



INSPIRES
RESILIENT TOURISM

Session 1: Introduction to Regenerative Tourism



Contents

The aim of this session is to explore the concept of regenerative development and how it is applied in the tourism context from SMEs perspective.

Keywords: Regenerative development, Regenerative tourism, Regenerative business

Why we talk about regenerative tourism?

- SMEs play a major role in accelerating the green transition and responding to ecological and social challenges. They are responsible for the wellbeing of the nature and the community.
 - **SMEs are the change agents towards a more sustainable future!**
- However, sustainability is not sufficient to respond to growing concerns related to ecological degeneration and social inequalities.
 - **Reducing the negative impacts of business operations in SMEs is NOT seen enough to respond to current challenges!**
- Therefore, we must go much **deeper**: a major transformation in the way we approach **both sustainability and the role of business in society** is required!

A dark green, multi-pointed starburst shape with the word "Instability" written in white text in the center.

Instability

A dark green, multi-pointed starburst shape with the word "Vulnerability" written in white text in the center.

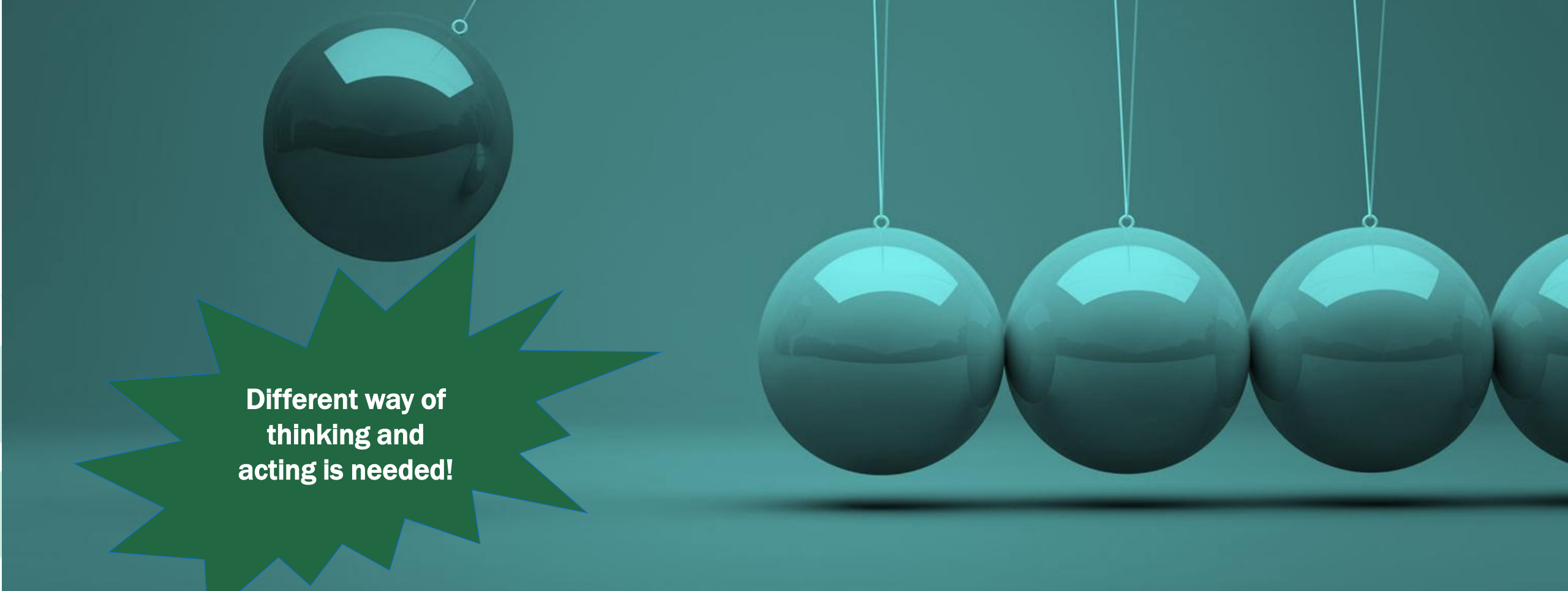
Vulnerability

A dark green, multi-pointed starburst shape with the word "Overtourism" written in white text in the center.

Overtourism

Regenerative development?

- Regenerative development has been identified as **one of the most crucial issues** that will have the greatest impact on ensuring our planet and future generations have the best chance of survival.
- Regenerative development is **a broader concept** and **a more holistic approach** than sustainable development.
 - It is not a version 2.0 of sustainability but **a different mindset to think about the role of business in this planet and the connection between economy, nature and people.**
- In regenerative mindset, economy, nature and people are not seen as separate dimensions part as an interconnected system.
- Nature is not something that the economy exploits, uses as a resource. Economy supports the capability of a social-ecological system to **continuously renew itself**, with the aim of promoting **the well-being of nature and people** and strengthening human agency in partnership with nature.
 - The economy is a tool to increase the wellbeing of nature and people and the system's capacity to thrive.
- According to this view, human activity is an integral part of the social-ecological system, making **people part of nature and their activity dependent on nature**. The same laws and principles of nature apply to all activities. This means that we have to understand living systems thinking.

A Newton's cradle with five silver spheres. The leftmost sphere is in motion, having just struck the others or about to. The other four spheres are stationary. The background is a dark teal color.

**Different way of
thinking and
acting is needed!**

**SMEs should redefine business sustainability
and how to do sustainable business!**



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Vocabulary

- **Holism:** A philosophical concept that sees the universe, and in particular living nature, as a set of interacting living organisms. The whole is more than the sum of its parts.
- **Regeneration:** A continuous process that reinforces the capacity of something to renew and evolve. It is usually used to describe the support of evolutionary processes that enable systems to renew or repair themselves.
- **Regenerative:** Strengthening, revitalising or invigorating the health and vitality of something.
- **Systemic:** System-wide, everything affects everything else. Systemic change is the simultaneous transformation of patterns, structures and their interactions to create the conditions for future prosperity.
- **Net positivity:** A state in which a company causes more net good than net harm to the environment.

