists of a variety of islands and different habitats. The further from the mainland, the more inhospitable the environment. Metsähallitus 2008.

A varied topography, both on land and in the sea, creates a diverse abiotic and biotic environment for many organisms. In fact, the Archipelago National Park has the largest number of different habitats of all the Finnish national parks. The national park also features the highest number of vascular plants per square metre (on Jungfruskär). Although it has a small surface area, the archipelago is teeming with life. Migrating birds stop both in the spring and autumn to feed and the littoral zone is an important reproduction and feeding area for many species. The shore zone is altogether 12,000 km long. The marine environment is just as fragmented and can show a remarkably high level of biodiversity. Both marine and freshwater species exist in the central and inner archipelago. In addition, the sea-floor environment varies from a hard, exposed habitat to sheltered inner coves with soft sea floors.

3.2.1 Eutrophication in the archipelago

The Archipelago Sea is plagued by eutrophication and nutrients are still flowing in from, for example, agriculture, from the air and from scattered settlements (Figure 8). Consequences of this include drifting algae carpets which asphyxiate stationary bottom-dwelling animals. This also causes disruptions in fish spawning areas. In many areas the seabed suffers from a lack of oxygen and hydrogen sulphide builds up, which is harmful to most organisms. Efforts are being made to minimise local nutrient emissions and thus achieve a better water quality. This result will be reached primarily through legislation and information designed to change people's behaviour. The issue also concerns tourists and people in recreational boats are asked to empty their boats' septic tanks at the guest harbours' reception points. Eutrophication can be seen as the biggest threat to both the environment and the archipelago's economy. An altered ecosystem afflicts fishing, tourism and recreation.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD), imposed by the EU in 2000, aims at preventing the further deterioration of water ecosystems and at improving water quality. The aim is for all surface waters to achieve a “good” status by 2015. Two of the Finnish WFD River Basin Districts include the coastal waters of the entire archipelago. On the national level, objectives and ways of reaching the WFD objectives are described in the River Basin Management Plans (RBMP). According to the Southwest Finland Regional Environment Centre the timetable for the River Basin Management Plans required by the WFD is as follows:

- Public hearings of the draft RBMPs in 2008–2009
- Government will adopt the RBMPs in December 2009
- Implementation of the RBMP measures starts at latest 2012
- The “good” status shall be achieved by 2015 (an extension until 2027 is proposed).

The WFD assessment over the past years has concluded that the Archipelago Sea’s ecological water quality is being strongly deteriorated by nutrient pollution and therefore only has “satisfactory” status. The future main focus of WFD-related mitigation measures is the reduction of nutrient loads, the improvement of current water quality conditions in between islands and the reduction of the harmful effects of the polluted bottom sediments near the ports. Supplementary measures in agriculture include for example wintertime vegetation cover, buffer zones and wetlands, enhanced manure usage and treatment. Determining suitable locations is the main measure taken to mitigate the effects of fish farming.

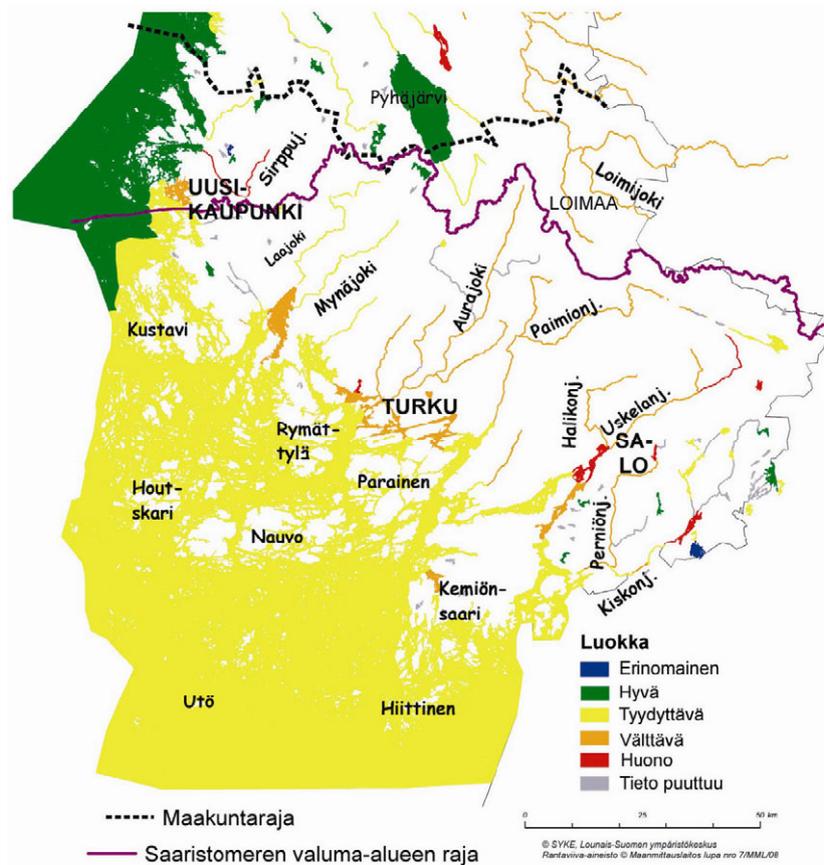


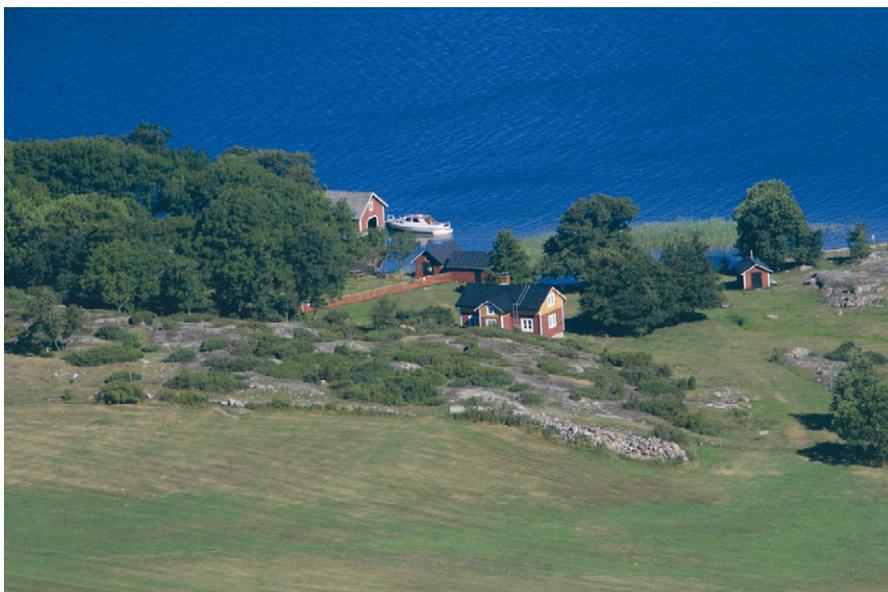
Figure 8. The ecological status of the waters according to the Water Framework Directive (2008). Blue is high, green is good, yellow is moderate, orange is poor, red is bad and grey means there is no data available. The purple line defines the drainage area of the Archipelago Sea. © Finnish Environment Institute 2009, © Southwest Finland Regional Environment Centre 2009, © National Land Survey of Finland 1/MML/09.

3.3 The archipelago and people

The archipelago and the coast have always been a natural place for people to reside. The Ice Age receded 11,600 years ago, allowing humans to inhabit the archipelago. The area was ideal for hunting and fishing. Once the small islets grew into islands, the seasonal inhabitants could finally settle there permanently. Consequently, the environment has been shaped by humans over thousands of years. Analyses of pollen from bogs show that the ground in the archipelago was cultivated over 4,000 years ago (Tuovinen 1991). Humans are co-responsible for the present-day biodiversity that exists there, due to the pasture landscapes. They cultivated small plots of land and had grazing animals, and these activities shaped the different biotopes. Today, much fewer people live permanently in the archipelago area and agriculture does not play such a significant role anymore but the Archipelago National Park maintains 300 ha of managed biotopes as a cultural heritage. Without these areas many types of flora and fauna would become extinct.

Tourism in the archipelago is on a much smaller scale compared with tourism in many natural areas and national parks in Europe. The smaller scale has its benefits: Tourism operations are more sustainable and easier to control and visitors experience a genuine archipelago environment. On the other hand, large numbers of visitors are already passing along the road to the archipelago. The ferry between Nagu and Pargas transports 600,000 vehicles annually (2006) and the volume of traffic is increasing constantly. The number of cars is double the number of those travelling on the ferries between Turku and Stockholm. According to a study (Särkilahti 2006) an average of 2.9 people travel in each car, which means a total of 1.7 million. Interest in the archipelago is growing and the area is becoming more easily accessible. The new motorway between Turku and Helsinki significantly reduces the driving time to 3 hours and visitors often arrive from the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. A bicycle path network through the archipelago would stimulate a more eco-friendly tourism and above all ensure the safety of cyclists.

According to a study by the Finnish Tourist Board from 2004, Finland has not been successful in creating packaged activity products (Ellare Oy *et al* 2004). The study focused on the wishes of foreign tourists, for example canoeing, hiking and cycling. Even though distances may be short and the natural environment offers many opportunities for various types of activities, the products are rarely easy to understand or book. Improving the information and creating an environmental image can help to reach customers better, especially foreign tourists, also in the archipelago.



Nagu Bergham Västerby is now part of the Archipelago National Park. Visitors get the chance to familiarise themselves with the homestead. Metsähallitus maintains the natural heritage landscape together with private cattle owners. Today, Bergham has only three inhabitants, compared to 61 in the 1890s. The island's history stretches back to the Middle Ages when farming began there. Photo: Metsähallitus 2008.

