

SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE ON THE WEBSITES OF INDUSTRIES IN FINNISH LAPLAND

Working paper 1

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1 Introduction

This working paper discusses various industries in Finnish Lapland reaching out to local communities and attempting to gain a social license to operate, or local acceptance, through their websites. The industries in question are the largest in Lapland: mining, forestry, tourism, and reindeer-herding, a traditional livelihood in the region.

The report is part of the project Building Shared Knowledge Capital to Support Natural Resource Governance in the Northern Periphery (BuSK), aimed to assess the management of natural resources and land use planning in Northern regions. This three-year project was started in June 2016, it is led by the Natural Resources Institute Finland, and it is funded by the European Regional Development Fund's Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme. The report is included in Work Package 4, whose aim is to develop best practices guidelines for large-scale extractive industries and tourism to gain a social license to operate.

The report begins with an introduction to the concepts of *social license to operate* (SLO) and *local community* as they are discussed in the Finnish academic literature concerning extractive industries and tourism, especially with reference to Lapland. This is followed by an account of the ways in which the four industries address local communities on their websites. The paper assesses the websites of the Agnico Eagle mining company operating in Kittilä and the Boliden Kevitsa mine located in Sodankylä. It is worth noting that Boliden bought the mine from First Quantum Minerals in March 2016 and started the operation in June 2016. The investigation of the websites started in August 2016. The forest industry is the domain of Metsähallitus, while reindeer herding is administered by the Reindeer Herders' Association. As for the tourism industry, the following three large companies are examined: Lapland Hotels, Lapland Safaris, and the Levi Ski Resort. Finally, the contents of the websites are summarized in the concluding chapter.

1.1 Social license to operate

In Finland, the social license to operate is primarily connected to mining projects. In simple terms, it means that the local community supports and approves the operation of a mining company. The license cannot be compared to administrative permits, for example

environmental licenses, since it refers to a company's self-regulation instead of legislation. The SLO depends on a company's performance in relation to the local communities. Different forms of cooperation between a mining company and the local communities can promote the company's approval. The cooperation may include local employment, building partnerships, local capacity development, interaction, etc. (Jartti et al. 2014; Kokko et al. 2013; Rantala et al. 2016). A key instrument in achieving the social license to operate is to develop corporate social responsibility (CSR). It means that a company takes an active role in issues related to the following: local employment, human rights, cultural heritage, local communities, stakeholders, ethical procurement, etc. (Sairinen et al. 2016, 183-184). Hence, the concepts are partly overlapping, but the approaches are different; CSR stresses the role of a company, whereas SLO refers to the community and its relation to a company. Naturally, the SLO is influenced by the company's performance and its work toward social responsibility.

The social license to operate can also be interpreted more broadly from the viewpoints of society and history. It can be said that an SLO does not only build on interaction with the local community, but is also influenced by a number of other elements (Rantala et al. 2016, 114). The general public may have certain mine-related expectations and perceptions that influence the local community's opinions on a nearby mine and thereby affect the project's social license (Rantala et al. 2016, 116).

The SLO is based on the idea that acquiring the approval of the local communities is important in the mining sector – in fact, it is a precondition for mining activities. Further, the operation of a mining company is linked to the approval of each and every stakeholder. However, in practice the concept of SLO is not that clear. The idea that it is achieved through the consent of the surrounding community or granted by society in general is problematic because there should be a party who can actually grant it. Besides the question who can grant an SLO, it is not clear what it requires and how permanent it is. The concept and its definition are a topics to be discussed in Finnish academia as well as in the mining sector (Peltonen 2016, 135-137).

Early on, the social and environmental impacts of a mining project may be small, but cooperation between the stakeholders is already needed at this stage. The key objective of interaction between a mining company and the stakeholders is trust. To achieve it, companies are to report their prospecting activities, listen to the local communities, keep the contact channels open, and strive to employ locals (Sairinen et al. 2016, 181). However, problems

may arise from prospecting near protected, indigenous, or residential areas. The reputation and business of a company may also be threatened by economic uncertainty, temporary permits, or a critical attitude towards the mining sector (Sairinen et al. 2016, 182).

