

# Eventful Forest

## EVENT FACILITATION MODEL FOR EVO

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DESIGN  
FOR  
GOVERNMENT



METSÄHALLITUS



mmm.fi



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# 1. Summary

*„Design for Government is a course at Aalto University that develops design addressing the complex challenges of the government and public sector. It applies empathic approaches to identify stakeholder needs, systems approaches to analyze the wider context of policies, and behavioural insight to identify and design relevant solutions.“*

The challenge of DfG 2018 was to develop Finland's hiking areas, using Evo Hiking Area as a case. *"Hiking areas are distinct from other categories of land use in Finland such as commercially-used forests and national parks – hiking areas are not primarily for commerce nor for conservation, but fall in-between."* (Project Brief)

The task was to create a better profile, find new users and make the area more attractive.

This report presents the proposal of our team, which shows the intensive research we conducted, how we narrowed down to key findings and conclusions, reached out again for ideation, and eventually arrived at our final proposal: „Eventful Forest“. The Eventful Forest is an event facilitation model, which utilizes events to raise public awareness about Evo and create sustainable growth in visitor numbers as well as the local economy by encouraging the public and private sector to join hand in hand for a prosperous future.

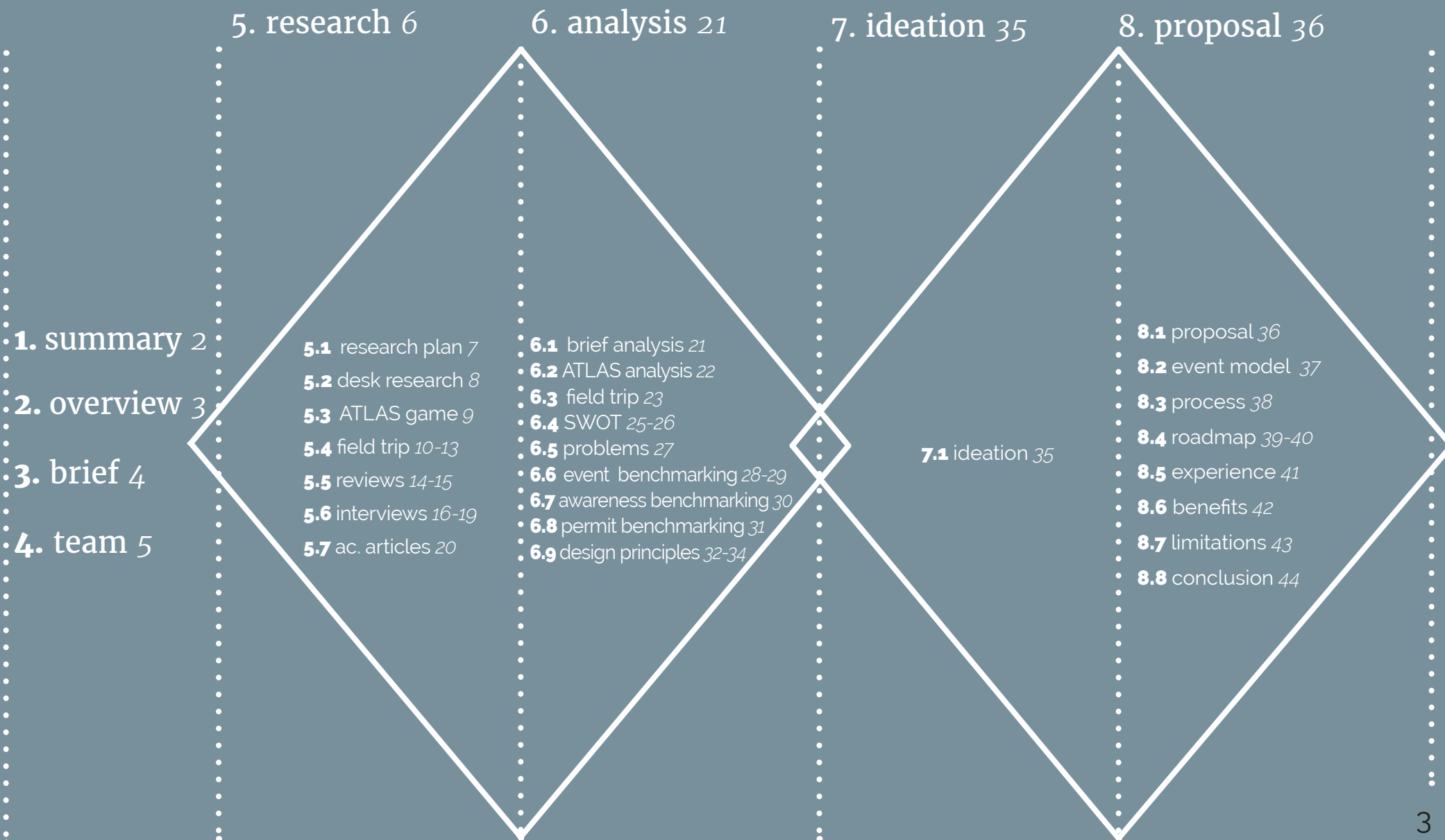
Our proposal serves three main goals:

1. By introducing an event facilitation model, the maintenance will be done in a smarter way.
2. The infrastructure will consistently remain a high quality to attract more visitors. The eventful forest will highlight the unique profile of the Hiking Areas.



*Getting on the ground during our field trip to Evo*

# 2. Overview



# 3. Brief

Evo is one of five Hiking Areas in Finland, located on the border of the Tavastia Proper and the Päijänne Tavastia regions, close to the cities of Hämeenlinna and Lahti. It is the only hiking area located in Southern Finland within easy reach of the three largest metropolitan regions of Finland.

One of the main project's goals was to increase the number of visitors in Hiking Areas. There is a steady growth in nature tourism in Finland; however, the national average of a 10% growth did not yet show in Evo, where the visitors are stagnating except for peaks caused by occasional scout camps. The area also lacks maintenance and attention and is therefore not attractive enough to potential visitors.

The attractiveness is also decreased by a lack of services, businesses and products in the area. An increase of offers to the users would attract more nature tourists, which is one of the goals of the current Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's agenda.

Furthermore, Hiking Areas are different from National Parks, but due to a lack of branding and profiling, this is not clear to most users, who might assume it's just a less equipped National Park. But Hiking Areas are unique because they provide a wide range of activities in addition

to the services found in National Parks. These activities include hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and more.

If hiking areas are not further developed they are likely to be turned into National Parks, even if Hiking Areas are designated for a broader and more versatile use than National Parks, which first and foremost focus on conservation.

Evo is an area of very mixed and sometimes conflicting use, such as forestry, education, conservation, scout activities, conflicting user groups etc. We see that use not as a problem, but as an opportunity, as long as the different interest groups and resources are managed in a smart way.





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# 5. Research

*While our preliminary focus in research was on exploring the user experience and the service ecosystem, we have rapidly come to an assumption that the experience gained through activities on the site is the key to understand it. Later in the project, we aimed our attention on how this experience through events can be enhanced, how the service ecosystem affects that and in what way the enhanced user experience would benefit the area as a whole.*

# 5.1 Research Plan

## Our research focus in the beginning:

### User Experience

- What is the user journey for visitors?
- What are crucial touchpoints? (Maps etc.)
- What experiences do the hiking areas offer?
- Which are the painpoints in the experience?
- What attracts visitors?
- Who are potential new user groups?

### Service Eco-System

- What kind of businesses are currently operating in the area?
- What are their attitudes, needs and desires?
- Do they attract visitors? How?
- Do private and public sector services collaborate?
- What are the relevant examples from elsewhere?

## In the ideation phase we narrowed down the focus to events:

- What kind of events are already happening in forests?
- Which trends are connected to nature and forestry?
- How do forest owners raise awareness for the possibility to organize events?
- How is the situation in Evo, what do you need to do to organize an event?
- How do you get a permit in other countries / private forests?
- How do events benefit major stakeholders in Evo?