4 Nature tourism today

The objective of Metsähallitus is for nature tourism in the Archipelago Sea area to support the local community and be included in the region's image. An equally important aspect is for the operations to be part of nature conservation and increase the public's environmental awareness.

Nature tourism was defined in the first chapter and conforms to the Ministry of the Environment's definition. Metsähallitus has in addition defined how nature tourism should be implemented and how it should function in practice. **The principles for sustainable nature tourism** (Appendix 2) have nine points, which also take into account cultural objectives. Tourism is expected to support other means of livelihood in the area, such as the manufacturing, service and construction sectors (Skärgårdsdelegation 2007).

So far there have not been enough resources to monitor the sustainability of tourism and to monitor how the principles are being applied within the Archipelago National Park. On the other hand, businesses are small and operate locally, which means that the majority of the principles are fulfilled automatically. The challenge is to develop a practical method for monitoring the principles; monitoring the environment, visitors and businesses. This is one of the core subjects of this strategy and will be addressed in Chapter 6.

Sustainable nature tourism can be implemented outside the national park as well because the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve stands for sustainable development and sustainable activities. Functioning models and examples of tourism products are thus expected to spread within a large operational area. Concrete advice and models will prove useful especially if the number of visitors and the pressure on the most popular destinations increase.

4.1 Entrepreneurship in the Archipelago National Park

As the Archipelago National Park's responsible management body, Metsähallitus's Natural Heritage Services (units for nature conservation) does not deal with the nature tourism business, rather they offer national parks and nature conservation areas for recreational and tourism purposes. It is possible for businesses to utilise the areas for tourism as long as the operations abide by the national park regulations.

Since 2005, Metsähallitus has actively introduced possibilities for private entrepreneurs to utilise the national park areas for their own operations. The operations are based on Metsähallitus's principles for sustainable nature tourism, which apply in all Finnish national parks. When businesses utilise the national parks' services, it is recommended that a utilisation or co-operation agreement be drawn up with Metsähallitus. So far 12 entrepreneurs have signed such co-operation agreements for the Archipelago National Park. The co-operation agreements involve certain rights and obligations for both the businesses and Metsähallitus (Table 2). In future such businesses have the possibility to apply for Local Business Partnership, a privileged business certificate offered by the PAN Parks organisation (see Chapter 7 and Appendix 4).

Projects have helped to organise information events and training courses for the business partners in the Archipelago Sea area. The events have been extremely popular and are still very much in demand. Course themes have included safety aspects for products, nature in the national park and marketing.

Since 2006 businesses have annually responded to Metsähallitus's feedback questionnaire. The aim of the questionnaire is to get an idea of the national park's facilities, the activities of visitor

groups and what areas they visited as well as the number of groups. The results are processed in Metsähallitus's database for visitor information (ASTA) to achieve comparative analyses. Activities within the national park have so far been low key in the archipelago area and entrepreneurs are gradually developing their products further. The network between the various businesses has strengthened through the projects and courses. New contacts and products are presently under preparation.

In spring 2008, a business survey (Mäki 2008) was completed: 126 questionnaires were sent out and 28 responses were received. The answers indicated that half of the businesses utilised the national park area. 84% of business customers were Finnish and 72% of all customers were private persons. Roughly half of all customer visits took place during the summer period (= end of June to early August). The businesses hoped for more co-operation with Metsähallitus concerning the development of the area.

Table 5. Obligations and benefits of Metsähallitus's utilisation and co-operation agreement.

Benefits for businesses	Benefits for Metsähallitus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An agreement which is valid for at least one season or one year, max. 3 years, is recommended - Right to practice business within the national park and utilise service facilities and infrastructure according to the agreement - Basic printed information materials concerning the national park and nature tourism's sustainability and environmental system - Possibility to learn about the nature conservation area, nature tourism's sustainability and environmental management programmes - Joint meetings for all businesses which have signed the co-operation agreement for the national park (twice/year) - Printed material about visitor numbers and results of visitor surveys for the area. Marketing; a link to the company's website or information about the company on Metsähallitus's website (www.outdoors.fi), brochures etc. can be distributed at Visitor Centres and similar locations, possibility to take part in developing the area through participation in meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information about the company and its operations - Fees for the agreement and utilisation of infrastructure - Businesses abide by national park's rules - Information about the businesses' visitor numbers and visitor profiles - Feedback through questionnaires and meetings - Continuous access to information on businesses - Businesses have more environmentally friendly operations - Businesses' customers are more environmentally aware
Business's obligations	Metsähallitus's obligations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilisation rights are required for using the services within the national park - At least one company name is required - Fees for the agreement and utilisation of infrastructure - Annual reporting - Operations are not in conflict with Metsähallitus's environmental management programme (ISO 14001) - Reporting, feedback and customer feedback - Participation in courses organised by Metsähallitus - Notification of company contact information and website address - Supporting the implementation of the principles for sustainable nature tourism - Safety management plan for e.g. activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for drawing up agreements with entrepreneurs - Offers businesses written material on the national park, sustainable tourism and the environmental management system (ISO 14001) - Entrepreneurs receive information on: the nature conservation area, the sustainability of nature tourism, the environmental management system - Arranges annual meetings with companies, min. twice/year - Hands out visitor surveys and other interesting reports - A link to companies on Metsähallitus's website - As far as possible arranges places for displaying the businesses' information material - Spreading information and participating in the development of the area - Taking part in the mapping out of safety risks within the area managed by Metsähallitus

4.2 Results of visitor survey carried out in Archipelago National Park in 2008

A visitor survey was carried out between May and August. Questionnaire responses were obtained from a total of 275 visitors. Most of the respondents were boaters. Visitors often arrive in groups (2–5 people), in other words most people visited the national park with their families. The majority of respondents had visited the national park previously (84%). The average age of visitors was 46 years. Most visitors are residents of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Over 90% of respondents stated that the Archipelago National Park was their only or most important destination. The most common activities were hiking, enjoying the surroundings and observing nature. Around 15% of all visitors were on a day trip, and almost all of the rest of the respondents stayed in their boats. Overall, the national park received a high score for the maintenance of the area and services. On the other hand respondents wished for more piers and campfire sites. The businesses' offering could also be expanded and more services are required for people with special needs involving mobility, hearing etc.

Foreign visitors accounted for 4% of visitors, approximately the same as in 2005, when the previous visitor survey was carried out. The total number of visitors was estimated to be 51,000 in 2008. However, the number of visitors simply passing through the area or mooring off the national park's excursion harbours is significantly higher. Visitors to the Archipelago National Park are familiar with the area from before and stays often last longer compared with other national parks in Finland, which means that marketing directed at new customers and customer groups could be worthwhile.

4.3 Survey of boat tourists in the archipelago in summer 2008

Metsähallitus completed a boat tourist survey during 12 June to 11 August. The questionnaires were handed out in guest harbours in Airisto (Pargas), Kasnäs (Dragsfjärd), Nagu, Näsby (Houtskär), Korpoström and Verkan (Korpo). A total of 80 questionnaires were returned. The aim of the survey was specifically to discover boating people's views on the national park and its services. Most of the visitors were from the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Sailing boats (69%) were more common than motor boats (30%).

Generally speaking, visitors were satisfied with the national park's offering and services. The behaviour of the visitors strengthens this message: 85% of the respondents visit the area yearly. However, they wished for more piers and clearer signposting of nature trails. Also, more outhouses as well as facilities for emptying their boats' septic tanks were some of the improvements suggested. The respondents appreciated the availability of local products and it would probably be possible to increase sales of fish and other products. Visitors to Jurmo complained that it was crowded. During the high season in July, certain natural and village harbours can be very popular with visitors. The typical reasons given for visiting the area were relaxation and overnight stays. Also nature experiences and the tranquil environment were mentioned as reasons for visiting the national park. The duration of a visit was on average 16 days.

Some conclusions can be drawn from the described routes of the respondents. Firstly, boaters mainly use existing boating lanes (Figure 9). This serves the protection of the national park and helps in the planning of service structures. Areas under the heaviest pressure are quite evident: the southeastern corner as the gateway from Helsinki Metropolitan Area and the lane Jurmo–Björkö–Aspö–Nötö. The most common route to Nagu from the southeastern corner seems to be along the northern side of Högsåra. On the other hand there are a couple of areas which are visited only seldom: Österskär archipelago, Brunskär-Bussö archipelago and the area around Kråkskär. These areas are ideal for those seeking wilderness experiences.

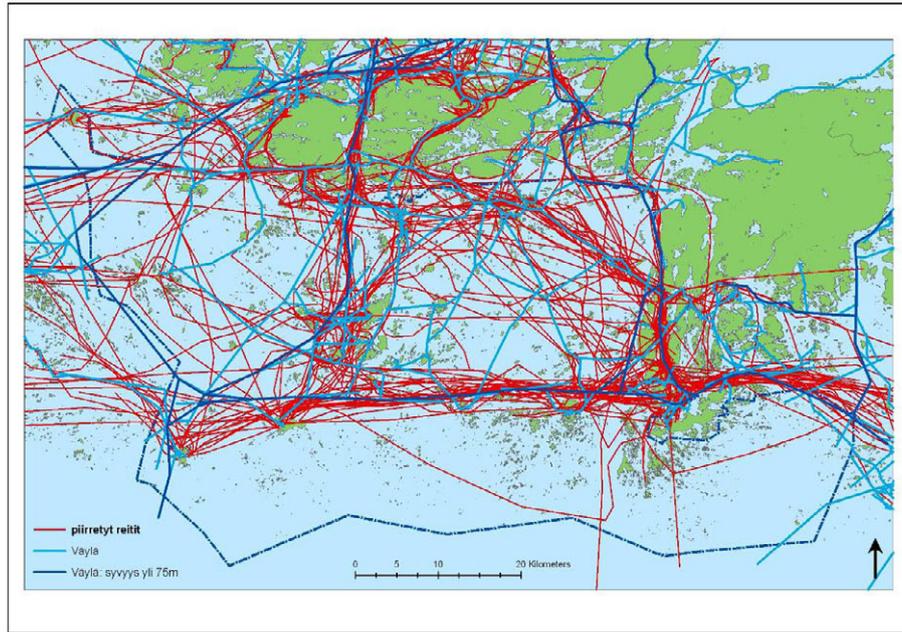


Figure 9. Routes of the respondents (red lines, n=63). The dark blue lines are boating lanes with a depth of more than 75 m and the blue ones are other boating lanes. Source: Mäki & Sarlin 2009. © Metsähallitus 2009, © National Land Survey of Finland 1/MLL/09.