Systems thinking

- Systems thinking is the basis of regenerative mindset and tourism.
- A holistic perspective that recognises the interconnectedness and interdependencies of all elements within a system.
- This means that tourism **is a system**, not an industry.
 - Regenerative tourism is about **sybiotic and interconnected relationships of human and non-human stakeholders with the communities and places they operate in to improve the quality of life for all** (Bellato et al., 2022).

Regenerative tourism is place-sourced

- Regenerative tourism is **not a type of tourism** - it is an approach that aims to **fulfil the potential of tourism places** to flourish.
 - A place is defined as a unique, multi-layered **network of living systems within a geographic region**.
 - By the potential is meant **how the place contributes to the vitality of the larger system** it is embedded in.
- Regenerative tourism is about **increasing the regenerative capacity of natural and human living systems** in the geographic region the SME is embedded in.
- It is about deep connection and respect for place and its community. Focus is on the characteristics of **a place and its community** – these are the basis for understanding what is really being regenerated.
- This means that a customer is **a guest** who participates in **building the capacity** of this system in the selected place.

A regenerative tourism SME works actively to bring about positive change and benefits for the wellbeing of nature and people and to increase the capacity of nature, communities, and individuals to flourish.

About Granö Beckasin

Granö Beckasin is a destination and a hotel in the deep forest of northern Sweden. Our goal and purpose is clear: We want our rural area to thrive and grow. You might say we measure growth not in money, but in the amount of residents and entrepreneurs in our little village.

This has been our purpose from day one.

We wanted to share what already exists here in Granö, and offer people from around the world the opportunity to experience the forest, the river and the wildlife. The stillness, silence and peace. The unique eight seasons we have here in northern Sweden. The fantastic food we eat. The outdoor activities and lifestyle that is naturally part of our lives.




Differences between sustainable and regenerative development



| | Sustainable development | Regenerative development |
|-----------------|--|---|
| World view | Mechanistic | Ecological |
| Potential | Universal solutions to problems | Place-based development to increase potential |
| Power relations | Top-down, expert-driven | Bottom-up, all stakeholders share expertise |
| The system | Separate ecological, social and economic dimensions, production and sectoral focus | All dimensions are interdependent, systems thinking |
| Change agents | Private sector, government-led | Local communities |
| Cooperation | Stakeholder involvement, expert-centred, non-natural activities | Broad stakeholder involvement, nature is a stakeholder, community-based |
| Purpose | Contribute to sustainable development, reduce operational harm, create sustainable economic growth | Building systemic capacity to deliver positive social, environmental and economic impacts |

From sustainable to regenerative business: what is the business impact?

- 
- A thick blue arrow points downwards from the top of the slide to the bottom, indicating a progression or transition from the top concept to the bottom concept.
- Sustainable mindset
 - Is about not doing harm and be less harmful: the business impact is **neutral**.
 - Focuses on identifying the harms a SME causes across its value chain which need to be eliminated.
 - Aims: zero emissions, using water and energy within ecological limits, not contributing to biodiversity loss, offering equal opportunities for all.
 - Regenerative mindset
 - SMEs build capacity for regeneration, to achieve **positive change**.
 - Recognises that humans are part of nature through participatory approaches; solving interconnected human and planetary health issues so that living systems can thrive together.
 - *Tailored approaches* are designed to regenerate based on the resources of the place and community.

What can be regenerated?

- SMEs should analyse **what they are regenerating**: to which themes they focus to have a positive impact on nature and society?
- Regeneration can focus on **nature, social or individual level** regeneration:
 - *Nature regeneration* can be related to biodiversity, soil, water bodies, forest regeneration and animal welfare.
 - *Social regeneration* can be related to community regeneration.
 - *Individual regeneration* is about human health and well-being regeneration.

Restoring Carbon Sinks

Haltia Lake Lodge actively participates in peatland restoration in Nuuksio National Park. Peatlands serve as significant carbon sinks, sequestering carbon dioxide and helping to mitigate climate change. We build dams for rewetting drained peatlands, promoting the recovery of natural ecosystem services. This way, we can strengthen the health of protected habitats and increase the area's biodiversity.



Photos:
Haltia Lake Lodge

Nature and social regeneration at Haltia Lake Lodge

Collaboration and Community Responsibility

We are committed to promoting the wellbeing of local communities and preserving cultural heritage. We collaborate with local producers and utilize local food to offer our guests fresh and ecological culinary experiences. We also participate in local employment and provide learning and work opportunities, for example, for students with special needs by utilizing their handmade insect hotels as part of the hotel grounds.



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How?

- 1) Reflect on **the way the SME thinks** about the economy, nature and society.
- 2) Explore **the impact** of the SME's activities on nature and society. Assess its potential to generate wellbeing for the social-ecological system it is embedded in.
- 3) Assess **the characteristics of the place and community** – what can be regenerated? What is special in the place and community?
- 4) Select **the main themes** for your SME to contribute to regeneration. Set targets, make an action plan with measures.

Summary

- Regenerative development is about adopting a regenerative mindset for doing business.
- It is about thinking about economy, business purpose and success differently.
- It is about having a positive impact on nature and society with operating a profitable business.

Activities

Business case

- In the attachment, you will find a business case.
- Read the case and **reflect the following questions:**
 - What are the main regenerative elements this SME has adopted? How can you conclude this?
 - How this SME creates positive changes and benefits?
 - What is being regenerated?

References

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