# 5.2 Desk research

## Methodology

Our desk research included diving into the brief, analysing and deconstructing it, looking for supporting materials available online and finding relevant academic literature.

## Results

Identifying stakeholders: In the brief, the commissioner has outlined that hiking routes already serve **local recreational visitors and DIY travelers**. The Evo Camping Centre located between Lakes Pitkäniemenjärvi and Ylinen Rautjärvi was designed and realised in cooperation between Metsähallitus and the **Guides and Scouts of Finland**. These groups are the **existing users**.

Also, the brief states that *“state hiking areas provide a venue for channeling the increasing interest for activity-based tourism”*, which we translated to a research goal to find out who can be a target group for such an activity. Further on, the brief mentions that **local businesses** act as flexible high-quality hubs for well-being, services and events.

Available open-source data shows that the following service providers are currently operating in the Evo Hiking Area: 9 guided excursions service providers, 5 equipment rental service providers, 4 food and catering services, 6 lodging and conference space services and 7 other businesses. Businesses as well as business opportunities in the surrounding area were identified by us as one of the crucial stakeholders and potential leverage points to be researched.

Another stakeholder is Metsähallitus itself and the brief highlights that 4 different units (National Parks Finland, Metsähallitus Forestry and Property Development Departments and Wildlife Service Finland) need **more coordination**. The project brief with added materials and links also indicates the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, in particular the Natural Resources Department is a stakeholder responsible for **steering** Metsähallitus.

Also Häme University of Applied Sciences, HAMK, has a campus in Evo and is already managing some of the hiking area facilities.



# 5.3 ATLAS workshop

## Methodology

The ATLAS game is a board game for learning about service co-development, and for planning service co-development projects, designed in the ATLAS research project at Aalto University in 2012-2014. The ATLAS game was originally conceptualized as a literal map that would visualize different service co-development tools and methods, and their relationships as a conceptual landscape. *Find out more: <http://otsohannula.com/atlas/>*

## Results

The insights were later on added to an affinity diagram which was revisited several times during the project.

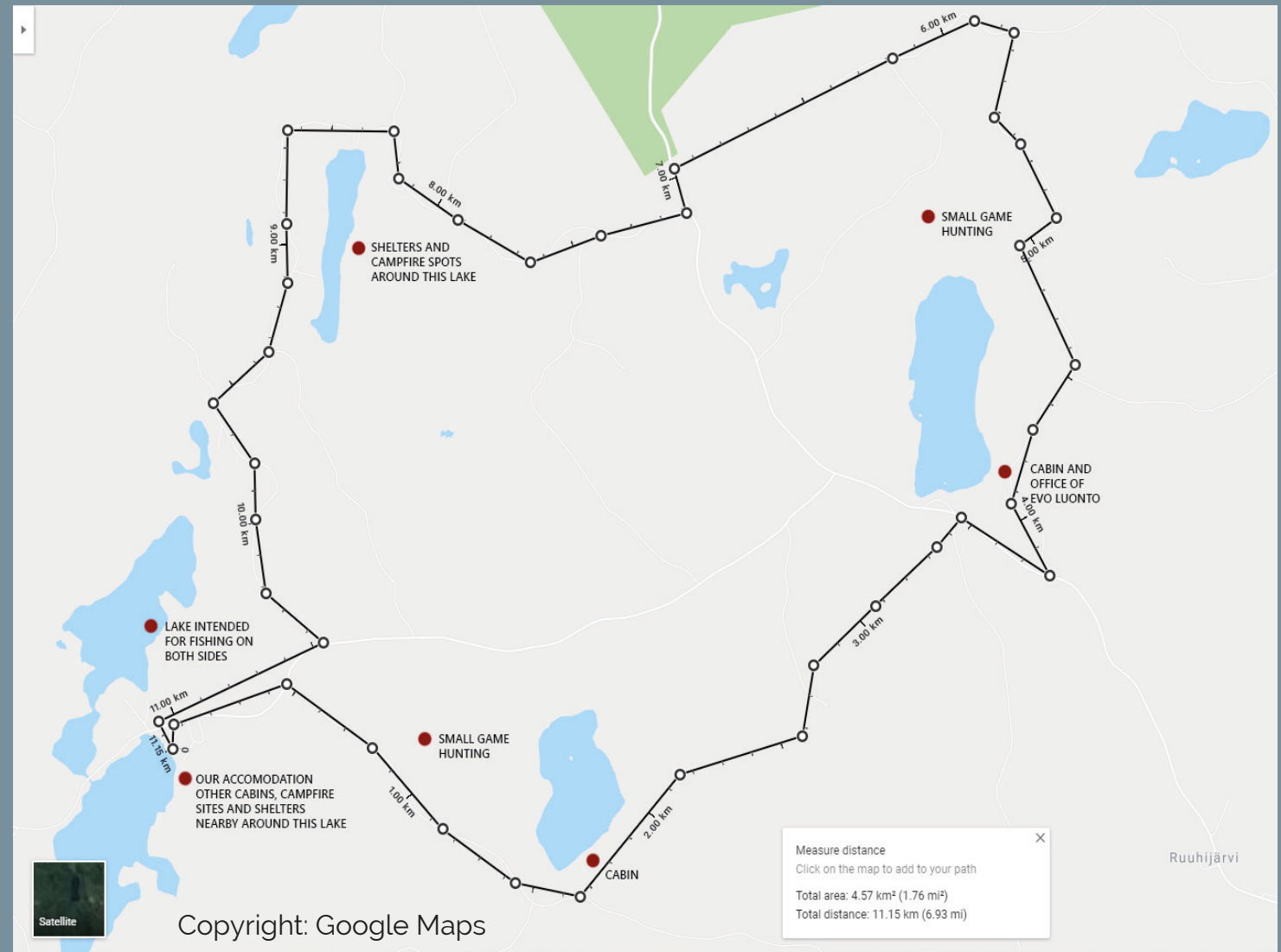


# 5.4 Field trip design

## Methodology

Preparing for the field trip we intended to play “tabula rasa” and follow the preparation steps as if we had no previous knowledge of Evo. Thus, we tried to put ourselves into the position of a regular traveler who simply found out that the Evo Hiking Area exists, and wanted to pay Evo a visit. We included one-night stay into the proposed scenario. Our main focus was on the means of **transportation**, types of **accommodation** available and planning a hiking route to observe a maximum amount of the designated areas for activities.

We also calculated the **budget** in order to estimate expenses.



# 5.4 Field trip design

## Results

Based on our research, we designed 3 possible scenarios. We picked the first option for our own field trip.

The route we designed for our trip included passing by several types of accommodation different from the one we stayed in, as well as designated areas for fishing and hunting, and an office of the larger service provider in the area.

During this exercise, we have managed to **identify several touchpoints** that potential users are facing: the official luontoon.fi portal run by Metsähallitus, social media resources dedicated to the area and various web pages published by the local service providers.

Category	Travel	Lodging	Price appr.	Experience
Young and Eager	Small car + train	Evo cabin without electricity	150€ + 120€ = 260€	Traditional cabin on a walking distance from Evokeskus (5 km). Essentially in the middle of the area, with a lot of hiking services nearby. Offers an authentic experience much (supposedly) like one many domestic visitors would prefer to experience.
Regular Family Trip	Big car	Evo cabin with electricity	300€ + 120€ = 420€	Easy but quaint cabin at the edge of the forest (10 km from Evokeskus). Positioned right outside the area. Offers a quiet and remote experience far from all services. Suitable for a family who wants to stay mostly by themselves. Car required to move around.
True Tourist	Big car	Air BnB	250€ + 80€ = 330€	Single family house in one of the closest tiny towns (30 km from Evo). Car required to get to Evo every time. Does not really differ much in experience from traveling separately from Helsinki on two different days altogether.



