



Bothnia Business Heritage

Round table discussions 2023-2025
- insights and conclusions

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora



LAPIN LIITTO



REGION
NORRBOTTEN



Region
Västernorrland

**SKELL
EFTEA**

Make room for ideas.



What are the round table discussions?

The round table discussions, held as part of the work process in the project *Bothnia Business Heritage*, are face-to-face meetings between cultural heritage actors and business representatives conducted in a relaxed environment. The conversation aims to explore potential collaborations between the stakeholders, without any binding commitment between them for further co-operation. If further collaboration arises because of the dialogue, it is of course a big bonus.

During the project years 2023-2025 a total of 23 round table discussions were conducted. The discussions took place in both Sweden and Finland. The following text is a summary of all 23 discussions.

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora

centria
University of Applied Sciences
ammattikorkeakoulu

NOVIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



VÄSTER
NORRLANDS
MUSEUM

SKELLEFTEÅ
MUSEUM

L
LULEÅ
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY





What can cultural heritage actors offer the business community?

Cultural heritage organizations promote access to cultural and historical knowledge and their mission includes collecting information and sharing facts with others. Cultural heritage actors such as museums often have large artifact collections in one or more specialized fields, combined with archives full of documents and knowledge. During our round table discussions, the cultural heritage organizations have expressed a desire to work with the business community to collect and manage knowledge about the local historical business field.

Cultural heritage actors are experienced event organizers with deep-rooted knowledge of hosting visitor groups. Groups that frequently visit them include school classes and groups of elderly people. Corporate groups are less common, although they do occur to some extent. In Finland, there are recreational days for staff, so-called TYKY days or TYHY days, when employers organize activities for their employees once or twice a year. For these occasions, programs offered by cultural heritage actors are both appreciated and in high demand. In Sweden, there are no such regulated concepts for employers to organize event days for their employees.

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora

CENTRIA
University of Applied Sciences
ammattikorkeakoulu

NOVIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



**VÄSTER
NORRLANDS
MUSEUM**

**SKELLEFTEÅ
MUSEUM**

**LULEÅ
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY**





Most heritage organizations are continuously striving to develop their activities and renew their exhibitions. A few organizations in our discussions have already worked with local businesses to incorporate this aspect into their collections and exhibitions. Cultural heritage actors usually work a great deal with digitizing their archives, collections and spaces, making them more accessible. They also work on offering unique experiences to strengthen their economy. The concept of 'touch and feel' is increasingly being offered at museums, and the idea of allowing visitors to experience their visit with all their senses, rather than just walking around looking at things, no longer feels as strange as it used to.

In the future, many cultural heritage organizations want to be able to offer businesses comprehensive solutions when booking visits. Simple package solutions such as a tour combined with food and drink is something that often emerged during the discussions.

Large groups of visitors can often pose practical challenges for smaller-scale heritage organizations. The spaces of heritage museums are not usually adapted to accommodate large groups of visitors, and even something as simple as making coffee for over a hundred people at once can be challenging.

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora

centria
University of Applied Sciences
ammattikorkeakoulu

NOVIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



**VÄSTER
NORRLANDS
MUSEUM**

**SKELLEFTEÅ
MUSEUM**

L
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY





The cultural heritage organizations that already offer some kind of package for larger groups are usually those that have paid personnel for the entire or a big part of the year. Small associations and organizations run mainly by volunteers find it more difficult to offer packages on a continuous basis. This is mainly because of lack of resources, not a lack of will.

During the discussions, the following activities and packages were frequently mentioned: guided tours, dinners, accessible meeting spaces, film screenings, camping experiences and nature walks, café activities, documentation, themed parties, workshops, lectures and training of handicraft skills, souvenirs, and historical interactive plays. This shows the heritage actors' genuine real desire for customization and interactivity.



Round table discussions held with K.H.Renlunds museum and Boliden, april 2024.

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora

CENTRIA
University of Applied Sciences
ammattikorkeakoulu

NOVIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



**VÄSTER
NORRLANDS
MUSEUM**

**SKELLEFTEÅ
MUSEUM**

**LULEÅ
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY**





What does the business community want from cultural heritage actors?

Companies have expressed interest in collaborating with cultural heritage actors in various ways. However, there is often a lack of resources within companies to focus on cultural initiatives, and the focus is often directed to profit rather than culture. Nevertheless, companies are interested in preserving historical sites and digitizing historical material. They also want to build up their brands around local history and have a positive attitude toward sponsoring associations, especially those working with children and youths.

