



INSPIRES
RESILIENT TOURISM

Session 2: Regenerative tourism offerings



Co-funded by
the European Union

This project receives funding from the European Union's
SMP Programme under Grant Agreement No 101181590.



Sanna-Mari Renfors



Contents

The aim of this session is to increase understanding on different types of regenerative tourism products and their development.

Keywords: regenerative products, regenerative product development

Prerequisites of regenerative product development

- Before tourism SMEs start developing regenerative tourism products, it is important to understand the thinking underlying regenerative tourism, which creates the basis for product development.

Regenerative tourism product?

- Regenerative tourism product development can be characterised as developing tourism **products that contribute to the overall wellbeing of the social-ecological system** the SME is embedded in and build the system's capacity to thrive.
 - In tourism products, **humans participate in the co-evolution of the social-ecological system** the SME is embedded in.
 - A product is **just the beginning** of the co-evolutionary partnership of nature and communities. **It is about starting a regenerative process!**
- Regenerative tourism product can be defined as **a capacity-building journey**, where the **ideas are place-sourced** and based on the identification of local ecological and social challenges.
- In this journey, **tourism products can be considered as means to improve the condition of natural and human living systems** in the selected place and community.

Regenerative tourism practice principles



- **Principle 1: Draw from an ecological worldview**
 - Regenerative tourism values harmonious relationships between humans and the rest of nature.
- **Principle 2: Use living systems thinking**
 - Regenerative tourism approaches include a wide range of stakeholders with shared interests in the health of a place. Broadly, ‘tourism living system stakeholders’ take on transformative roles that contribute to the regeneration of themselves, places and communities.
- **Principle 3: Discover the unique potential of a regenerative tourism place**
 - Regenerative tourism focuses on identifying and progressing what places and communities can uniquely become rather than identifying problems and assigning universal solutions.
- **Principle 4: Create regenerative places and communities**
 - Regenerative tourism enables net-positive impacts and effects on ecosystems by contributing to the conditions that restore systems (places and communities) and supports them to self-generate continually.
- **Principle 5: Collaborate to evolve and enact**
 - Collaborative participation is core to regeneration processes and prioritises harmony over competition.



Starting point for product development



- 1) Engage people** in meaningful dialogue and activities that inspire personal reflection, relationships between individuals and provide perspectives on the joint challenges.
- 2) Uncover unique ecological and social challenges, potential of the place and values and aspirations of the community** for product development.
- 3) Explore the SME's possibility to contribute to improving the wellbeing of the social-ecological system by asking what can be regenerated in this system by developing tourism products. What kind of regenerative processes the SME wants to start in this system?**

Ecological and human regeneration



- Ecological regeneration is about **the ability of planet's biosphere to build, maintain, repair, and reproduce itself**, in other words about maximising life's capacity to sustain its organisation, productivity, and resilience.
 - The purpose of the product can be related for example to biodiversity regeneration, soil health and land regeneration, water body or forest restoration.
- Human regeneration entails **community regeneration** empowering communities to thrive and **individual regeneration** promoting better human health.
 - The purpose of the product can be related for example to cultural regeneration.



Example of biodiversity regeneration

Hawkhill Cottage Resort in Finland has developed regenerative tourism products centered around **combating the invasive species garden lupine**. The company considers it important to spread awareness about how lupine disrupts native ecosystems and the importance of removing it to stop its spread. The company organises events, the so-called Lupin Battles, to remove them in collaboration with local entrepreneurs, residents, and guests. In addition, the company organises lupine retreats, which include removing as well as relaxation time, a lupine dyeing workshop, a meadow picnic, and the making of lupine wreaths and bouquets. (Photo: Hawkhill)



Example of animal welfare

A Finnish regenerative tourism product by Karelia Cottages is related to **protecting the Saimaa ringed seal**. Due to low snowfall in recent winters and rapid changes in weather conditions, Saimaa ringed seals have had difficulty finding suitable natural ice floes for nesting. The idea behind this guided regenerative tourism product is to help Saimaa ringed seals during winters with low snowfall by creating artificial ice floes. At the same time, guests learn about nature regeneration and the unique way of life in the lake area. The product is implemented in accordance with national Park and Wildlife Finland guidelines, with experts and researchers involved in the implementation of the product. (Photo: Karelia Cottages)