# 5.4 Field trip

## Methodology

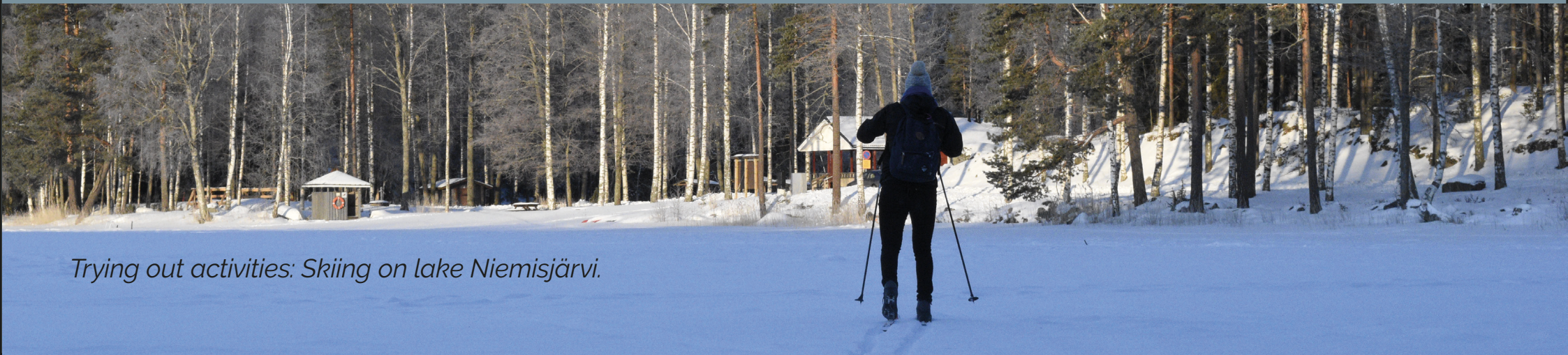
Before starting the trip, we prepared a **questionnaire** for the visitors we were expecting to meet. Also, one of our goals was **to try out activities** such as hiking, skiing, and reviewing facilities provided. (tracks, accommodation, sauna and campfire) At the sight, we also were able to detect and review a guestbook placed in the cabin.

Our main mode of documenting the experience during the trip was taking photos. Furthermore, we used an ethnographic method of **personal diaries** describing the trip. Journals as a method of keeping personal records date back to the 16th century: writing down research activities; political memoirs; personal voyages and experiences of historical events.

## Results

Unfortunately, we did not meet any visitors on our 20 km long hike, but it equipped us with hands-on experience regarding possible activities in the Hiking Areas.

Also, conducting an interview with fishermen on the Niemisjärvi lake gave us an excellent example of a user perception of the Hiking Area, which we were looking for.



*Trying out activities: Skiing on lake Niemisjärvi.*



## Quotes from our journals



*“For an urban dweller the very first emotion after arriving was excitement from everything in our sight. Literally, even the things you are expected to see in a hiking area. I kept exclaiming and hearing others doing the same: „Look, there’s a lake!“, „Wow!“”*

*“Wonderful, tiny, cozy cabin that had a splendid view of the lake from the middle of the room. 6 beds and heated up”*

*“First time enduring a long hike in the snow. Never done it in all the rainy, slushy, muddy winters that I’ve encountered in the city streets of Helsinki”.*

*“The lynx trail had reflectors that aided our vision. Critical of the green colored signs marking the trail, almost other end of the spectrum and questioning why.”*

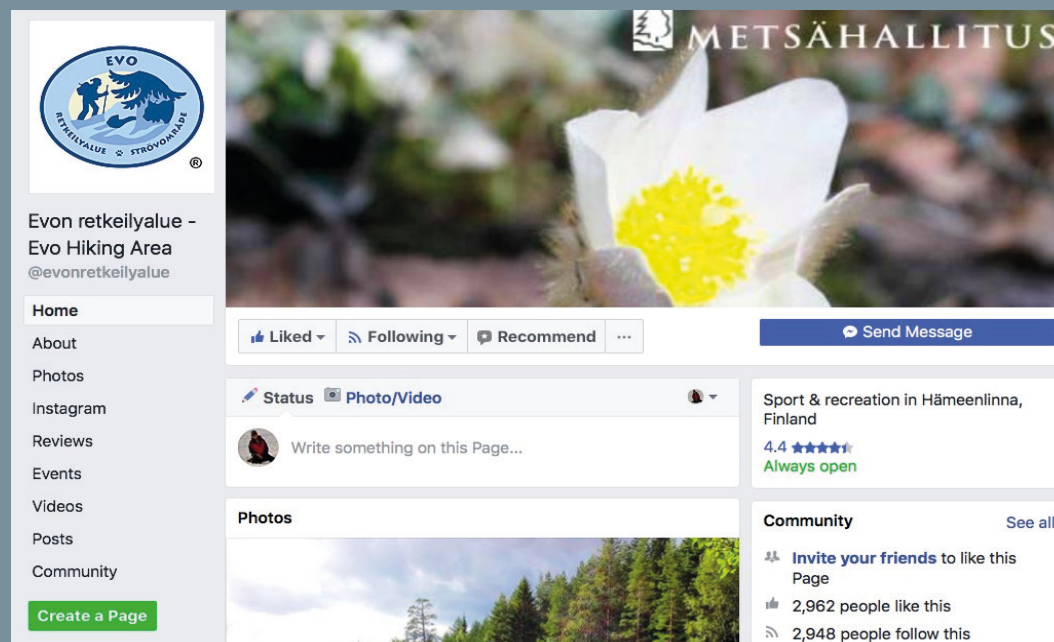
# 5.5 Social media analysis.....

## Methodology

While our trip took place during the winter season and allowed us to evaluate the area only partly, we were searching for another source to get a better overview of the Hiking Area as a destination, using Evo as a case. Thus, we appealed to the power of social media. Facebook served as an ultimate source for open data and real life experience of people in Evo. All the 31 reviews left on the Evo Hiking Area Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/evonretkeilyalue/>) were translated from Finnish to English and analysed.

## Results

This secondary data helped us to identify the key values for the users, the most frequent problems they face, their motivation to visit Evo in the first place and what activities they usually perform there.



Copyright: Evo Hiking Area Facebook page



## Quotes from Social Media

*“It is challenging..knowing how to interpret the map ... and meet control-burned forest ... and motorcycles in the middle of the forest ... well ... fortunately, they were smart people and cared for cleanliness. Surprisingly lot of trash in the forest... but different strokes for different folks ...”*

*“Evo is great for starting the hobby of hiking. You will find a variety of forests, diverse walking trails and ready-made lean-to shelters. The area is a forest management area, emphasis is on the word forest. There are routes in the area where the forest has priority. In any case, one should visit nature with a visitor’s attitude, you don’t belong there. Buy the latest map, it’s your most important equipment. Make sure that you have the equipment and attitude in order and you will get the most out of your moments in nature”.*

*“Great terrains, but at the campfire place there was no firewood or waste bins”*

# 5.6 Interviews • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

## Methodology

Since the brief and a workshop with the government representatives provided us with the knowledge on a general and nation-wide level, we were aiming to interview local actors in order to get a more “on-site” perspective and precise information from those dealing with the topic of the Hiking Areas on a daily basis.

