

# Visit Skellefteå sustainability strategy

## Introduction

Visit Skellefteå sustainability strategy is connected to the development strategy Skellefteå 2030 and the long-term overall goals for the destination, appendix 1. The strategy describes how the tourism industry and the DMO should proceed towards 2030 to contribute to the overall goals for the destination. The development must be sustainable and focusing on what is best for the inhabitants. The starting point is the vision " *A sustainable place for a better everyday life*".

Skellefteå is a sustainable destination that takes responsibility for future generations. There is a drive and a will to constantly evolve, and we do it with respect for our environment, our inhabitants, and our assets. Skellefteå grows with new competences, businesses and industries which secure the jobs and welfare of tomorrow. Our society is inclusive and benefits from all individuals. We create an attractive place together.

Skellefteå offers a better everyday life for all. Closeness and simplicity bring the puzzle of life together. A strong welfare, a growing labour market and the fact that the countryside and city are connected offer safety, tranquillity, faith in the future and exciting development possibilities. Everyone is welcomed into our community where trust, courage and openness go hand in hand.

## Input values to the strategy

The sustainability strategy was written during spring 2021. To identify and prioritize important focus areas and activities for the strategy, the following input values have been central:

- The development strategy Skellefteå 2030 and dialogue meetings before revision.
- The viewpoints of stakeholders and input from the industry (dialogues with companies, organisations and the municipality through reference groups and projects).
- Co-workers' and the board's knowledge of the positive and negative impact of our business. (Work meetings and strategy seminars).
- External analysis of important industry issues, both nationally and internationally.
- The UN Sustainability Goals and their sub-goals.
- Four basic principles for a sustainable hospitality industry in Västerbotten.
- The GSTC analysis of the destination Skellefteå.
- Ownership directives, business idea, core values, vision and the overall goals set by the Visit Skellefteå board.
- Regional development strategy 2020-2030 for Västerbotten and the process of the regional tourism strategy for the destination Swedish Lapland (will be ready in the autumn 2021).

## Large-scale societal transformation

Skellefteå is facing an enormous societal transformation that has not been seen in Sweden or Europe in modern time. In the coming decades, the number of inhabitants is predicted to grow with up to 20 000, which is revolutionary for a municipality with 73 000 inhabitants (2020). This creates challenges – but above all great possibilities for us as a destination.

Skellefteå has become somewhat of a centre for the green transition in Europe, manifested by the fact that right now, the largest factory for green batteries, Northvolt Ett, is being built in Skellefteå. Skellefteå offers perfect conditions for a sustainable destination, with access to 100 % renewable energy, closeness to nature, companies and research institutions that are in the forefront when it comes to recycling, automation, electrification, and sustainable wood construction.

The attractiveness of the destination will be one of the crucial factors for successful competence and labour attraction to Skellefteå. Tourism and event industry is therefore an important part of the social development and the DMO is a tool for development and sustainable growth.

To reach the overall goals set in the strategy Skellefteå 2030 and the overall vision, Visit Skellefteå will contribute with the following tools and insights:

- Increased cooperation and cocreation locally and regionally.
- Strengthen Skellefteå's attractiveness and the development to become a more sustainable destination.
- Be innovative and use new technologies and new channels.
- Improved accessibility.
- A thriving, genuine and honest Skellefteå.

## How do we approach the mission?

Marketing the destination Skellefteå is the core of what we do, everything we do aims to strengthen the image of Skellefteå and attract visitors, inhabitants, and investments. We always have the attractive place in mind when we communicate with our prioritized target groups. We also work on developing Skellefteå's attraction factors and reasons to travel here.

Skellefteå is the engine in the Skellefteå region and to maintain a strong future growth we are depending on investments and on people wanting to live here. The tourism- and event industry is well established but has a strong development potential, above all when it comes to new investments and to develop strong reasons to travel here. We have a long experience of working in the meetings- and event industry, but we must grow further in a sustainable way. With Sara Kulturhus and The Wood Hotel, Skellefteå will develop as a city for culture, meetings and events. With a strong identity, sustainability in focus and a varied offer, Skellefteå will take more and more space on the national and international arena.

## Core Values

We address the mission with the keywords brave, value creating and committed. Together with the core values of the place brand; braver power of ideas, sustainable viability, closer diversity and honest openness, our keywords form our fundamental attitude which will take Skellefteå into the future. We are a place where everyone contributes.

## Vision

*A sustainable place for a better everyday life - Together we make more people choose Skellefteå.*

Ideas are given room to grow in Skellefteå. We are proud of our past and stand strong for the future. We are the new industry's growth place, a place where people develop and feel at home and a place people want to visit many times. A sustainable place where everything is possible, and we make it happen together!

## Business Idea

Strengthen the conditions for our owners to do more and better business by increasing Skellefteå's attractiveness to the surrounding world.

Visit Skellefteå will develop and market Skellefteå, long term, as a sustainable destination. Together with the marketing unit of the municipality, we will build and maintain the positive image of Skellefteå and maximize the attraction power of the destination through creative and effective communication.

## Work and focus areas

Cooperation is the foundation of our work. We lead the development of the destination through cooperation and knowledge. We work close to local, regional, and national partners. On the local level our owners, member companies and the municipality are our most important partners. Regionally, we have a close cooperation with the destinations in Swedish Lapland and in Västerbotten. On the national level we are part of networks in different business areas.

Strategically we have chosen **five focus areas**:

- Strengthen the image of Skellefteå as a sustainable place by sharing news and stories about Skellefteå to the outside world.
- Market and develop an attractive city centre and sustainable commerce.
- Marketing and destination development of sustainable leisure tourism.
- Make people meet by shared experiences, meetings, and events.
- Support processes connected to investments and moving to Skellefteå.