4.4 Entrepreneurship (outside the national park) within the strategy area

Figure 10 shows the number of tourism operators within the strategy area. The archipelago area has the highest frequency of private businesses compared to the rest of Finland. This shows an ability for self-employment and to create jobs. There is also a demand for various services in the archipelago. A demand for more specialised products can be discerned within tourism, for example canoeing excursions and guided tours.

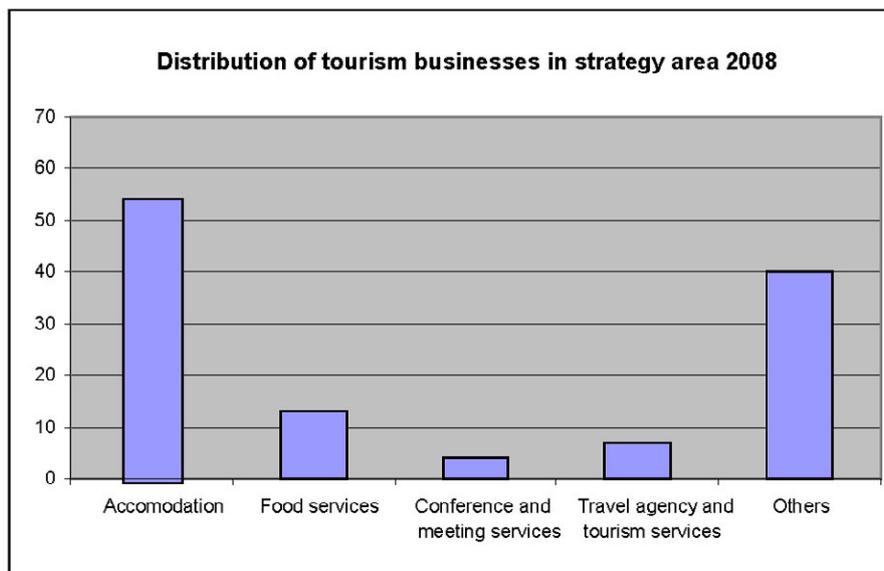


Figure 10. There are around 125 registered tourism operators within the planned expanded Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve area. The group "Others" consists of attractions, guest harbours, handicrafts, fishing and charter. Source: Region Åboland 2008.

4.5 Marketing study 2008

The aim of the study was to discover how interesting the Åboland Archipelago is as a nature tourism destination. The study was carried out by Taloustutkimus Oy (2008) using a web survey on 3–5 November 2008. The target group was 25–69-year-olds from the provinces of Southern or Western Finland (except from Turunmaa). The sample was set to correspond with the national sex, age and residential distribution. The survey was sent to a total of 2,200 people and was answered by 855 people, of which 73 were disqualified due to their occupations within tourism or marketing. A total of 706 people (32% of respondents), were somewhat interested in or had taken part in nature tourism.

41% of those who answered were experts or officials by profession. The households of respondents were divided into one person (26%), no children (22%), other adult household (17%), children under age of 18 (35%). Around one fifth of respondents, 440 persons, stated that nature tourism in the Åboland Archipelago interested them a great deal. In total, three quarters were, at least to some extent, interested in nature tourism. People who enjoy outdoor activities and who live in the vicinity (Southwest Finland or Satakunta) and people who had previously visited Åboland Archipelago showed a markedly greater interest than other respondents.

The archipelago was seen as an interesting destination. The most common reasons for visiting the area were:

- The sea, combination of sea and islands
- Diversity of the archipelago nature
- Peace and quiet.

Services which were seen as important were:

- Ferry traffic services
- Accommodation and restaurants
- Every fifth visitor had used Metsähallitus's services (nature trails, campfire sites etc.).

Reasons for not visiting the area:

- Distance (between place of residence and the archipelago)
- Lack of time
- Lack of information
- Did not have a boat or skills to handle a boat, which makes moving around the archipelago complicated
- Expensive trips and poor connections.

The PAN Parks concept was unfamiliar to the target group, only 1% were familiar with the name and the brand.

40% of respondents were willing to visit the archipelago during other seasons than summer, with spring and autumn as the most popular. Only 1/10 were interested in nature tourism during the winter.

Feedback concerning services in the archipelago

- Beautiful nature and views
- Ferry traffic appreciated
- Pleasant people and peaceful atmosphere
- Good guest harbours
- Of the respondents, 10% had negative experiences, often concerning the absence of service, bad food or annoyance over accommodations. 90% of the respondents were fairly or very satisfied to the nature tourism services of the Archipelago.
- Three quarters of the people who were interested in nature tourism were also interested in package holidays.

4.6 SWOT analysis of the archipelago area

SWOT analysis was made on 28 August 2008 with the Local Archipelago National Park Co-operation Group (Table 3).

Table 3. Results of SWOT analysis.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Four seasons – Geographical location – Archipelago consists of old, genuine countryside. – The small-scale, safe area offers challenges and adventure, quiet- and darkness. – Developed infrastructure which functions year-round. – Good entrepreneurial spirit and the archipelago is nationally and internationally known. – Tourism is an established business/income. – The archipelago offers excellent opportunities for mental and physical recreation, the sea and nature, archipelago landscape, life on the islands is considered exotic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Product offering is not developed enough and is of uneven quality and price – Difficult to find products on the internet – Inadequate willingness to serve and co-operation within tourism sector – Quality of products and services are too low – Inadequate information material – The area is difficult to reach and visits are often reliant on the weather. – Short summer season/seasonal operations and tourism is often a side-business – Fragmented ownerships cause difficulties in developing tourism
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The culture and historical theme (common to the Baltic Sea area), Swedish language and coastal culture as a background for untapped products – The archipelago is interesting for investors and tourism is an interesting source of livelihood from the EU perspective. – Appreciation of the archipelago – Marketing can be improved and financing possibilities utilised more efficiently – Increased co-operation within the area and between different interested parties – The archipelago's nature is unparalleled and the national park is an opportunity as more and more areas are being developed and constructed in the archipelago outside the national park. – Unexploited archipelago combined with small scale activities and construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Economic changes resulting in a loss of jobs – Decreased number of public sector jobs, affecting the infrastructure and degrading the archipelago's culture – Decreased commitment from the community and co-operation on the local level – Increased bureaucracy – Inadequate quality and know-how – Tourism is not welcomed because it affects both seasonal and permanent residents – Sales of land areas – Severe environmental problems and oil spills.

4.7 Archipelago's attractions and opportunities for new target groups

The archipelago has many characteristics which provide excellent opportunities for tourism development. The area's distinguishing features were also emphasised in the marketing study (4.5) and SWOT analysis (Table 3). The area's tourism operators have good opportunities for increasing their clientele and profiling the area as a sustainable small-scale tourist destination.

1. Nature. Unique natural values which cannot be found elsewhere. The diversity of nature and closeness of the sea, also the archipelago environment. Experiencing the inner, intermediate and outer archipelago.
 - a) The marine environment which exhibits a significant number of species and a huge variety of biotopes.
 - b) Cultural landscape and managed biotopes: 300 ha of managed biotopes are maintained inside the national park and interest in the cultural landscape has increased within the Biosphere Reserve.
 - c) In spite of problems like eutrophication, the general impression of the archipelago environment for most people is that of "pristine nature". The national park can be utilised better in both the marketing of the area and in connection with new tourism products. Simple, well organised and knowledgeable guide services provide wonderful experiences, offered through, e.g. archipelago safaris (e.g. seal safaris), hiking, canoeing, diving and other forms of nature tourism.
2. The culture includes, among other things, archipelago architecture, small village communities, outer archipelago villages and the Swedish language. Archipelago culture also consists of various cultural events and village fairs. History shared by the Nordic countries, the Baltic countries, Russia and Germany. The area contains many wrecks and relics as well as maritime culture.
3. Small-scale tourism is necessary in the area as it is not suitable for mass tourism. It is possible to visit the area alone or in small groups.
4. The archipelago is a safe environment which offers sound tourism products.
5. Well-functioning logistics and possibility for sustainable means of transport. Bus traffic between Turku–Kasnäs, Helsinki–Kasnäs, Helsinki–Houtskär and Turku–Houtskär. Many ferry traffic routes are in operation year-round. Bicycle tourism is a good option, however the routes require planning (ferry timetables and choosing safe roads). Sailing and canoeing are environmentally friendly options for reaching the archipelago and the national park area. If distances are long or there is not enough time, several taxi boats are in operation in the area. Traffic to Åland between Galtby in Korpo and Långnäs on Åland provides added opportunities for experiencing the archipelago. Establishing new, practical connections between the eastern and western archipelago (Kasnäs–Korpoström or Vänö–Borstö–Jurmo).
6. Seasons. Each season has something to offer the visitor. Exotic for foreign visitors. Fewer visitors during the low season, providing good opportunities for sustainable nature tourism.

7. Both market and visitor surveys support the fact that there is potential to increase visitor numbers in the area. The number of foreign visitors is low and for visitors without boats, the area is practically undeveloped. At present, information about tourism products is fragmented and difficult to find. Customers have trouble finding a centralised offering of services and products. Canoeing, photography and guided tours are examples of undeveloped products.