## Results: Key interviews, insights and conclusions

### Local entrepreneur, organising the upcoming event, including a business camp and outdoor activities programme

- Locals do not know about Evo or where to start
- Interviewee was positive toward Metsähallitus
- No formal event permit or contract from Metsähallitus
- Offers “business meetings in nature instead of boring offices in the capital region”
- Possibilities of Evo are underutilized
- Possibilities for future events
- New development for and after the event: mountain biking trail
- There is a need for new/more services for visitors
- Construction/Infrastructure done by public sector

### Forestry-related company selling wood products

- Share an opinion that events can revitalise hiking areas
- Is ready to provide product samples for e.g., for scouts to be used in their building activities
- Seeks good contacts with Metsähallitus
- Has a commercial interest to see Metsähallitus as a client



# 5.6 Interviews • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

## Results: Key interviews, insights and conclusions

### Local enterprise specializing in arranging tours in wilderness, nature education programs

- At the moment, participating in one of the particular local events or organising one themselves does not seem affordable
- Customers peak during weekends, making it expensive to assign such time for marketing.
- Online promotion is cheaper than events
- To stay a successful small enterprise, one should offer diverse services
- Nature education is rising and has increased in the national curriculum.
- Positive attitude towards Metsähallitus, satisfied with current communication and possibility to use Metsähallitus-run portal luontoon.fi and SoMe
- Prefer other destinations than Evo as it has maintenance problems and a lack of services

### Service provider renting out the villas located at the lake shore in the Evo Hiking Area

- Premium segment
- Mostly B2B advertisement
- Operated by Lahti business association
- New travel agency company
- Transportation needed
- Avoid Evo, claiming it is good for a self-tour, but not for the businesses at the moment
- An event calendar of Evo would be very helpful for their business
- Evo needs a clear profile
- There are opportunities for nature education as well as outdoor survival learning and experience
- Metsähallitus provided service providers in the national park with info, but not in the hiking areas

# 5.6 Interviews

## Results: Key interviews, insights and conclusions

### Local student organisation formed by forestry students

- Focus on recreation, such as sports and hunting
- Membership fee and participation fee
- No forestry-related events
- No students during summer
- From their experience, organising events gained support from the HAMK, and they succeeded in obtaining permissions from Metsähallitus
- Too many visitors in educational forest
- Could be more visitors in Evo as a whole
- Metsähallitus is positive to new projects
- Confusion about services
- Lack of communication
- No focal point in Evo
- Evokeskus is closed this summer



*“When doing these kind of development projects, they should incorporate businesses representatives from the very beginning.*

*What often happens, is that businesses are brought in at a later stage, when the chance to make a valuable impact is too late.”*

**CEO of a local enterprise,  
specializing in arranging tours  
in wilderness, nature  
education programs**



# 5.7 Academic Articles Research

## Methodology

To have a solid ground in what we were going to proceed in, we took a look on the academic legacy. We had a specific focus on marketing approach to tourism and services while researching the relevant literature.

## Results

According to the academic sources we reviewed, selling an experience of a place through relating it to the lifestyle constructs turned out to be a trend. According to the literature, tourism and hospitality has become a major economic activity as expectations with regard to the use of our leisure time have evolved, attributing greater meaning to our free time. The evolution of tourist behaviour encourages both change and the emergence of new meaning (Bouchet et al., 2004).

*“Traditional marketing was developed in response to the industrial age, not the information, branding and communications revolution we are facing today” (Schmit et al. 2000).*

In a new age with new consumers, we need to shift away from a features-and-benefits approach, as advocated by traditional approaches to consumer experience. We need to consider new concepts and approaches which capitalise on the opportunities offered by these new consumers. One such approach is experiential marketing; an approach which in contrast to the rational features-and-benefits view of consumers, takes a more postmodern orientation and views them as emotional beings, concerned with achieving pleasurable experiences.

Morgan et al. argue that conventional tourism marketing tends to focus on confirming the intentions of tourists, rather than persuading them to consume differently. In addition, the marketing of tourism and hospitality products has become increasingly complex, being associated not only with conveying an image of a place, but with attempting to sell an experience of a place through relating it to the lifestyle constructs of consumers.

Marketing within the sectors is different to many other industries, as purchase decisions are made on the basis of projected and perceived images, rather than prior experience.

This information was valuable when developing our proposal.

## Key references

Bouchet, P., Lebrun, A. M., & Auvergne, S. (2004). *Sport tourism consumer experiences: a comprehensive model. Journal of Sport & Tourism, 9(2), 127-140.*

Middleton, V. T., Fyall, A., Morgan, M., Morgan, M., & Ranchhod, A. (2009). *Marketing in travel and tourism. Routledge.*

Schmitt, B. H. (2000). *Experiential marketing: How to get customers to sense, feel, think, act, relate. Simon and Schuster.*



# 6. Analysis · · · · ·

*Throughout the project, our research guided us towards the final solution. Having initially gotten a lot of information from the commissioners, we noticed that a deeper understanding of the visitors were missing, especially potential visitors. Additionally, the role and importance of the local businesses was unclear. Therefore, we set out to investigate the user perspective, and by user we mean all visitors, businesses and organisations using or potentially interested in the area.*

*It was easy to find things to improve to raise the attractiveness of Evo and advertise it to a larger public. Most of the research we did during the first half of the project validated our initial thoughts on the matter. But it was not as easy to find solutions that would not require a vast increase in investments to the development of Evo and communication between stakeholders. Using events as part of the solution was originally only an idea among others, but the more we tried and tested the option, the clearer it became that it is the best way to solve our key issues. In this chapter we present the main steps in increasing our understanding to develop the final proposal.*

# 6.1 Analysis of the brief • • • • •

*After having made our initial acquaintance with the brief, Evo and the framework of the assignment, we gathered our analysis into problems, ideas and goals.*

## Problems

- Communications seem outdated (website, social media)
- Public Transport does not regularly reach Evo
- The numbers of visitors is not increasing
- How can you align the values of forest management and recreation, with values needed for business, tourism and producing attraction

## Ideas

- Rename "Hiking Area", the term seem very misleading
- Develop activities that you are not able to do in a National Park
- Increase rental services
- More rangers
- Benefits for local businesses are needed
- Short-term venues for hiring, enhancing innovation business
- Support users with dogs
- Gamefy the experience and advertisement

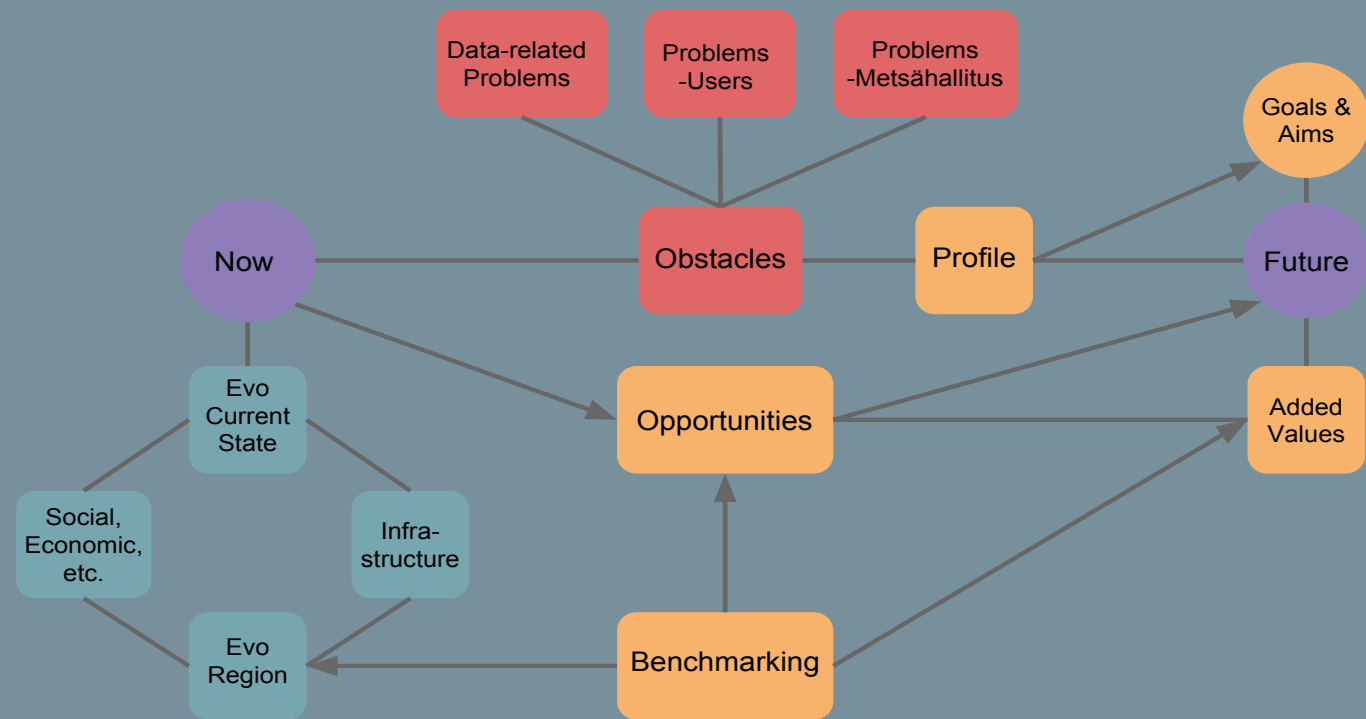
## Goals

- Increase the number of visitors
- Clear profile getting deeper knowledge about target group, figure out the demand, need for legislation? what are the key existing and potential users?
- Create an alternative name for Hiking Areas, combine nature with fun activities
- Utilize a bottom-up approach
- Promote sustainability
- Attract private investments
- Support cooperation between operational units inside the ministry
- Develop land use