During our discussions, it was frequently mentioned that companies need help in planning exhibitions in their own spaces and with including historical sites in guided tours. They do want to organize activities for their staff, such as family days and recreation days. Businesses are also looking for tangible, engaging, unique, and meaningful package experiences for their customers.

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora

centria
University of Applied Sciences
ammattikorkeakoulu

NOVIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



VÄSTER
NORRLANDS
MUSEUM

SKELLEFTEÅ
MUSEUM

L
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY





Companies emphasize the importance of environmental, social, and economic sustainability, and they want to connect the past with the present. They are interested in using cultural heritage to strengthen their brands and create a sense of pride and belonging among both employees and customers. Companies are also aware of the need to get young workers more motivated and engaged in their work and their workplaces.

Businesses see value in using heritage organizations' facilities to describe their own factory activities to children, for example, as it can be dangerous to show them around the actual factories. Companies appreciate ready-made visit packages and are happy to use them when they are available. They are also interested in co-operation when it comes to exhibitions in their own facilities, the preservation of image collections, and marketing the history of the company. They would like to see cultural heritage organizations lend a helping hand with these tasks. Documentation of the companies' history and future is something that several of the companies emphasized as a possible area of cooperation. In addition, they would like to see cooperation with their local museums when it comes to historical image materials for informational films, websites, and promotional articles. They want their customers to feel a connection with the goods they sell, and this can perhaps be achieved by using a cultural and historical twist.

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora

CENTRIA
University of Applied Sciences
ammattikorkeakoulu

NOVIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



**VÄSTER
NORRLANDS
MUSEUM**

**SKELLEFTEÅ
MUSEUM**

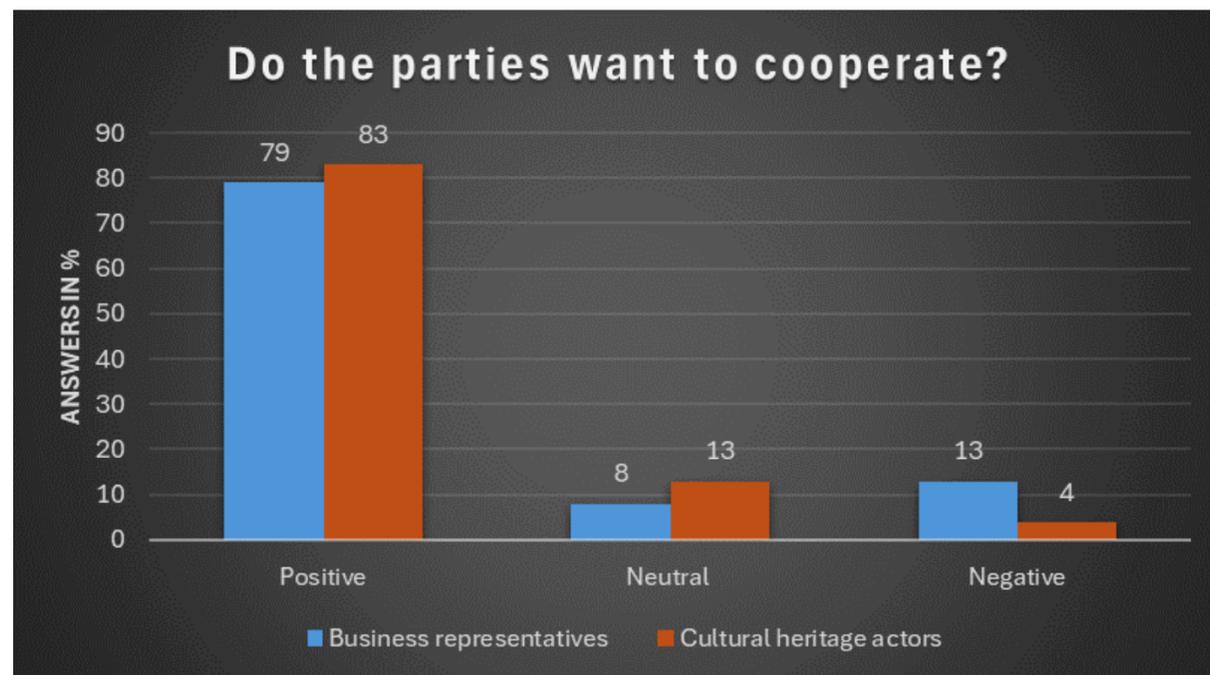
**LULEÅ
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY**





Companies are also interested in raising awareness of the local cultural heritage among their employees to create meaningful leisure time activities for them and give them a chance to connect with the local area. They see value in using cultural heritage to highlight the narrative of the business for marketing purposes. Using digital solutions can also make cultural heritage more accessible and appealing to the younger generation.