Bird-watching is a growing hobby, especially foreign tourists search for areas which offer new bird species for them. Europe's ornithological associations have a total of 20 million members. At present, some 1,000 foreign bird-watchers visit Finland and spend more than 170–250 euro per day (Matkailun edistämiskeskus 2008). The archipelago has excellent potential for development concerning bird-watching, which is an activity that takes place outside the high season. The term "wildlife tourism" involves photographing and observing wild animals. Interest in this type of tourism is on the rise. Bird-watchers are attracted for example by the Archipelago Sea's White-tailed Eagles.

Potential types of visitors who can be offered a longer stay in the area can be divided up as follows:

- a) Travellers using the Archipelago Trail
- b) Visitors renting cottages or seasonal residents and their guests
- c) Domestic tourists, also from more distant regions in Finland
- d) Foreigners
- e) Canoeist
- f) Bird-watchers
- g) Divers
- h) Hikers
- i) Geocachers (treasure-hunting with GPS-receivers).



The archipelago offers a variety of opportunities and experiences all year round. The strategy area also includes a diverse cultural offering. The most significant challenge is creating unique products from existing conditions. Photo: Metsähallitus 2008.

5 Objectives for archipelago tourism

5.1 Vision

Vision for the STDS area 2015: The Archipelago National Park and the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve are flagships among areas that can provide versatile nature and cultural experiences in Finland.

Key elements of the vision:

- The area offers a variety of high-quality services and unique nature experiences in a marine and archipelago setting.
- Local businesses have increased their efforts towards international customers. Nature tourism is becoming an increasingly important livelihood and also supports permanent habitation of the outer archipelago. Tourism has been strengthened through intensified co-operation between businesses and through an improved and more consistent level of quality. The local businesses are developing and implementing new products.
- The tourism organisations and Metsähallitus have clear fields of responsibility within tourism development. The authorities are responsible for the administration of the national park and other conservation areas. Metsähallitus is also responsible for monitoring the degree of utilisation and environmental impacts within the Archipelago National Park.
- A coherent image is used in marketing and the area has successfully emerged as a high-quality destination. The strategy area is marketed and developed co-operatively by the Town of Västaboland, Kimitoön Municipality, tourism organisations and the authorities. The area's infrastructure functions well thanks to a steady demand for products and services.

5.2 Strategic objectives

The Archipelago National Park needs to meet the objectives required from network members by the PAN Parks organisation. In addition to first-rate management and administration of the national park, a great deal is required from the partners and tourism companies, as well as from the town and municipality.

5.2.1 Development of sustainable tourism in the strategy area

- Improve international, regional and local co-operation.
- Create transportation connections between the eastern and western parts of the archipelago.
- Create ways for visitors not travelling by boat to experience the archipelago and the national park, all year round.
- Develop opportunities for visitors to experience the marine environment. Raise awareness of the cultural landscapes, as well as the nature, villages and culture of the archipelago.
- Develop a number of sustainable tourism products suitable for the outer archipelago.

5.2.2 A common, sustainable and high-quality brand and a uniform image for the region

- Boost the businesses' sales by way of first-rate sustainable products and activities during all seasons. Active contact with Finnish and international travel agencies interested in small-scale nature tourism.
- The Town of Västaboland and Kimitoön Municipality will integrate the national park into the marketing of their products and services.
- Improve the information material about the area.
- Strengthen the image of the unique archipelago area that is different from other tourism areas in Finland or the Baltic region. The archipelago's image consists of elements of the archipelago's sub-regions with their own unique features.
- Chance to create a quality management system for local businesses.

5.2.3 Developing nature tourism in the Archipelago National Park

- Development of zones and related infrastructure within the national park.
- Production of information materials in several languages.
- Developing a concept and the resources for monitoring the environmental impacts of tourism.
- Co-ordination of the co-operation between Metsähallitus and Korpoström Archipelago Centre. The Archipelago Centre will provide information about the national park and be a permanent part of the national park's service offering.
- Training and information for co-operation partners and local businesses.
- Contact person for PAN Parks and development of the area.
- Establishing the Brunskär area as an example of a wilderness area in the Archipelago National Park.

5.2.4 Developing nature tourism and the information offering in other important regions

Inside the strategy area but outside the National Park there are couple of locations with high concentration of tourism activities which has to be noticed while developing the nature tourism of the region.

- Kasnäs-Rosala-Bengtskär-Örö: The region already offers a wide variety of tourism services. In future the different parties could co-operate to provide even more varying and comprehensive packages.
- Själö: The island is already very popular among visitors and is in need of visitor co-ordination as well as updated material for the nature trail.
- Houtskär-Iniö: Plans have been made to build a guest harbour in Iniö. Iniö is another area that will see increased tourism in the future as a result of the Archipelago Trail.
- Vänö-Borstö-Nötö.

6 Evaluation and monitoring of the environmental impacts of nature tourism

6.1 Limits of Acceptable Change

Limits of Acceptable Change has been a common method for the planning of protected areas since the 1980s and was originally used in national parks and recreational areas (McCoy *et al* 1995, Cole & Stankey 1997). The method consists of defining the optimal condition of a selected survey area and defining the decisions to be made and actions to be performed in order to reach the optimal condition, as well as the limits within which changes may occur (Stankey *et al* 1985).

By selecting quantifiable indicators and standards it will be possible to monitor the development of the protected area and see to it that activities and changes remain within acceptable limits. The method has also provided a broader view of and deeper insight into recreational areas, their utilisation degree and the nature of the biophysical impacts of recreation. Systematic monitoring of the environment using quantifiable variables has, through the LAC concept, contributed to a more effective administration of recreational areas and national parks (McCool & Cole 1998).

In brief, it can be said that planners using the LAC process can highlight the areas to be monitored, the means and methods by which the monitoring should be carried out, as well as describe the optimal condition of the area (the target). Moreover, the planning should preferably involve the general public and local residents in order to achieve sustainable results (McCool & Cole 1998). Experiences have shown that LAC can also cut costs, because the subject to be monitored, the monitoring method, as well as the required investments are already known at the planning phase.

Metsähallitus has its own version of LAC, which has been employed for instance in Oulanka National Park. Metsähallitus's principles for sustainable nature tourism (Appendix 2) constitute one starting point for these objectives and form the basis for different measurement methods and indicators. Due to the fact that conditions vary greatly in the different regions, each region has its own separately defined indicators and methods of measurement. Indicators for ecological, economic and social sustainability should be utilised in order for the method to work as comprehensively as possible. When basic data becomes available the limits of acceptable change can be defined, in other words the interval within which changes may occur and a maximum value that may not be exceeded.

6.2 LAC and the Archipelago National Park

The indicators presented here (Appendix 5) are merely suggestions. Monitoring of environmental effects will primarily be conducted within the national park and to the extent of available resources. To some extent monitoring already takes place but there are indicators which require resources in order for the gathering of the necessary basic data to begin. In any case, the situation in the Archipelago National Park appears to be under control. Visitors stay in the area for only a brief part of the year. The impacts of tourism are uncertain, however no major changes have been discovered as of yet. The number of visitors may increase in the near future, at which time reference materials, monitoring methods and reliable indicators will be needed.

In order to monitor the effects of nature tourism reliably in the Archipelago National Park, the following actions are required and some are already under way:

- a) Surveys of local businesses and visitors every five years (under way)
- b) Continuous visitor monitoring (under way)
- c) Feedback from local businesses collected annually (under way)
- d) Reviews of the financial impacts of nature tourism on the region's economy every five years (methodology being developed during 2009, not yet complete)
- e) Surveys of local residents, follow-up of utilisation of national park area (not yet complete)
- f) Establishment of test plots and areas (not yet complete)
- g) Environmental monitoring taken into account in budgeting (not yet complete).

7 The Archipelago National Park Co-operation Group

This strategy for nature tourism in the Archipelago Sea (STDS) was prepared by the Archipelago National Park Co-operation Group, also called the Local PAN Parks Group (LPPG). The members of this group are listed in Appendix 1. The first main task of the LPPG was to prepare the STDS in 2008–2009. Following this the number of members was cut down. The new Co-operation Group started working in May 2009 (Appendix 1). The Archipelago National Park Co-operation Group's responsibilities and ways of working are described in its Charter (Appendix 6).

The Archipelago National Park Co-operation Group also operates as a working group with issues concerning nature and culture tourism in the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve. The steering group for the Biosphere Reserve approves the composition of the group.

7.1 PAN Parks business partnership and quality criteria

The aim is to stimulate the local nature tourism business and to have businesses operating in the STDS area become Local PAN Parks Business Partners (LBP). Business partnership requires that the entrepreneur meets the criteria defined by the Local PAN Parks Group (see Chapters 7.2 and 7.3). The partnership offers the businesses quality control guidance and marketing through the PAN Parks network.

The application procedure is similar in all PAN Parks (Appendix 3). The Local Business Partners (LBP) are verified by specialists appointed by the Local PAN Parks Co-operation Group. The task of the verifiers is to ensure that the business or the certified product meets the quality criteria. The quality criteria for the businesses will be updated when the businesses themselves, Metsähallitus and other partners gain more experience of the activities and co-operation.

The criteria are the same for both businesses and products. A certified business can use the PAN Parks logo in all of its marketing material. In the case of a certified product the PAN Park logo can only be used in close connection with the product.

Over the course of a few years, 2011 at the latest, the Local PAN Parks Co-operation Group will decide which of the general quality programmes for businesses presently in place will be further recommended (Quality 1000, Nature's Best or similar quality certification) to Local Business Partners.

7.2 Metsähallitus and PAN Parks Business Partnership

Metsähallitus will accept applications from businesses for Local PAN Parks Business Partnership and verify whether the business or product meets the following **criteria**:

1. The business has either one of the two possible agreement types with Metsähallitus.
 - a. Agreement on co-operation: the business does not operate or utilise the services of the national park but is interested in co-operation, for example hotels and B&Bs.
 - b. Agreement on utilisation and co-operation: the business operates and utilises the services of the national park like campfire sites and outhouses.