# 6.2 ATLAS Analysis

The ATLAS workshop validated many of our ideas, but it also provided valuable insight concerning the magnitude of the problem at hand. It turned out that the issue lie not only on the surface, but is partly caused by a lack of communication and information, as well as conflicting interests within Metsähallitus itself. The amount of information gathered so quickly in the process, made it very hard to digest. In order to channel and communicate our information and reflection on it, we used the affinity diagram method. We mapped all our findings on a rough map showing how we viewed the situation and the potential future of our project. This way we got a deeper understanding and validation on how to proceed.

It was clear that there were several ways to tackle the problem, by going into the structure of management at the Ministry and Metsähallitus, by finding out the true reason for why it has come to this, or by investigating what would trigger people to visit the Hiking Areas. Since the problem was so vast, we quickly realised that each group could only choose one approach. We strongly felt that we would not be able to paint a rich picture of the relationships and worldviews of all stakeholders without losing too much precious time, so we wanted to narrow down our focus from the start. Having heard a lot about the issues and viewpoints of the commissioners, but knowing next to nothing of the user's point of view, we decided to focus on the user experience, when going further in our project.



*A rough map of how we viewed Evo and the project after the ATLAS workshop.* 23



# 6.3 Field Trip Findings.....

We knew from the beginning that visiting Evo in March would not be the ideal timing for getting a diverse perception of the area, but seeing the place with our own eyes was crucial to get an attachment and vision of the current place to guide ideas for future development. Additionally, we knew we wanted to create a solution that is not fixed to a season, so with a single visit, any time of the year would have been too little to get a complete picture of the place. Contrary to what you might think, we realised the snow-rich winter provided us with a great view into how much maintenance is going on during less visitor-heavy seasons.

Although we were disappointed in details such as parts of the trail we walked and the information provided previous to the visit, the trip showed us a far more diverse image of the place than we imagined, and really showed how vast the area truly is. The trip consequentially made it easier to approach business providers and students for interviews. We were also able to do more specific interviews, personally knowing what the area is like.



# 6.4 SWOT Analysis • • • • •

SWOT Analysis (or SWOT Matrix) is a strategic planning technique used to help an organization identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats related to business competition or project planning. We used it to evaluate which internal and external factors, shaping the Evo Hiking Area, that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving objectives stated in the brief.

Strengths and Weakness are frequently internally-related, while Opportunities and Threats commonly focus on environmental placement.

**Strengths:** characteristics of the business or project that give it an advantage over others.

**Weaknesses:** characteristics of the business that place the business or project at a disadvantage relative to others.

**Opportunities:** elements in the environment that the business or project could exploit to its advantage.

**Threats:** elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the business or project.



# 6.4 SWOT Analysis • • • • • • • • • •

## Strengths

- Good infrastructure for huge events.
- People who actually reached the area often enjoy it and keep returning.
- Location: the only hiking area in Southern Finland.

## Weaknesses

- Communications (inefficient information flow).
- No system for analyzing feedback.
- Maintenance problems, lack of resources to be allocated there.
- No specific attractions

## Opportunities

- Cooperation with associations.
- Using volunteer- or low-investment work.
- Engaging locals to become “ambassadors”, stay involved in Evo development and attract visitors.
- Branding the area and use social media, webpages, word of mouth and influencers to advertise for it and raise awareness.

## Threats

- Is there enough demand for nature-related activities to bring people to Evo?
- Would the increase of visitors bother those who were praising the solitude in Evo?
- Not enough public and private investment and resources (time, money).
- Many different stakeholders and different interests to take into account.

# 6.5 Problems analysis • • • • • • • •

Midway in our project we had been researching the matter for several weeks. Prior to developing a solution, we listed the key problems and most important questions we still did not have a sufficient answer to. They were the following:

- Evo is a secret: info is exclusive and scattered
  - Does someone want to keep it a secret?
  - Whose secret is it?
  - Why is it a secret?
- Benefiting from Evo require a lot of knowledge and tools
- Evo is versatile but scattered (not zoned)
- Alternative resources/funding need to be evaluated
- Bad connection/communication/cooperation between locals and Metsähallitus
- Events trigger growth
  - What kind of events trigger growth?
  - What are the scouts doing wrong (and what do they do right)?
- Valuable sites (historical/cultural/natural) are not used
  - Why?
  - How?
  - Commercialize?
- Fishing is strongly associated with Evo
  - Main attraction
  - Why? How?

- Accessibility for elderly
  - For who else is it accessible (families/disabled/beginners)?
- Forestry suffers from bad public perception in Finland
  - Make it friendly?
  - Recreational values?
  - Transparency?
- Do not increase entropy
  - Metsähallitus cannot maintain new stuff (or it will be on the cost of previous)

Through several brainstorming sessions and discussions with our tutors, we found that events, if carefully planned and facilitated, carried the potential to solve most of the biggest issues. Most notably they enable outsourcing much of the effort most important for users (advertisement, maintenance, and communication), while it attracts more investments and visitors to the area, benefiting the local economy on many levels. We acknowledged that this solution might not be the best one for all Hiking Areas, but we knew far too little about the others to make a decision on how to help them, so we decided to focus on what we had learned from Evo. An additional great benefit of Evo was its position, a mere two hours drive from as many as eight out of Finland's ten largest cities.

# 6.6 International Events Benchmarking

*In order to design a strong and functional model for generating events in Hiking Areas, we used benchmarking answering the following questions:*