Example of water body regeneration

Sauga Fishing Village in Estonia has developed their **regenerative fishing tourism product** called Trash fishing in Sauga River. Trash fishing is a new fishing method where, instead of traditional fishing, guests are involved in cleaning up the river and riverbanks. Trash can be fished out using landing nets, magnets, as well as litter pickers. Every trash fisher gives new life to the river: in cooperation with the fish farming department of the State Forest Management Centre, young whitefish and salmon are released into the water at the end of the season. As a result, in 2022-2024, approx. 3 000 juvenile fish were returned to the riverbed due to the contributions of guests. (Photo: Visit Pärnu)





Example of cultural regeneration

Dugout boat workshops in Estonia are a significant example of **regenerative community-based and cultural tourism products**, as they revive ancient skills, strengthen local identity, and connect participants to natural materials and rhythms. The product idea is based on preserving and passing on traditional dugout boat craftsmanship, a near-lost skill deeply rooted in Estonian wetland culture. Local masters lead the process, reinforcing community pride and intergenerational knowledge sharing. Participants work directly with local wood, gaining a hands-on understanding of natural cycles and sustainable material use. This is a slow and immersive process that raises inner self reflection, collaboration, and connection to place. (Photo: Haabjas)



Features of regenerative products



- **Learning from and about nature and the community**
 - Regenerative experiences are a tool to educate guests about the uniqueness of the place and the community as well as significant issues in its biodiversity, environment, cultural heritage and history.
 - After their visit guests, should leave inspired and motivated to do their share for a regenerative future.
- **Co-creation plays a major role in product and service development**
 - Restoration work, various thematic workshops and guided field trips are included in experiences.
 - Events are seen as a means of nature generation and cultural immersion, bringing locals and guests together.
 - Voluntary work is one of the elements.
 - Participation of various stakeholders (locals, guests, NGOs, scientists) with different skills is needed.
- **Increasing mental and physical well-being**
 - Multisensory experiences are essential: see, feel, hear, taste nature in products and services
 - Embracing slow living lifestyle is also a key element in products and services.
 - Creative tourism elements are integrated in products and services. For example, doing handicrafts with local artisans, story telling evenings with local writers and musicians.

Regenerative elements can also be added into other products

Accommodation with regenerative elements

- Direct contact with nature (glass igloos, bird nests, glamping), nature-based luxury
- Adaptive reuse of old buildings in accommodation
- Recycled, upcycled and natural materials, local designers featured, minimalism featured in the interiors.

Restaurant with regenerative elements

- Aims to improve the health and wellbeing of their guests with food.
- Local, seasonal and healthy ingredients are the key element.
- Collaborates intensively with various partners in the local food chain, cultivate ingredients themselves in their garden.
- Respects the local food traditions, showcases them in their dishes.
- Provides outdoor dining experiences for guests.

Summary

- The reason for regenerative tourism product development differs from "traditional" tourism products. The products are developed to improve the condition of natural and human living systems.
- It is important to understand what is being regenerated with the products.
 - Is the aim to regenerate nature, community, individuals with the products.
- Products are related to starting regenerative processes in nature and community-build the capacity of nature and communities to thrive!

Activities

Reflect

- What kind of place-sourced tourism products can be developed to create well-being for nature and society?
- What are the specific features or challenges in the place that can be regenerated?
- How can the community be involved in product development?
- With whom else can we work to develop regenerative tourism products?



INSPIRES

RESILIENT TOURISM

*Stay
tuned!*



inspires-tourism.eu



linkedin.com/company/inspires/



facebook.com/INSPIRES-TOURISM



Co-funded by
the European Union

This project receives funding from the European Union's
SMP Programme under Grant Agreement No 101181590.