2. If activities are conducted within the national park:
 - a. Operations are conducted in accordance with the regulations of the nature conservation area, as well as the management and land-use plan for the national park.
 - b. Activities follow the principles for sustainable nature tourism (more details in Appendix 2).
 1. Natural values are preserved and all activities promote nature conservation.
 2. The environment is subjected to as little pressure as possible.
 3. Local traditions and cultures are respected.
 4. Visitors increase their understanding and appreciation of nature and cultures.
 5. Improved recreational facilities are provided for visitors.
 6. Visitors are encouraged to enjoy both mental and physical recreation.
 7. Local economies and employment are promoted.
 8. Publicity materials are produced responsibly and carefully.
 9. Activities are planned and organised co-operatively.
3. Marketing and publicity materials about the national park must be accurate.
4. Further requirements for activities within the national park are:
 - a. Small visitor groups, if the activities take place on land, group sizes of no more than 20 persons per guide are recommended.
 - b. The businesses must ensure that no waste is left in the area following a visit.
 - c. Tourism products are respectful towards nature and the local residents.

7.3 The Local PAN Parks Group and Business Partnership

The Local PAN Parks Group for the Archipelago Sea will verify that the following requirements are met by businesses applying for Local PAN Parks Business Partnership.

Compulsory requirements

1. Available at least in English or in German
 - a) general information on the business
 - b) descriptions of the offered products
 - c) personal service
2. The offered products have a clear description, for example departure, content and arrival. The product is transparently priced, for example what is included in the price, number of participants and possible discounts if any.
3. The company has familiarised itself with the strategy for nature tourism in the Archipelago Sea, including the sustained protection of the archipelago nature and a respectful use of its features.

4. The company has an environmental plan or commits to participating in a course for drawing up an environmental plan within one year.
5. The product meets the Consumer Agency's requirements regarding safety regulations.
6. The company has a business license and is registered in the Town of Väståboland or Kimitoön Municipality.

Recommendations

1. Within one year of being approved as a Local PAN Park Business Partner, the company will meet a national or international environmental standard recommended by the LPPG (Quality 1000, Nature's Best or similar quality certification).
2. The customers are invited to give feedback on the product or visit, and the feedback is evaluated in order to improve customer service.
3. Environmental issues are considered seriously when investments are made.
4. Priority is given to local products and services as well as to co-operation with local businesses.
5. The product is integrated into the archipelago tourism offering in general.
6. The company possesses the necessary expertise to implement the product.
7. The target group is defined and its special needs are taken into account in the offered activities.

7.4 PAN Parks and Local Business Partnership

Upon successful verification of a local business, the Local PAN Parks Co-operation Group (Chairman) sends an application to the PAN Parks Foundation, which will give final approval (contract) for the Local Business Partnership. The business then gains the right to use the PAN Parks logo in its marketing (websites, brochures etc.) The company will be listed and marketed as a partner on the PAN Parks website. The partnership also provides visibility and a privileged marketing position, e.g. being contacted by international travel agencies seeking high-quality sustainable products. PAN Parks intends to expand the network to no more than twenty national parks across Europe. The network will provide a market for an exclusive list of businesses as well as services for visitors.

7.5 Cancellation of the Local Business Partnership

If needed, the Local Business Partnership can be cancelled on behalf of the company or the Local PAN Parks Group. In case the company wishes to cancel the partnership, the entrepreneur contacts the Archipelago National Park LPPG by sending an application. The application is processed according to the rules of procedure within the group after which the Chairman sends the group's recommendation to PAN Parks. After that the company will be removed from all the partner lists and the website.

In case the need for cancellation of the Local Business Partnership arises within the Archipelago National Park LPPG, a related decision will be made according to the rules of procedure of the group. Following the decision the process is similar to the process described above.

8 The Archipelago Sustainable Tourism Development Plan

The conservation of environmental values in the archipelago while simultaneously expanding nature tourism, notably within the PAN Parks network, requires environmental monitoring, improved quality and access to information about the area and its services. In practise this requires the co-operation of several stakeholders. Sharing responsibilities makes it possible to also find more funding for the different objectives.

8.1 Fields of responsibility

The Archipelago National Park Co-operation Group/The Local PAN Parks Group (LPPG)

- Takes care of LBP applications and verifications and forwards these to the PAN Parks Foundation.
- Appoints the specialists who are responsible for the verification of the potential Business Partner.
- Also responsible for implementing some of the objectives pointed out in the strategy (Chapter 8.2).
- Supervises and updates the strategy.
- Spreads information about PAN Parks and the values and benefits that the national park gives to the region.
- Operates simultaneously as a working group for developing nature and culture tourism in the Archipelago Biosphere Reserve.
- The secretary and the group are in active contact with PAN Parks in order to develop the area and the PAN Parks network.

Metsähallitus

- Manages the national park and maintains its infrastructure.
- Secures nature conservation in the national park.
- Hires personnel to co-ordinate and develop tourism within the national park, as well as provides related information materials.
- Is responsible for exhibition materials at Visitor Centres, nature information huts and for the national park website. The costs of other information materials, maps, brochures and marketing materials for the area may be divided between several interest groups, or alternatively be financed through joint projects.

- Is responsible for guiding at the Visitor Centre and therefore, if necessary, hires seasonal employees within given resources. In the national park guide services can be arranged in various ways depending on the situation:
 - a) Metsähallitus can take on seasonal workers.
 - b) Metsähallitus can purchase guide services from an entrepreneur.
 - c) Businesses can purchase guide services for groups from Metsähallitus.
- Provides regular information (at least twice a year) to LBPs and training on how to visit and use the national park, including its infrastructure.
- Monitors the environmental impacts of tourism in the national park in connection with other inventory work.
- Maintains contact with the administration of PAN Parks and informs other actors in the Archipelago Biosphere Reserve of any news.

Town of Västaboland and Kimitoön Municipality

- Publish information about the Archipelago National Park and the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve (e.g. on their websites), promoting nature tourism in the spirit of the Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy.
- Consider the Archipelago National Park as a resource in planning and realising recreational activities, entrepreneurship, education and nature management.
- Create an image and develop the region in a sustainable manner, make efforts to provide opportunities for local businesses and support the local communities.
- Support joint projects, events, publications and marketing efforts.

Regional tourism developers

- Plan marketing efforts in co-operation with local businesses. Marketing of tourism services in the national park and biosphere reserve is to be conducted in accordance with Metsähallitus's and the biosphere reserve's objectives. All parties are responsible for publishing information to benefit the development of tourism in the area.
- Maintain contact with Finnish and foreign tourism organisations.
- Participate in travel fairs and represent the region at other events.
- Maintain contact with customers and provide tourist information in the STDS area in various ways.
- Participate in and contribute to financing tourism and development projects.
- Inform businesses about product demands.
- Develop and facilitate contacts with foreign customers.

Local Businesses

- Are responsible for the safety and quality of their tourism products and services.
- Co-operate with the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve, the Town of Väståboland, Kimitoön Municipality and Metsähallitus to develop the joint marketing of the area and its tourism offering.
- Participate in courses arranged by Metsähallitus/the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve or other co-operating authorities.
- Provide annual feedback to Metsähallitus.

8.2 Proposed measures

The following proposed measures within the Archipelago National Park and the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve shall be executed in order to achieve the vision and objectives of sustainable tourism in the archipelago area and take account of the different responsibilities. The proposed measures are in two categories: short term measures (A) and long term measures (B). The total costs for measures linked to the Archipelago National Park, its responsible partner usually being Metsähallitus, will amount to some EUR 1.4 million. Of this amount, renewing the exhibition at Blåmusslan Visitor Centre constitutes EUR 500,000, actions in Jungfruskär EUR 300,000 and EUR 150,000 in Berghamn. The costs resulting from an employee responsible for maintaining and developing the PAN Parks strategy also fall in part upon Metsähallitus (EUR 45,000).

A. Measures to be carried out in the short term (2010–2011) within the Archipelago National Park and the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve:

Strategic objective	Measures	Indicative Budget	Responsible parties
1. Development of sustainable tourism in the strategy area			
Improve international, regional and local co-operation	Stronger networks: contacts with LPPG, LBP, travel agencies, tourism developers, and PAN Parks	Input from current employees	Metsähallitus, Town of Väståboland, Kimitoön Municipality, Regional Council of Southwest Finland, Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve
Create ways for visitors not arriving by boat to experience the archipelago and the national park, all year round	Planning a package around chosen ferry connections and marketing it.	Project funding	Väståboland, Kimitoön, entrepreneurs, Finnish Maritime Administration
Develop opportunities for visitors to experience the marine environment. Raise awareness of the cultural landscapes, as well as the nature, villages and culture of the archipelago	A connection from Archipelago Trail: a trip from Korpoström to Archipelago National Park (ANP) by motor boat	Project funding	Väståboland, entrepreneurs
	Trips from Kasnäs to ANP	Project funding	Kimitoön, entrepreneur

Strategic objective	Measures	Indicative Budget	Responsible parties
	Marketing of chartertrips from Kasnäs and Korpoström into archipelago	Project funding	Väståboland, Kimitoön, entrepreneurs
	Training: local life and environment in the eyes of foreigners and how to sell it	Project funding	LPPG
	Training: What is Sustainable Nature Tourism?	Input from current employees	Metsähallitus, PAN Parks
Develop a number of sustainable tourism products suitable for the outer archipelago	Planning a package with the chance to watch seals, white-tail eagles and wildlife in all its forms	Project funding	Local businesses, Metsähallitus
2. A common, sustainable and high-quality brand and a uniform image for the region			
Boost the businesses' sales by way of first-rate sustainable products and activities during all seasons	Creating specific "key products" to be expanded in the long term. The products support existing products and infrastructure, e.g. the ferry network	Project funding	Väståboland, Turku Touring, Kimitoön, local businesses, Finnish Maritime Administration
Improve the information material about the area	Map of the archipelago area, information on entrances to the area etc.	Project funding	Väståboland, Kimitoön, Biosphere Reserve, Metsähallitus
Strengthen the image of the unique archipelago area	Joint marketing of the strategy area	Project funding	Väståboland, Turku Touring, Regional Council of Southwest Finland, Kimitoön, Metsähallitus, local businesses
Chance to create quality management system for local businesses	Selecting a quality management system; monitoring PAN Parks-related products and businesses	Input from current employees	Local PAN Parks Group
	Training in the quality system	Project funding	Local PAN Parks Group, educational institutions, universities of applied sciences, local businesses