## **What kind of events are currently being organized in forests?**

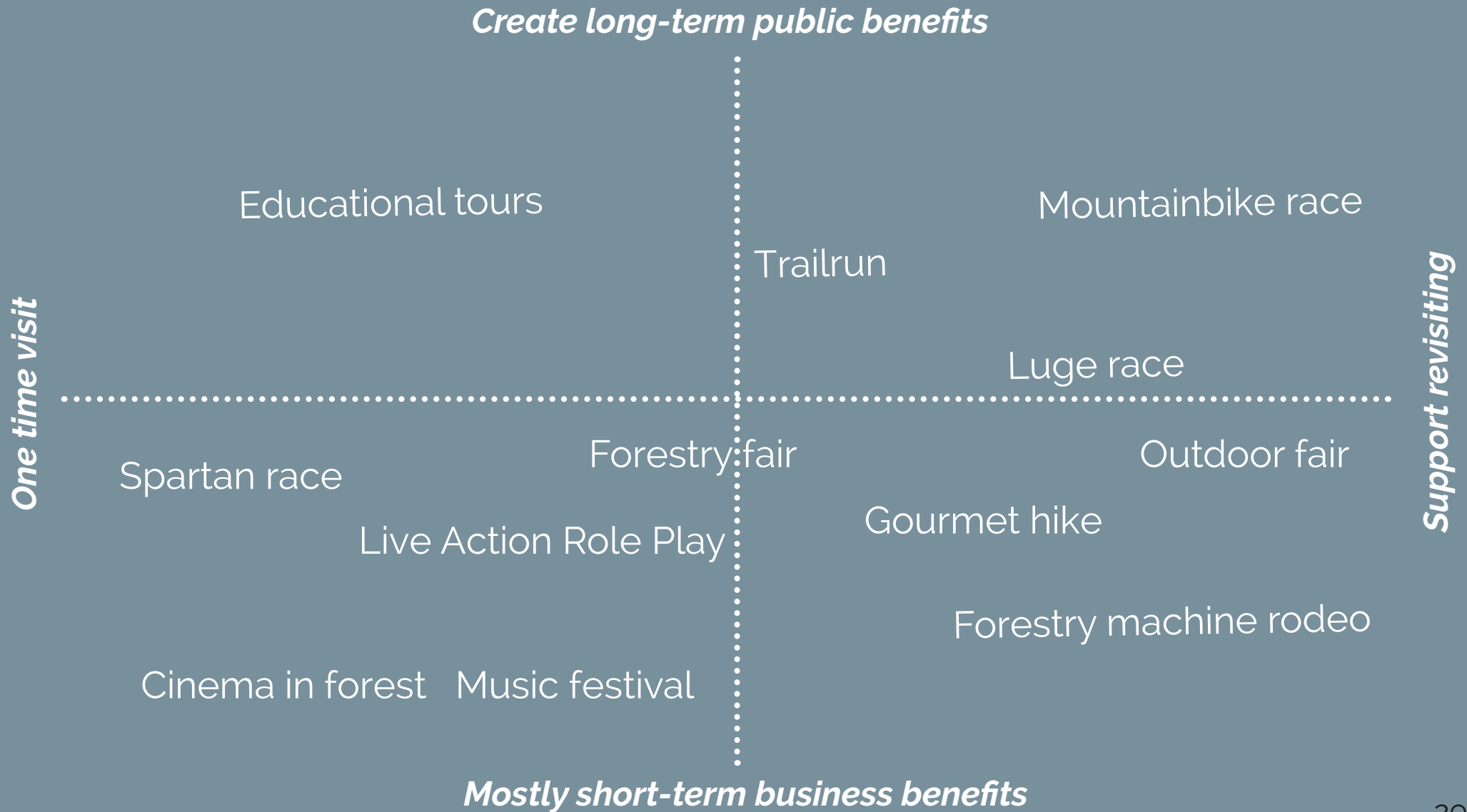
- Sports competitions: Cape to Cape MTB (Australia), Shimano Enduro Tasmania (Australia), luge races (Finland)
- Trail runs: Nuuksio trail run (Finland), Österlen springtrail, (Sweden)
- Music festivals: Superwood, (Helsinki), Waldfrieden (Germany)
- LARP games: Conquest germany
- Extreme runs: Spartan race (international)
- Cinema in the forest
- Adventure parks
- Adventure hikes: Estonia lantern hikes, swedish taste hikes
- Forestry machine rodeo (Finland)

## **How can Evo benefit from similar Events?**

- New trails and maintenance of existing trails
- Spartan race: outdoor exercise stations, Parkour parks
- Positive perception of forestry
- A lot of people come to the area - they might come back if they like it.
- Free advertisements from organizers
- Outsourcing the function of promoting hiking areas
- Reaching out to a new audience
- More revenue coming in directly or indirectly
- Employment opportunities for locals
- More demands for local services, a good chance to have a thriving service ecosystem
- Empowering local businesses



# 6.6 International Events Benchmarking



# 6.7 Awareness benchmarking · · · ·

Since a lack of awareness might be one of the main reasons, why very few people organize events in Evo, we took a look at ways to raise awareness in both private and state-owned (international) forests. In Finland there is a private landowner association "Svenska lantbruksproducenternas centralförbund SLC r.f.", which provides the opportunity to actively participate in events like the nature days ("Open farm"). Another good example for showing the benefits of partnering up with forest owners are the USA and Singapore, who both hand out "partnership" awards to the best partners. Below we list the best practices we gathered from these benchmarks.

## **Finland:**

The landowner-association SLC, mentioned above, organizes events and publishes the opportunity to participate on their webpage.

## **USA**

Hand out a partnership award for the best partner (most beneficial or best serves the public good).

## **Austria**

Media scholarships: Journalists, authors, photographers, etc. can apply and receive 2 free weeks in a national park on the term that they write or report about it. The national park will then publish the results, so it's a win-win for both parties.

## **Germany**

Volunteer work (often instead of military service):

A lot of different sponsors and partners, such as Fjällräven, Coke and Honda on the website "Marketplace nature", where companies and private persons can see different opportunities for getting involved with national parks.

## **Singapore**

Actively encourage business owners to cooperate and invest in forests by, among other things, handing out a partnership award.

# 6.8 Permit benchmarking · · · · ·

By analyzing the best-practice of permits and contracts in state-owned forests around the world, we found that the responsible units in Britain, the USA and Australia have clear guidance on how to organize events and how to apply for permits on their website. Sometimes there is even a fee for organizing events, and therefore an opportunity to get revenue from events. Additionally, to the advice and permit templates, there are requirements for insurance (UK), evidence of competence (UK) and a risk assessment (UK and Australia). There is also a lot of helpful support provided, like an emergency action plan (UK), maps of the forest areas (UK), an event planning guide (Australia) and the option to book a ranger for the event (USA).

These benchmarks proved to us that Metsähallitus could smoothly combine all these important segments in one application process to make sure to stay in control of the use of the Hiking Areas. This would be important to uphold the values of Hiking Areas and ensuring safe conduct for all stakeholders.



# 6.9 Design Principles

*Based on all our insights and findings, we chose eight design principles to guide us toward producing our final proposal. These principles were to function as strategic goals, which our final proposal would have to reach.*

**#1 Do not rely solely on funding from Metsähallitus, but alternative sources instead**

Metsähallitus is investing money to maintain services in Evo. However, there is disagreement about how to best use that money. We cannot assume that Metsähallitus can increase their own investments in the area before there are more visitors, so the current investments must be used in a different way. A solution based on funding from multiple actors, is more likely to survive local or individual economic disruption.

**#2 Raise awareness of what is already there**

Evo is an enormous and diverse forest offering the opportunity to practice a vast amount of different activities, and there is infrastructure for large events. However, because of too little and outdated advertisement, the whole area is currently underutilized. Utilizing what is already there, is economically and ecologically far more sustainable than creating new.

**#3 Growth is sustainable**

Making fast and large investments in enhancing Evo, would not create lasting benefits, since there currently is not enough money to maintain the existing infrastructure. Lasting improvements require slow organic growth, building on previous work and correcting mistakes, while they are manageable.

# 6.9 Design Principles • • • • •

## **#4 Change is mindful of locals**

The local community is an important expert when developing any area. It was there before and it will remain there after the change has been applied. Positive change, therefore, require collaborating with locals to ensure mutually beneficial solutions and avoiding conflict. The student campus in Evo constitutes the largest part of the community inside the area. Besides the student population, there are several service providers and forestry practitioners, who need to be taken into account. Additionally, there are several villages in the immediate vicinity to Evo, whose inhabitants are eager to participate in the development.

## **#5 Benefiting from and enjoying Evo is made easier**

As mentioned in principle #2, Evo offers vast potential. However, the area is so big that the current infrastructure does not support utilizing, or comfortably reaching the whole area. Furthermore, it is difficult to reach Evo by public transport, decreasing the amount of potential visitors. Attracting more visitors to Evo, require utilizing more of the unique potential Evo has to offer by for instance increasing and improving current infrastructure.

## **#6 The experience answers the expectations**

Currently the information available for people interested in visiting Evo is not efficiently communicated. Hiking Areas as such are widely unknown which means that the name is interpreted as a descriptive addition, painting a picture much like that of the national parks, which are generally known as areas predominantly used for hiking. However, where national parks provide clear guidance and easy infrastructure, the fact that Evo is very different, does not show from the information currently provided. To have people revisit the area, it is essential to meet if not exceed the expectations generated through the information communicated.

# 6.9 Design Principles • • • • •

## **#7 Communication between stakeholders are streamlined**

The communication between Metsähallitus and the local businesses and organisations is good, but because there is no clear structure in place for this kind of communication, messages do not always get answered, causing friction between stakeholders. A specific platform or channel for this form of communications can easily incorporate feedback from users and so streamline the communications between all stakeholders.