Businesses want to work with heritage stakeholders to create engaging and meaningful experiences for their employees and customers, while strengthening their brand and contributing to sustainable development.



Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora

centria
University of Applied Sciences
ammattikorkeakoulu

NOVIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



VÄSTER
NORRLANDS
MUSEUM

SKELLEFTEÅ
MUSEUM

L
LULEÅ
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY





How do we find a true win-win solution for both parties?

Whether the co-operation between heritage organizations and the business community will generate some kind of profit for both parties depends very much on the type of collaboration and the main purpose of it.

From a purely economic point of view, it is profitable for both parties when the heritage organization can offer an interesting, varied, and unique package. The package needs to provide the heritage organization with an income, which is possible as long as the businesses feel it is worth the price. They feel it is worth it if booking it is easy and convenient and everything can be organized at the same time, for example both an activity and refreshments, for a period of time that meets the needs of the business. The packages need to have a certain degree of flexibility both in terms of price and in terms of time. In this scenario, companies act solely and purely as customers.

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora

CENTRIA
University of Applied Sciences
ammattikorkeakoulu

NOVIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



**VÄSTER
NORRLANDS
MUSEUM**

**SKELLEFTÅ
MUSEUM**

**LULEÅ
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY**





If we instead look at the social aspect, with two-way information sharing - marketing and creating a sustainable and functioning society - the parties become involved in the process on a different level. In this scenario, both parties give and receive information.

For example, the company wants to set up an exhibition in the factory canteen. The exhibition will increase the well-being of the employees during the lunch break and at the same time tell them about the history of the company and its connection to the facility they are in. If the company collaborates with a local heritage organization, information can be shared and collected by both parties. The company will have a well-made exhibition with accurate historical facts.

At the same time, the heritage organization can collect information, photographs and stories from the local industry that can be used for their own future events and exhibitions. Making needs and wants profitable for both parties does not always mean a large exchange of pure money between the parties, but sometimes the exchange can be through information.





Concluding remarks

Partnerships between cultural heritage organizations and the business sector can be formed with many different objectives and values in mind. Businesses often talk in terms of sponsorship, while heritage stakeholders are keen to sell their services and products.

Businesses do not always see the value of co-operating with small actors, but during the conversations, a curiosity to co-operate with cultural heritage actors has emerged among the business community. The small size of a cultural heritage actor does not have to be an obstacle when creating partnerships, but can also offer flexibility and allow for tailor-made activities and programs. Sometimes, long geographical distances can also be a challenge between partners and a small local actor can be an equally good alternative to finding larger actors further away.

Interreg  Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora

centria
University of Applied Sciences
ammattikorkeakoulu

NOVIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



**VÄSTER
NORRLANDS
MUSEUM**

 **SKELLEFTEÅ
MUSEUM**

 **LULEÅ
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY**





Staff days, for example, do not need to offer complicated programs that might be difficult to implement, but can instead focus on providing a cozy atmosphere and environment where everyone feels comfortable. Heritage actors can, for instance, offer customized services to meet the needs of their customers, such as short, guided tours or in-house presentations. The main thing is to keep the services tangible and useful to the business.

The first step in cooperating is for the parties to approach each other and open a dialogue. Here it is important for the cultural heritage actors to have easily accessible communication channels toward the business community, and to offer clear services and packages. It can also be a good idea for heritage actors to cooperate with for example hotels and tourism-oriented companies to promote their services. Cultural heritage actors have a wealth of knowledge that can be packaged into a format that is relevant to businesses. Businesses often lack resources and may sometimes need external help to recognize the value of the shared cultural heritage.

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora

centria
University of Applied Sciences
ammattikorkeakoulu

NOVIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



VÄSTER
NORRLANDS
MUSEUM

SKELLEFTEÅ
MUSEUM

L
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY





A constructive and creative dialogue is crucial if businesses and heritage organizations are planning major initiatives together. It is important to find the right people in both organizations, who want to work toward a common goal. Sometimes it can be difficult to find a way to take the plans forward and key people in both organizations are needed to bring the collaboration to the next level. The two parties may have good knowledge of the same topic, but with different perspectives. If the desires of the two parties are completely different, it can sometimes be useful to bring a third party into the discussion.

Overall, heritage actors need to put more efforts into marketing and visibility to get noticed by the business community. On the other hand, it is also important that companies provide feedback after an event so that the heritage actor can adapt its services and visitor packages if necessary.

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora

centria
University of Applied Sciences
ammattikorkeakoulu

NOVIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



**VÄSTER
NORRLANDS
MUSEUM**

**SKELLEFTEÅ
MUSEUM**

**L
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY**