Strategic objective	Measures	Indicative Budget	Responsible parties
3. Developing nature tourism in the Archipelago National Park			
Development of zones and related infrastructure within the national park	Customer Service Points: Visitor Centre Blåmusslan, Nature Information Huts in Jurmo and in Berghamn, Archipelago Centre	EUR 525,000 Project funding	Metsähallitus
	Islands with strong entrepreneurship (Jurmo, Nötö, Utö): information boards	EUR 3,000	Metsähallitus
	National park (NP) islands for active use of entrepreneurs (Jungfruskär, Berghamn, Kråkskär, Högländ, Stora Hästö, Konungskär): improvement of facilities	EUR 479,000 Project funding	Metsähallitus
	NP islands with public right of access (Björkö, Boskär, Dalskär, Holma, Högsåra/Sandvik, Långlandet, Sandö, Yxskär: piers, buoys etc.	EUR 53,000 Project funding	Metsähallitus
Production of information materials, in several languages	For foreigners English language	EUR 30,000	Metsähallitus
	Marine Nature Trail	EUR 2,000/each	Metsähallitus
	Visibility of ANP on ferries, at harbours and entrances	EUR 20,000 Project funding	Väståboland, Kimitoön, Metsähallitus
	For foreign boaters: practical information about local systems, like the use of septic tanks	EUR 5,000	Keep the Archipelago Tidy organisation, Väståboland, Kimitoön, Metsähallitus,
	For entrepreneurs and guides: information material about ANP, for example important species in the national park	EUR 40,000 Project funding	Metsähallitus
	For visitors of Blåmusslan and Archipelago Centre: AV material from wilderness area and material about important species in the national park	EUR 60,000 Project funding	Metsähallitus

Strategic objective	Measures	Indicative Budget	Responsible parties
Developing a concept and the resources for monitoring the environmental impacts of tourism	Surveys of visitors and local businesses every five years	EUR 6,000/survey	Metsähallitus
Training and information for co-operation partners and for local businesses/guides	Training programmes for local businesses (to improve knowledge of nature, customer service, marketing and other areas that support nature tourism businesses)	EUR 20,000 project funding to create courses and course materials	Metsähallitus, Town of Väståboland, co-operation with educational institutions (universities of applied sciences)

B. Proposed measures that could be carried out in the long term within the Archipelago National Park and the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve:

Strategic objective	Measures	Indicative Budget	Responsible parties
1. Development of sustainable tourism in the strategy area			
Create transportation connections between the eastern and the western parts of the archipelago (incl. circle route for island hopping)		Project funding	Väståboland, Kimitoön, Local businesses, Finnish Maritime Administration
Develop opportunities for visitors to experience the marine environment. Raise awareness of the cultural landscapes, as well as the nature, villages and culture of the archipelago	Connections from Archipelago Trail, for example a canoe trip into the Brunskär area or the possibility to explore the underwater trail	Project funding	Väståboland, entrepreneurs
2. Developing nature tourism in the Archipelago National Park			
Development of zones and related infrastructure within the national park	Guide services on Berghamn, Jungfruskär and Kråkskär	EUR 10,000/island	Metsähallitus, entrepreneurs
Developing a concept and the resources for monitoring the environmental impacts of tourism	Survey of local residents every five years	EUR 6,000/survey	Metsähallitus
	Environmental monitoring (of both terrestrial and marine environments) according to LAC	Basic data EUR 11,000 (three months' work) EUR 10,000 for technical equipment EUR 3,500/year for updating the data (one month's work) Project funding	Metsähallitus

Strategic objective	Measures	Indicative Budget	Responsible parties
Training and information for co-operation partners and for local businesses/guides	Training of nature guides (e.g. from LBP) operating within and outside the NP	EUR 20,000 project funding to create courses and course materials	Metsähallitus, Town of Väståboland, co-operation with educational institutions (universities of applied sciences)
Contact person for PAN Parks and development of the area		EUR 45,000	Local PAN Parks Group, Metsähallitus, Regional Council of Southwest Finland
Establishing Brunskär area as an example of a wilderness area in the Archipelago National Park	Simple structures in Långlandet, information material		Metsähallitus, PAN Parks organisation
4. Developing nature tourism and the information offering in other important areas			
Functional logistics within the area	A route for bicycles and pedestrians along the Archipelago Trail		Väståboland, Kimitoön, Finnish Maritime Administration, Finnish Road Administration, Government of Finland
	Transit between Kasnäs and the southern archipelago		Kimitoön, Finnish Maritime Administration, Government of Finland
New products adapted for the outer archipelago (Vänö-Gärskär-Borstö, Jurmo-Kalkskär, Utö-Alunskär)			Local businesses, private persons and Metsähallitus

9 Division of the strategy area into zones within the Archipelago National Park's co-operation area

9.1 Restricted zones

The restricted zone around Trunsö-Kalkskär comprises 10,000 hectares. The area is completely off-limits to visitors and is also a PAN Parks wilderness area, i.e. one of the outstanding assets of the Archipelago National Park. Other smaller zones with restrictions are presented on the map below. These areas are restricted throughout the year or during the hatching period for birds, from 1 April to 31 July.

9.2 The wilderness area around Brunskär

In order to offer visitors the possibility to experience a wilderness-like environment similar to the PAN Parks core area in Trunsö, a so-called “wilderness consideration zone” (hänsynsområde) area, will be established south of Stora Hästö, on the islands around Birsskär and Brunskär. In practise the establishment of the area is taking place through management planning; this new zone is a sub-zone of the wilderness zone in the Finnish management and land-use planning system. The idea is to minimise construction, and locate buildings on Långlandet. Visitors are asked to refrain from making noise and to operate their boats at a low speed.

9.3 Recreation and nature tourism

The category “recreation and nature tourism” exists for areas that are open to people visiting the Archipelago National Park's co-operation area. This category is divided into four zones depending on the degree of use and the stakeholders operating in the areas.

a) Mostly private businesses: Utö, Jurmo, Nötö

The islands can be reached by ferry and have permanent habitation all year round. These areas are mostly privately owned and only a small fraction is part of the Archipelago National Park. Private businesses are therefore responsible for tourism in the area and their services are still being developed. Metsähallitus's role within the area's public administration is minimal: The primary task is currently to maintain the Nature Information Hut and information boards on Jurmo. In future the co-operation with private businesses may be developed or the infrastructure expanded if the need arises. (Yellow line in Figure 11)

b) Development of Metsähallitus's facilities for visitors and local tourism businesses

Metsähallitus prioritises certain areas that are popular with visitors or that have potential for recreation and sustainable nature tourism. Nature trails have different themes that attract different customer groups (the marine environment and divers, cultural history and traditions, cultural landscapes and managed biotopes etc.). Metsähallitus encourages businesses to make use of these areas or rent facilities for their operations. Metsähallitus provides facilities for nature schools and also develops information materials for children.

The Blåmusslan Visitor Centre plays an important part as a gateway to the national park. Up-to-date information about the area and basic information about the distinctive features of the area should be made available to both children and grown-ups. The Blåmusslan Visitor Centre has a long tradition of hosting groups of children and youths. The exhibit at Blåmusslan needs to be renewed and partly be in a format which would allow the information to be updated inexpensively. Services are provided in Kasnäs in the form of a hotel and a guest harbour and the national park can provide new experiences for visitors. In future guided tours to e.g. Holma and Jungfruholm can be arranged from Kasnäs, if the need arises.

The co-operation between Metsähallitus and the Korpoström Archipelago Centre is being developed and the centre is categorised as a joint information centre. The private businesses are responsible for activities in the area; however Metsähallitus and the national park should be made more visible. The Archipelago Centre also has potential for co-operating with regular schools and nature schools. The presence of visitors in the area means that up-to-date information needs to be provided through materials and personnel. To this end, the personnel of Blåmusslan and the Archipelago Centre could jointly train seasonal employees. The national park can easily be reached from Korpoström by kayak or charter boat.

The following areas within the national park have higher priority for being developed for visitors (Blue line in Figure 11):

Jungfruskär

- Co-operation with businesses that can provide services and experiences, courses, guide services as well as an entrepreneur to assume responsibility for landscape architecture.
- Development of accommodation possibilities is needed (a former barracks house, a watch hut and other buildings that remain on Junfruskär after the Defence Forces ended its operations on the island).
- Information about Jungfruskär's wooded meadows and cultural history should be developed as well as information about the Defence Forces' activities between 1940 and 1990 e.g. in a casemate by the harbour.
- Buoys for visiting boats are needed in order to decrease the erosion of the seabed environment.

Stora Hästö and Konungskär

- A destination situated close to the Archipelago Centre.
- On Stora Hästö the marine nature trail will be supplemented with information boards on the marine environment – on land. Information for children will also be provided.
- The open wilderness hut on Konungskär may be used for short-term accommodation even during colder seasons.
- Buoys for visiting boats are needed.

Nagu Berghamn

- Profiled as a destination close to Pärnäs harbour and the Korpoström Archipelago Centre. Berghamn can be visited by ferry.