## **#8 Existing resources are used to a maximum degree**

Evo offers a good foundation for expanding the current and creating valuable new infrastructure and services. There are several businesses acting in the area and several more in the immediate vicinity, there are plenty of trails, cabins and information provided on site, and there are communities inside and close to Evo interested in participating to further develop the area. When producing new services in the area, it is essential to utilize these existing resources as far as possible; building on the interests of all stakeholders, expanding the service ecosystem, enhancing the infrastructure and embracing the ecological value present all over Evo.



# 7. Ideation



## Ideation & Decision

### How we merge ideas

We researched about the best practices of events in the nature, how permit/contract application works and how other natural areas raise awareness. With the research data and insights from interviews, we merge ideas that will work together to answer the problems in hiking areas.

### Rooftop meeting

The rooftop meeting was a turning point for our project. After mid-term review, we were brainstorming on top of the roof for our final proposal. The event idea came up and we all thought it would serve to address the problems and fit our design principles.

### Change directions

The original focus of our project was about the user's journey and local service ecosystem. After our field research in Evo, we discovered that Evo Trail Weekend will be organized in Evo in this September. The research we conducted supports the idea that events can bring visitors, benefit the local service ecosystem and the local economy.

# 8. Our proposal

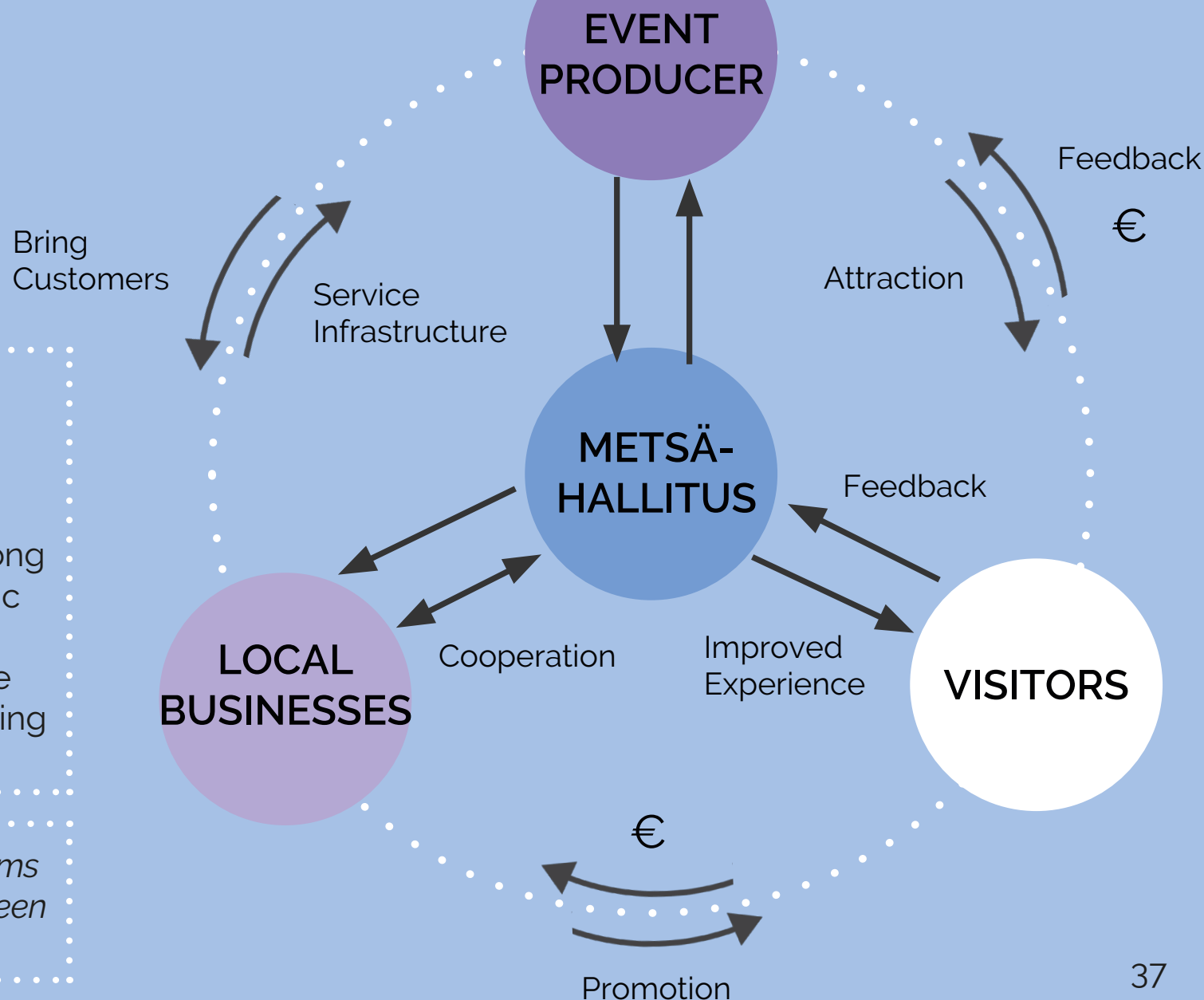
## Proposal Overview

- Our proposal is called Eventful Forest - event facilitation model for Evo. We propose for the commissioners to take the facilitator's role to build joint forces between public and private sectors in order to utilize events for raising public awareness and generating a sustainable growth in visitor numbers as well as local economy.
- The proposal includes an introduction to the event facilitation model and a roadmap to show how to start the execution of our model.

## Validation / Evidence: Why?

- There is a 10% increase in nature tourism from 2016 to 2017, and the interests in outdoor activities have been growing in Finland.
- In September, a new event will be organized for the first time: Evo Trail Weekend. Local businesses are interested in cooperating in producing events in Evo.
- Our research in international event benchmarking shows that events can bring benefits to public and private sectors.

# 8.2 Event Facilitation Model



## What is it?

The Event Facilitation Model is designed for Metsähallitus to take the facilitator's role in utilizing events to build a strong joint force between the public and the private sector for a win-win situation in the future development of National Hiking Areas.

*The Event Facilitation Model aims to create mutual benefits between all the major stakeholders.*



# 8.3 Process

## How does it work?

Once event producers form the ideas, they can start an online application for event permit in the Hiking Areas.

Metsähallitus will evaluate the application and provide advice and assistance, if the event is aligned with the interests and values of the Hiking Areas' development, Metsähallitus will issue the event permit and sign the contract that clearly explains the liabilities for event producers.