## Sustainability goals and sustainability strategies Visit Skellefteå

Visit Skellefteå's work should lead to sustainable growth and contribute to strengthen the image of the destination.

### 1. Environment and climate

We make careful choices regarding the environment and show care for the sea and nature.

### 2. Welcoming and inclusive

We offer a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible destination.

### 3. Responsible economy and fair terms

We work for a diversified and sustainable tourism and event industry, to benefit everyone who lives in Skellefteå.

### 4. Lasting positive effects

Through attractiveness, hospitality, digitalization, and innovation we are a positive force of change in a growing Skellefteå.

Visit Skellefteå works according to **three company-wide sustainability strategies**, that strengthen each other and the destination:

- We are role models and inspirers in what we do and can control.
- We motivate and challenge commerce, companies in the tourism and event industry and other partners to develop in a sustainable direction.
- We guide residents and visitors to a sustainable consumption of the destinations offer of products and services.

## Quantitative goals and KPI: s

### Goal image 2030

The ambition is that the tourism and event industry to an even higher extent contributes to Skellefteå's development in the coming years. That includes employment effects as well as strengthening the place brand and attractiveness to visitors as well as to new and old residents.

The tourism and event industry in Skellefteå has good prospects to grow sustainably. We can welcome more visitors without risking over-tourism. The destination ranges over a vast surface which makes it possible to spread visitors between city, nature, and archipelago.

The goal is to achieve a tourism economic turnover of 2 billion SEK by 2030 (+67% compared to 2019), to offer a varied range of sustainable experiences, and to have viable, prosperous companies who will, can and dare.

## Sustainability goals 2025

### Economic goals

- 1,5 billion SEK in tourism economic turnover according to TEM (National Tourism economic measurement) 2025.
- 500 000 commercial overnight stays according to SCB (Statistics Sweden database).

### Environmental goals

- >25 analysed companies according to the GSTC - Global Sustainable Tourism Councils criteria (Västerbotten Experience).
- Reach top 20 on the GDS Index
- Minimum of two larger public events, without disposable (plastic or paper) items.

### Social goals

- Good member relations according to the member survey carried out every two years:  
NKI>8 good dialogue with the DMO.  
NKI>8 experience of value by membership in the DMO  
NKI>8 recommending others to become members of the DMO.
- Attractive employer according to the employer survey carried out every two years:  
NMI>8 relating to work satisfaction.  
NMI>8 relating to the feeling of teamwork.  
NMI>8 relating to having the right competence in relation to work tasks.

### Attractiveness goals

- Increased attractiveness as a destination, according to the survey Travel in Sweden (Resa i Sverige):  
Top 30 Which city/destination you spontaneously think of when hearing travel in Sweden. Plus NPS >10 2025.
- City Centre of the Year 2025.

## KPI: s and indicators

KPI: s and indicators for the tourism and event industry in Skellefteå consist of quantitative measurement points where commercial overnight stays, employment and tourism economic turnover are the three most important ones.



## Strategic challenges onward

Commerce and retail, the tourism and event industry, as well as the whole of Skellefteå, face a time of great challenges when it comes to a fast-growing population, internationalisation, digitalisation, changed purchasing behaviour and revolutionary innovations. Add to that the climate challenge and effects of Covid-19.

### How do we grow in a sustainable way?

Many destinations in Europe have had problems with over-tourism. Skellefteå has the possibility to welcome more visitors than at present, but the growth must be sustainable and cannot get in conflict with our surrounding environment, nature or with the people who live and work here. To weigh different interests to achieve the long-term goals and vision of a sustainable place for a better everyday life is a difficult and important task onwards.

### Internationalisation and skills supply

More international visitors, aware travellers and an increased demand for high-quality experiences, products and services also put new and higher demands on the competence of the people within the tourism and event industry. At the same time, the industry has lost qualified labour in the tracks of Covid-19. We can see that few people stay in the industry and too few apply for the industry related educations. This is a threat to the growth and development of the industry, and a great challenge.

### Accessibility to and within the destination

The accessibility to Skellefteå has been a great challenge, even before Covid-19. We lack passenger traffic by train and have limited air traffic access combined with high prices. Add to that the fact that air transportation is a huge climate challenge that must be handled. The geographical position of Skellefteå makes air transportation crucial for the accessibility to the destination.

The accessibility between tourist attractions, venues and activities within the destination also needs to be improved. Today, visitors are too dependent on individual car transport to get around within the destination. This is not sustainable in the future unless there is a 100 % electrified car fleet pool.

### Skellefteå as a sustainable, safe, and secure destination

Because of Covid-19 the industry, both globally and nationally, is in a new situation with new challenges related to safety and security. Sustainability has accelerated and is now a hygiene factor in the leisure and meeting and events industry. Even if many factors related to the pandemic are beyond our control, we must follow and analyse the situation in the world, continue to be responsive, agile and act on the things we can control.

### Digitalisation and changed behaviour

Internationalisation, digitalisation and changed behaviour, in combination with increased demand on sustainability and environmental considerations, create new possibilities and great challenges. How important will digital meetings and events be in the future? What business models, products and competence will be needed? Physical commerce was challenged by e-commerce, even before the pandemic. What role will physical shops play in the future? What does the business model look like? How will our city centres develop?

Today's fragmented media climate demands communication which is mobile, social, authentic and "always on". This demands a marketing strategy which builds on constant content production and digital presence. Successful marketing takes place where the visitors/customers are, which is not necessarily in the marketing channels of the destination. The industry is also constantly challenged by new actors and innovative solutions like AirBnb.