- Co-operation with businesses that can provide services and experiences, guide services as well as an entrepreneur to assume responsibility for landscape architecture.
- The nature trail needs to be renewed and a map of the area is to be placed at the lookout-point.
- The Archipelago Homestead Västerby could function as a museum and its information material needs updating to include information on e.g. the habitation history of Berghamn, which stretches back to the 16th century. Västerby could also provide accommodation for entrepreneurs, offering for example guide services.

Kråkskär

- Kråkskär represents an important cultural historic part of the archipelago – the fisherman's croft.
- Co-operation with businesses that can build up and provide services, experiences and guide services.
- Photographs depicting life on Kråkskär during the previous century will be collected and presented in an album in the cabin.
- Buoys for visiting boats (in the southern bay) and moorings are needed.

Jungfruholmen

- A potential, attractive and diverse destination for day-trips close to Kasnäs. At the moment it has no infrastructure.
- Co-operation with businesses that can provide services, experiences and guide services.
- The island is situated next to former fairways and represents the area's maritime history.
- Service infrastructure for visitors – outhouses, campfire sites, improved mooring possibilities, especially if charter trips are initiated – and information materials in the form of a nature trail or brochures.
- The potential for an underwater nature trail in the area is under investigation (2009).

Högländ

- Högländ is situated close to roads and local businesses.
- The potential for an underwater nature trail in the area is under investigation (2009).
- The nature trail will be renewed.

Bodö

- Metsähallitus is seeking ways to make use of a former coastguard station (2009).
- The area has recently been incorporated into the national park and an increasing number of visitors are heading to the former coastguard pier.

c) Other areas with public infrastructure that are managed by Metsähallitus

The national park also contains some nature trails and excursion harbours that are not so suitable for regular use by businesses. These areas are primarily suited for occasional visitors arriving by boat. Islands in this category include, among others, Boskär, Björkö, Dalskär, Holma, Högsåra, Sandön and Yxskär (Green line in Figure 11). Some areas still require work in order to be able to provide visitors with service and information. The areas are maintained and the infrastructure is dimensioned for current levels of demand.

9.4. Areas outside the co-operation area

This chapter presents those areas of the biosphere reserve that are outside the co-operation area but attractive for nature tourism.

Kimitoön Municipality aims to create services for visitors travelling independently. The objectives include providing a canoe route around the island, complete with accommodation and restaurants. The municipality is also trying to promote cycling routes on the island.

In the outer archipelago, on Rosala and Bengtskär, the objective is to increase networking and to harmonise the area's existing tourism services.

In the Town of Väståboland a substantial change is expected when the Archipelago Trail begins to operate all year round (expected in 2012). This will entail completely new possibilities for tourism operators. The town also plans to invest in bicycle tourism. The Archipelago Trail acutely needs bicycle and pedestrian roads.

Plans have been made to build a guest harbour in Iniö. Iniö is another area that will see increased tourism in the future as a result of the Archipelago Trail.

The Town of Väståboland is investing in the general facilities needed to accommodate tourists; increasing the quality and availability of accommodation etc. The town will produce new information materials, for instance a new map of the hiking trails.

The area has an extensive cultural network. In addition to all the different events there is a significant number of galleries and other sights. A project called Konstrundan (the Art Tour) promotes co-operation between artists and gives them an outlet to market their work. This is also a good way for visitors to discover all the hidden gems to be found along the Archipelago Trail.

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Members of the Local PAN Parks Group, May 2008 – March 2009

Members of the LPPG	Organisation
Backman Bengt/Gräsbäck Jan	Outer Archipelago Delegation
Björkroth Tomas	Pelago
Björkstén Nina	Backaro
Bonnevier Katja	The Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve
Enberg Mats/Enberg Amanda	Högsåra
Hoffström Pirjo	Finlands skärgårdsbokning
Lemmetyinen Liisa	Turku Touring
Karlsson-Parra Inguar	Destination Finland Seaside
Lehtonen Laura /	Metsähallitus /
Lehtomaa Leena	Southwest Finland Regional Environment Centre
Liljeqvist Wilhelm	Salmon Farm
Lindholm Bo	Nagu Municipality
Louko Laura	Strandbo group
Mattsson Clary-Ann/Mattsson Jerker	Jurmo, Jurmo village community
Nilsson Martti	Region Åboland
Paetau Curt-Johan	Kimito Region Åboland
Penttilä Tapio	Regional Council of Southwest Finland
Vähämaa Timo	Finnish Maritime Administration

The group has held meetings on the following dates: 14 May, 26 June, 8 August, 28 August, 14 November, 13 March.

Composition of the future Local PAN Parks Group as of May 2009

Members of the LPPG	Organisation
Bonnevier Katja	The Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve
Gestranius Niclas	The Town of Väståboland
Hirvenoja Satu	Turku Touring
Lindholm Bo	The Town of Väståboland
Paetau Curt-Johan	Kimitoön Municipality
Relanto Pia	Korpoström Archipelago Centre
Vähämaa Timo	Finnish Maritime Administration
Lehtonen Laura	Metsähallitus, Group Secretary

Metsähallitus's principles for sustainable nature tourism

1. Natural values are preserved and all activities promote nature conservation

- Nature is an important reason for visits.
- Visitors can learn about nature and conservation.
- Tourism does not disturb nature, not all areas are suited to tourism.
- Groups are small, and use marked trails wherever possible.
- Tourism is channelled into areas with suitable facilities.
- Facilities are designed to fit in with the surroundings; the most beautiful areas are left undeveloped.
- Erosion and other impacts are monitored, with corrective measures taken as needed.

2. The environment is subjected to as little pressure as possible.

- Nature comes first; every effort is taken to avoid damage or disturbance.
- Visitors leave no trace behind them.
- Firewood is used sparingly.
- Emissions of all kinds are minimised, and renewable energy sources preferred.
- Metsähallitus and other organisations set good examples on environmental protection.

3. Local traditions and cultures are respected.

- Visitors are encouraged to learn about local cultures.
- Local cultures are suitably considered in the provision of information and activities.
- Guides are familiar with local conditions.

4. Visitors increase their understanding and appreciation of nature and cultures.

- Information is available for visitors before they come.
- Information is easily available and attractively presented.
- Visitors can contribute to the management of the area.
- Guides are well trained.

5. Improved recreational facilities are provided for visitors.

- The needs of all visitors are considered.
- Facilities suit local demand and conditions.
- Visitors can enjoy peace and quiet, as well as guided activities.
- Facilities and services are developed in co-operation with local firms.

6. Visitors are encouraged to enjoy both mental and physical recreation.

- Visitors are encouraged to move under their own steam.
- Facilities are provided for hikers and other visitors.
- Easy and demanding routes are available.
- Opportunities exist for a variety of activities in natural surroundings.
- All trails and other facilities are safe.

7. Local economies and employment are promoted.

- Local firms' products and services are used where possible.
- Employment is given to local people where possible, although outsiders may contribute valuable ideas to help promote local development.

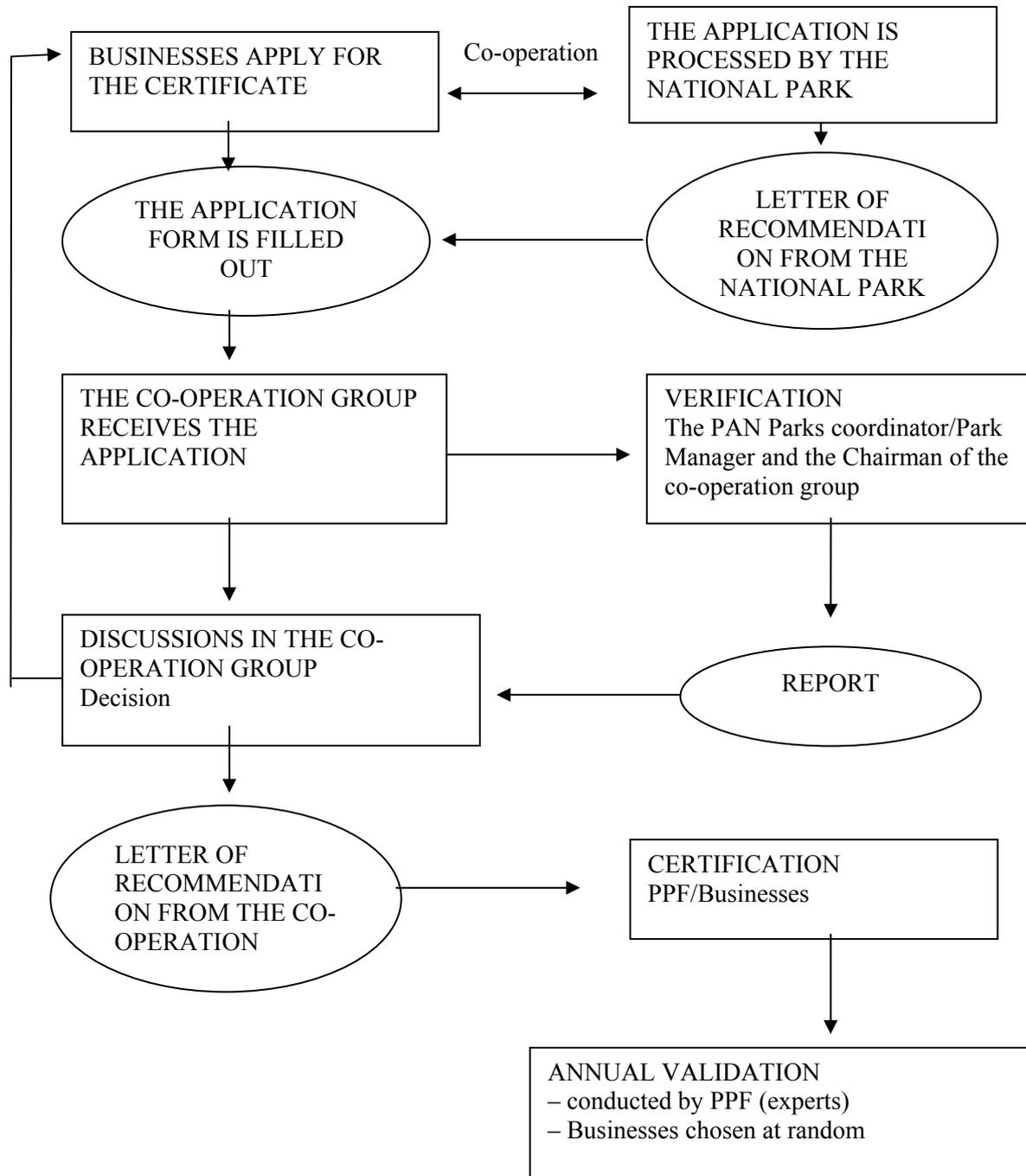
8. Publicity materials are produced responsibly and carefully

- Information is reliable and up-to-date.
- Publicity work is conducted openly and interactively.
- Publicity does not work against nature conservation.