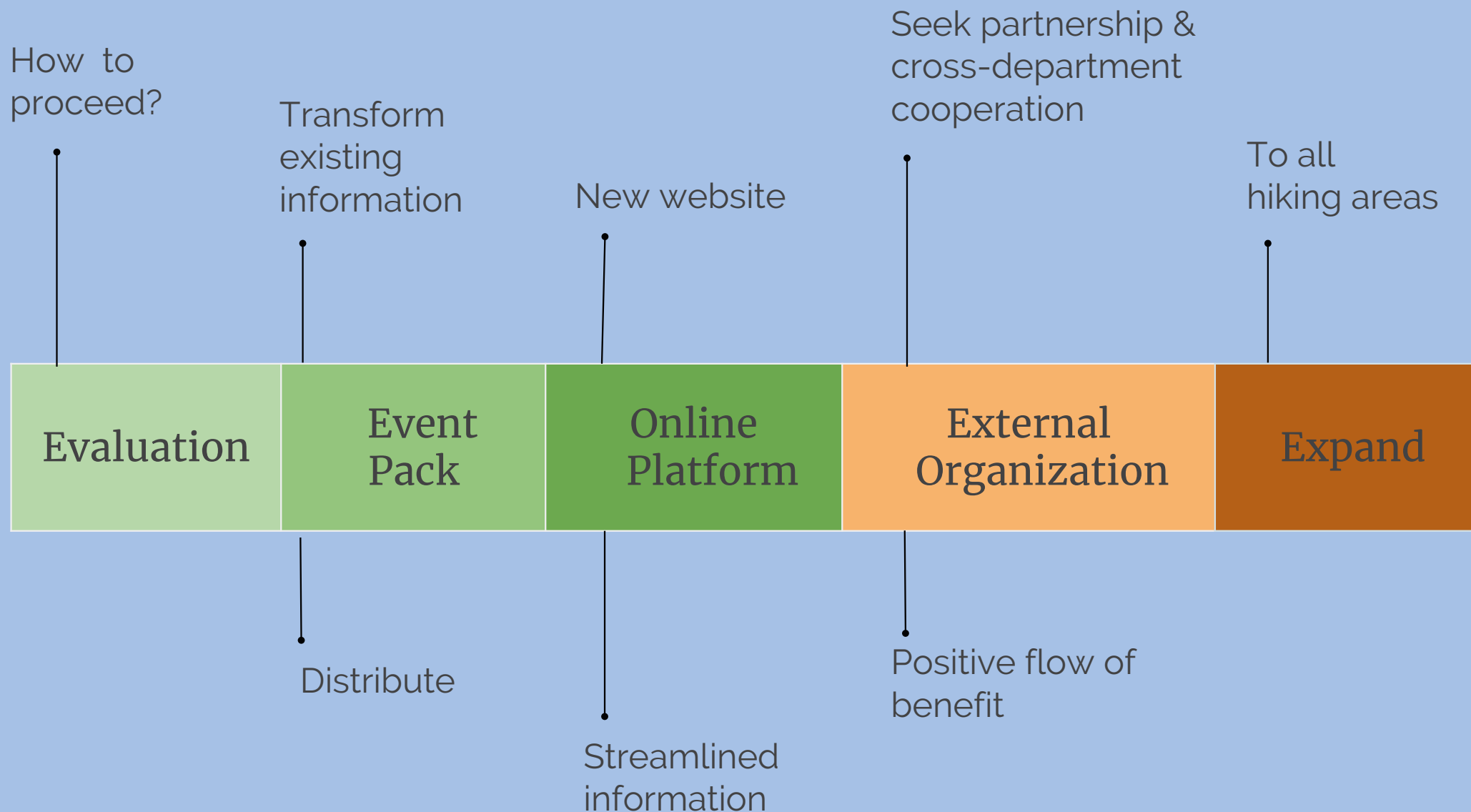
There will be further help and information from Metsähallitus about how to proceed to event production.

Metsähallitus will monitor the activities during the event.

Afterwards, event producers need to submit follow-up reports and visitors' feedback to Metsähallitus. The best practices of events will be published on the website and provide reference for future events.



# 8.4 Roadmap



# 8.4 Roadmap

## **First Step: Evaluation**

Start by evaluating how Metsähallitus wants to realize the model and how many resources you have. Shall it be an in-house event production division or outsourcing a professional organization?

## **Second Step: Event Pack**

We suggest Metsähallitus to issue an event-friendly information pack of Hiking Areas to the stakeholders in the region, such as tourism offices and business associations, to provide them with an alternative venue for events. For example, Evo Trail Weekend is organized in September 2018 with a business camp and several outdoor activities. There will be more potentials and more surprises to come with events.

## **Third Step: Online Platform**

A new online platform will work as the interface between the stakeholders and inform visitors of the possibilities in Evo. All services will be combined in one website for permit application, event promotion, feedback gathering and so on.

## **Fourth Step: External Organization**

Hiring an external organization will generate more comprehensive benefits, and build stronger partnership between different public and private sectors.

## **Fifth Step:**

Once the model pilots in Evo hiking area. It is easy to expand the idea to the other Hiking Areas.

# 8.5 New Experience of Stakeholders

*The event facilitation model can improve stakeholders' experience in personal and system level.*

Stakeholders	Personal level	System level
Visitors	Enjoy a versatile hiking area	generate demand and feedback for service providers, event producers and Metsähallitus
Event Producers	Encouraged to hold events in hiking areas	initiate events and serve as a partner
Metsähallitus	has a clear overview	facilitate collaboration
Local Businesses	increase direct connection to customers	a better service ecosystem to attract more visitors



# 8.6 Benefits

## Short term

### 1. Increase visibility

Events promote hiking areas through different channels. Participants will reach potential visitors through word of mouth or social media.

### 2. Attract visitors

Potential visitors who are interested in nature-related activities or experience will be attracted to Hiking Areas through events. The number of visitors will grow organically.

### 3. Attract investments

More resources will be brought in from different public and private sectors. When the visitor numbers grow, more revenue will go to local business and generate a positive flow of benefits.

### 4. Enhance infrastructure

The organizer of Evo Trail Weekend exchange services with Metsähallitus, which maintains the trails in Evo and creates a new mountain biking trail for the event. Infrastructure created for the events can last for long term benefiting future visitors.

## Long term

### 1. Improved Communication

The model establishes a new official channel for Metsähallitus to communicate with all the stakeholders, including visitors, local service providers, event producers and etc. The improved communication will help Metsähallitus to devote limited resources to the most needed areas.

### 2. Enhanced employment

The growth in visitor numbers will bring more revenue to the local business and generate more demands, which will lead to more local jobs.

### 3. Growing popularity

The cooperation between public and private sectors can generate benefits for local economy and increase the local popularity.

### 4. Positive image

Events will promote Evo and create a positive image for Evo.

### 5. Organic Growth

The event facilitation model will help Metsähallitus to control the development in hiking areas and make sure the events will bring growth in an organic way without environmental impact.

# 8.7 Limitations

## **More feedback from visitors on the ground:**

Although we obtained plenty of feedback from varying stakeholders and understood the problems they face, we were unable to receive qualitative or quantitative feedback from visitors on the ground. This was because we visited Evo during the off season and a quieter time period where many activities were not taking place. We also need to acquire more specific feedback from the visitors, hear their opinions on event production within a specific context. This could have opened our eyes to something that we could not examine and enable a bottom-up perspective.

## **Inability to prototype the model on a small scale and test whether it works in Evo:**

Our whole proposal remains in the realm of existing as a conceptual and theoretical framework. There was no time to test the solution and see how it works. We also did not present it to enough stakeholder representatives to hear their take on it.



# 8.8 Conclusion

## CONCLUSIONS

Creating an ecosystem for events to take place is definitely a leverage point to improve the overall situation. This is strongly validated by some of the event ecosystems that were created in the past within Evo. The potential and opportunity is amplified even more within the present day context. Having benchmarked and examined some of the best practices from other countries, the validation is extended even further.

Our model is based on extensive research that introspects the systems in close detail and allows room for much needed flexibility from different stakeholder to steer in their own direction while keeping the structure of the systems intact.

## FUTURE ROLES

Based on our findings, we propose that Metsähallitus take the role as a facilitator for creating a mutually beneficial service ecosystem. By further strengthening the collaboration between Metsähallitus and the Event Producer, a better service infrastructure can be generated to support and cooperate with Local Businesses. This will allow Local Businesses to advertise Evo and attract more customers, which in turn will improve their experience in Evo.

*But how do we turn this nice ideal into practice?*

In order to generate lasting growth, the event facilitation model creates a circular process, which supports the accumulation of information for the development of Evo. It does this by encouraging stakeholders to communicate and support each other throughout the process.

## BENEFITS

### Short term benefits

In the short term, our model encourages different stakeholders to promote Evo, which will increase visibility and attract new visitors. An increased number of events will attract investments and channel them for improving and building new infrastructure where it is most urgent.

### Long term benefits

In the long term, with Metsähallitus as an event facilitator between the public and private sector, we strengthen the communication between all stakeholders. The increased demand from new visitors will increase business and employment opportunities. Advertisement by visitors and events will generate a growing popularity and a positive image of Evo. Lastly, the facilitation ensures building on what is already there, to ensure organic growth.

Our proposal enables creating a win-win situation beneficial for both the public and private sector while creating positive support for Evo.

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# Appendix · · · · ·

1. International Event Benchmarking
2. Ideas for Event Facilitation Model
3. Example of event application form from the United Kingdom

