

Visit Finland Internationalisation Criteria



2022



Visit Finland

Dear Reader,

Long-term dedication to product development and quality assurance helps travel companies have happier customers, higher profitability and a competitive service portfolio.

Visit Finland's Internationalisation Criteria help make sure that Finnish travel products and packages for international markets are of high enough quality to be competitive and beneficial for international growth.

With increasing competition on the travel market, key factors for success include sustainable practices, utilisation of new digital opportunities, data-driven customer understanding and development of year-round services.

Read the criteria below and make sure your services meet the demands of international customers and hold their own against heavy competition.

Best regards,

KRISTIINA HIETASAARI

Senior Director, Travel/Visit Finland,
Business Finland Oy

1. Quality

You monitor customer satisfaction and develop the quality of your services based on the feedback you receive. You pay special attention to cleanliness, aesthetics and the last detail.

You have defined your customer groups and considered their needs in your services and communications.

(Includes product development as well as communications with your target group)

You have studied Finland's international target groups. You utilise a quality management system to improve the quality of your services and track customer reviews (e.g. on TripAdvisor). You use feedback to improve your services and respond immediately to reviews when needed. You follow the principles of knowledge-based management, including the use of research and trend forecasting to keep up with your target groups. You improve your customer experience by paying attention to cleanliness and using suitable aesthetic elements.

2. Service

You offer a seamless service package to your customers. Your staff is familiar with the customer group, has good language skills and is committed and competent.

Customer orientation and emphasis on service are the cornerstones of service development. You focus on the customer from the first encounter and give them your undivided attention. You aim to carry out their wishes to the best of your abilities and without delay.

You must train your staff to understand the company's customer groups, continuously develop their professional and language skills (including languages other than English, if necessary) and ensure their commitment to the company and their work.



3. Sustainability

As a responsible operator, you promote the principles of sustainable travel: you consider the wellbeing and needs of the local community and the environment in your activities, you support the local economy through your choices and treat all customers equally.

You want your region to be a great place to live and visit – now and in the future – so your decisions must be sustainable for future generations as well. You are constantly leading your company towards more sustainable and responsible operation, taking into account the direct and indirect effects on the surrounding community and the environment. Your activities do not endanger the region's natural capacity or the community's goodwill, they contribute to the foundations of good living and the preservation of clean nature. In your efforts to combat climate change, you strive to decrease your carbon footprint by using renewable energy, saving energy and water, reducing waste and recycling. You promote cultural sustainability by genuinely promoting the cultural heritage and local culture of your region. By employing locals and using local services and products as well as considering the local residents in your operations, you contribute to regional prosperity. You also ensure that all animals are treated with care and dignity within your operations. You inform your customers about your values and help them make responsible choices. You have signed the Sustainable Finland Pledge and are pursuing the Sustainable Travel Finland Label.

You ensure that your services are accessible to everyone regardless of their age, sexual orientation, religion, culture, special needs or disabilities. You promote equal hospitality and develop your operations so that your customers can equally and independently have the most diverse travel experiences possible. An open travel product is accessible to everyone but its service design also makes it suitable for special groups. You train, guide and encourage your staff to act responsibly and to meet your customers as equals. Non-discriminatory, inclusive travel contributes to an open, inclusive and equal society and supports sustainable development.

4. Safety

You ensure the safety of your staff and guests as well as compliance with the law, regulations and official recommendations. Your operations do not pose any danger to local residents either.

The Consumer Safety Act requires operators to assess the hazards associated with their services and to take the necessary measures to eliminate them. Your services are compatible with industry-standard safety practices and guidelines. Remember to create a safety document for your services if necessary. Health safety is also relevant. Safety should be included in your communications and marketing.



5. Capacity and networks

You have formed networks with the other travel operators in your region. Your capacity or the capacity offered through a co-operation network forms an attractive and comprehensive service package for independent travellers and/or groups.

International travellers don't come to Finland for one single service, so try to create comprehensive service packages that appeal to your customer base and leverage other suitable services in your region the best you can. Remember that facilitating international travel requires close collaboration with your regional travel organisation.

6. Accessibility

Your location has sufficient public transport connections or you can arrange transportation from the nearest bus or train station or airport.

Try to imagine reaching your location as an international traveller. Provide detailed instructions for them on your website, for example. Explain all the ways to reach your location: timetables, fares and travel times. A smooth arrival helps create a positive overall experience. Please consider inclusivity as well (see section 3, Sustainability).

7. Availability and purchasability

You are constantly developing new digital solutions. Your products and services are clearly described and priced in the language of the target market or English on your company website. Your products can be easily found and purchased through multiple channels, such as tour operators or other sales organisations, your website or other digital booking channels.

Online booking is a prerequisite for success with international sales. Visit Finland's DataHub platform is recommended part of Visit Finland's operations and a gateway to success with international travel sales. DataHub also simplifies the management and distribution of your product catalogue across different channels. Make sure that your product descriptions include all relevant facts. Instructions for writing product descriptions can be found in Visit Finland's Internationalisation Guide and My Stay ABC guide, for example.

8. Authenticity and appeal

For product development and marketing, you make use of authentic Finnish experiences and ingredients based on the unique assets, traditions, culture, and lifestyle of your region.

Consider your most important USPs as well as the USPs of Finland and your region. Remember to engage the traveller, include narratives that complement the experience and explain some of the history involved: for example, Finnish cultural icons are mostly unknown to foreigners. Developing year-round services will benefit the appeal and profitability of your company. Study theme-specific product recommendations to improve the authenticity and appeal of your services.

9. Business goals

Your operation is professional and profitable, you know the laws regulating the industry and you have defined an internationalisation strategy and its budget in your business plan.

Your company has the prerequisites for profitable growth and you are actively pursuing international customers. You are working on your competitiveness and you are familiar with the conventions of the international travel trade, your sales path and common distribution channel practices.

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publications:



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