9. Activities are planned and organised co-operatively.

- Visitors' opinions are very important.
- Training is organised together with local firms.
- All interested parties may participate in planning.
- In co-operation work, preference is given to organisations committed to these principles of sustainable nature tourism.

Verification procedure for PAN Parks Business Partners



Potential Local Business PAN Parks Partners

Companies wich have agreement on co-operation or agreement on utilisation and co-operation with the Archipelago Nationalpark in August 2008 and therefore possibility to apply for PAN Parks parthership.

Anders Mickelsson

Backaro Bed & breakfast

Destination Finland Seaside

Finlands Skärgårdsbokning

Meriranta Oy

Moln

Nagu Charterbåtar

Oy Pensar Syd Ab

Portosol Ab Oy

Skeppargården

Strandbo Group

Proposed indicators and measurement methods for monitoring the environmental impacts of tourism as well as social and economic sustainability

Limits will be defined when data becomes available. Consequently it is important that the indicators be quantifiable and that measures can be put in place if the limits are exceeded.

Ecological sustainability in the Archipelago National Park

Principle	Objective	Indicators	Measurement method
Natural values are preserved and all activities promote nature conservation	Tourism does not harm endangered or rare species	1. Number of successful nestings of White-tailed Eagles	Inventories
		2. Number of Ringed Seals	Inventories/estimates
		3. Monitoring of <i>Zostera</i> , <i>Chara</i>	Test plots, changes in area
	Tourism does not harm natural values or marine species	4. Species composition, biodiversity	Test plots
	Nature tourism benefits or at the least does not reduce scenic values	5. Visitors' assessments of the environment, opinions on the visit	Visitor and resident surveys
	Regulations are followed	6. Monitoring of the number of offences (dogs without leashes, fishing and camping without permits, unauthorized campfires etc.)	Data collected by employees of the national park, feedback
The environment is subjected to as little pressure as possible	Terrain erosion remains within acceptable limits	7. Deterioration and erosion around nature trails	Test plots, photographs
		8. Deterioration around camping sites	Test plots, photographs
		9. Visitors' opinions on deterioration in the environment	Visitor survey
	Seabed erosion remains within acceptable limits	10. Deterioration and anchor traces on the seabed	Test plots
	The seabed is kept free of litter	11. Litter on the seabed	Test plots
	Commercial activities are well organised and group sizes are adjusted to the environment	12. Number of co-operation agreements	
		13. Number of meetings with local businesses	
		14. Number of organised excursions	Feedback from local businesses

Principle	Objective	Indicators	Measurement method
	Water quality is not impaired	15. Number of facilities for emptying septic tanks within the co-operation area	Statistics from Keep the Archipelago Tidy association
		16. Number of facilities for emptying septic tanks in relation to the number of visiting boats	Statistics from Keep the Archipelago Tidy association
		17. Continuous monitoring of water values (O ₂ , algae) on Jurmo	Measurement instruments

Social sustainability in the Archipelago National Park

Principle	Objective	Indicators	Measurement method	
Respect for local culture and traditions	The archipelago culture is part of the landscape and sights	1. Number of managed biotopes and their surface area	Statistics	
		2. Number of voluntary work camps and number of participants	Statistics	
		3. Number of working hours devoted to managed biotopes	Metsähallitus's working hours bank	
	Metsähallitus's activities are approved of	Local residents endorse the activities of local businesses	4. Residents' opinions on tourism	Surveys every five years
			5. Opinions on Metsähallitus's activities among local businesses	Survey of local businesses
			6. Opinions on Metsähallitus's activities among residents	Surveys every five years
Visitors increase their understanding and appreciation of nature and culture	Visitors increase their understanding of the local culture and environment	7. Number of guided tours	Feedback from local businesses and ASTA (Metsähallitus's database for visitor information)	
		8. Number of participants in guided tours	Feedback from local businesses and ASTA (Metsähallitus's database for visitor information)	
	Visitors are interested in nature, ask questions and look for information	9. Number of visits on www.outdoors.fi	website statistics for www.outdoors.fi	
		10. Number of visitors in the national park	ASTA	
		11. Number of visitors at Blåmusslan Visitor Centre	ASTA	

Principle	Objective	Indicators	Measurement method
		12. Number of visitors at the Archipelago Centre	ASTA
	Nature is an important motive for visits	13. Visitors' reasons and motivations for visiting the area	Visitor surveys every five years
		14. Spontaneous feedback from visitors	Guest books
Improved recreational facilities are provided for visitors	A high standard of tourism and recreation is maintained in the area	15. Visitors' experiences of the area and its services	Visitor surveys, feedback
	Visitors show consideration for other visitors	16. Visitors' opinions on other visitors	Visitor surveys every five years
	Increased availability of nature tourism products	17. Number of co-operation agreements	Statistics
		18. Products provided by co-operating businesses	Survey of local businesses
Visitors are encouraged to enjoy both mental and physical recreation	Visitors gain individual nature experiences	19. Visitors' expectations are met	Visitor surveys every five years
	Visitors feel rested and relaxed	20. Did the infrastructure and environment meet expectations?	Visitor surveys every five years
	The infrastructure safety is of high quality	21. Visitors' experiences and satisfaction during visits	Visitor surveys every five years
		22. Have visitors visited the area before?	Visitor surveys

Economic sustainability in the Archipelago National Park

Principle	Objective	Indicators	Measurement method
Positive effect on local economy and employment	Nature tourism creates opportunities for local businesses	1. Number of co-operation agreements	Statistics
		2. Increase in sold services	Feedback from local businesses
		3. Number of joint products	Survey of local businesses
Sustainable publicity and marketing materials of high quality	Information is easily accessible and up-to-date Information about what is allowed and appropriate in the national park	4. Visitors' expectations are met	Visitor survey: How well did the visit meet expectations concerning nature, activities and services?
		5. Number of visits on www.outdoors.fi	web site statistics for www.outdoors.fi
		6. Increased demand for nature tourism products	Feedback from local businesses
Activities are planned and organised co-operatively	Businesses with co-operation agreements/a PAN Parks certificate share a common image	7. An increased number of foreign visitors	Visitor surveys every five years
		8. Number of participants in courses and meetings	
		9. Number of joint products	
		10. Co-operation with other interest groups (Town of Väståboland, Kimitoön Municipality, different associations)	Number of meetings Internal statistics
		11. Regional economic impacts	Studies
		12. National park's utilisation rate	Feedback from local businesses

Charter of the Archipelago National Park Co-operation Group / Local PAN Parks Group (LPPG)



The main tasks of the group and its members are to:

- Take care of LBP applications and verifications and to forward these to the PAN Parks Foundation.
- Appoint the specialists who are responsible for the verification of the potential Business Partners.
- Be responsible for implementing some of the objectives pointed out in the STDS.
- Supervise and update the STDS.
- Spread information about PAN Parks and the values and benefits that the Archipelago National Park gives to the region.
- Operate simultaneously as a working group for developing nature and culture tourism in the Archipelago Biosphere Reserve.
- The secretary and the group are in active contact with PAN Parks in order to develop the area and the PAN Parks network.

Operating policy

- The chairman is elected for one year at a time. Every year both eastern and western parts of the archipelago need to be represented (chairman from either area).
- The Metsähallitus delegate will also function as secretary.
- Each member can have a deputy member. The deputy member can participate and each member takes care of providing sufficient information to the deputy member and receiving it from them.
- Approximately two meetings a year are arranged. More can be arranged if needed. Also teleconferences are possible. No meeting fee will be paid to the participants. Metsähallitus covers the smaller meeting expenses for catering and the meeting room.
- A meeting is competent if more than half of the members are present.
- Decisions are made by voting after a discussion. One vote/member. In case of an even vote the vote of the chairman is decisive. If needed, the chairman can also set up a vote via e-mail.

Newest Nature Protection Publications of Metsähallitus

Series A

- No 180 Koskela, K. (toim.) 2009: Ennallistaminen, luonnonhoito ja seuranta Vattajan Dyyini Life-hankkeessa 2005–2009. 218 s.
- No 181 Koskela, K. & Sievänen, M. (eds) 2009: Restoration, environmental management and monitoring in the Vattaja Dyne Life project 2005–2009. 39 s.
- No 182 Junninen, K. 2009: Kalkkikäävän (*Antrodia crassa*) suojeluselvytykset. 51 s.
- No 183 Yliniva, M. & Keskinen, E. 2009: Perämeren kansallispuiston pohjaeläimet. 46 s.
- No 184 Leinonen, K. & Mutenia, A. 2009: Lokan ja Porttipahdan tekojärvien kalakantojen tila. 32 s.

Series B

- No 113 Aaltonen, A. & Mäki, S. 2009: Saaristomeren kansallispuiston kävijätutkimus 2008. 64 s.
- No 114 Mäki, S. 2009: Saaristomeren kansallispuiston yritystutkimus 2008. 51 s.
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