Besides being a tool to earn the trust of the local residents, the SLO is also required by financial markets. Some financiers require it before financing a company (Kokko et al. 2013). To achieve the license, companies are actively developing their corporate social responsibility. The risk of losing the SLO will increase if a company ignores the opinions of the local residents. In such a case, opposition may escalate and even lead to an open conflict (Sairinen et al. 2016, 160-161).

1.2 Local community

In general, the terms *localness* and *local community* refer to the people who live in a particular area (Lehtonen 1990, 218-219). However, determining who is a local resident is not a straightforward issue. A person who has moved out of a place, for example to study somewhere else, can still experience affiliation to the local community. Owning land or a holiday cottage can also make people feel that they are members of the local community even if their permanent residence is somewhere else. In such cases it is difficult to define who is a local person affected by a mining project and who is not. Localness is rarely questioned or defined, and if so, it is usually done in administrative or legal terms (Tuulentie & Meriruoho 2008).

In Tuulentie and Meriruoho's (2008, 88) article, interviewees define local residents as those who live in an area. Localness is often taken for granted, and referring to it could even be considered surprising in an interview. It is in fact viewed as an unspoken baseline condition that does not need clarification. An individual region may contain a number of communities. For example, in Inari there was a dispute between the forest industry and reindeer herding with twenty different groups involved, almost all of which defined themselves through the locality. (Valkonen 2003a.)

Locality, as a concept, refers to a place, and *place* refers not only to geographical and physical areas, but also to emotional spaces associated with identity. It may refer to a place of

residence, but a place can also serve as a source of cultural and symbolic attachment. For example, a landscape might mean or symbolize something important to a viewer. Thus, the importance of the landscape is an individual experience because it evokes unique feelings (Keskitalo-Foley 2006, 130-131).

The idea of a common, shared locality evokes a sense of community (Tuulentie & Meriruoho 2008, 86). A local community is often presented in the Finnish media as a single, homogeneous group which has a common opinion on, for example, a residential project in their territory. However, a local community may comprise not just one homogenous entity but a number of local communities with diverse interests. It is therefore not possible to ascribe localness to a single group sharing the same opinion (e.g. Kuparinen 2008).

The general view is that people should be involved in decision making concerning their own living environment (Suopajärvi 2001). According to Valkonen (2003b, 111), knowledge of the local conditions can be argued to provide a solid ground for giving an actor the right to speak. Also, the Constitution of Finland states that everyone should have a chance to influence the decisions that concern their own living environment (Kopomaa & Peltonen 2008, 16).

2 Mining

Lapland's mining industry has grown since the turn of the century. Mining projects have brought new jobs and new national and international actors to the region and they have breathed new life into remote villages. On the other hand, it is thought that mines have had adverse effects on the environment and local residents (Mononen 2016, 187). It is easier for a mining company to pursue its business if it has received a social license to operate in the area. Achieving and maintaining the license requires the trust of local residents in mining companies, municipalities, and authorities (Kokko et al. 2013, 10).

This report examines two mining companies located in Lapland. Agnico Eagle Finland Oy owns a gold mine in Kittilä and is prospecting elsewhere in Finland and the other Nordic countries. The company is a subsidiary of the Canadian company Agnico Eagle Mines Limited. The Kittilä

gold mine is the largest in Europe, employing directly around 400 people and indirectly more than 100 people as contractors (Agnico Eagle Finland 2016a).

The homepage of the Agnico website has the slogan "Success – hand in hand with the people of Lapland," referring to cooperation with the local people, as well as the text "The core of our operations does not only include share prices, employees, and a gold deposit. We are just as much about people, families, and communities. More than half of our employees hail from Kittilä, and over 90% call Lapland home" (Agnico Eagle Finland 2016a).

The company emphasizes the importance of *family*. The homepage states that the company is about families and the Our Approach section says, "Agnico Eagle is like a family." Also, according to the company values, family is one of the five mainstays of the company. The homepage has three images: two showing a man at work and one showing a young woman with a baby.



(Images on Agnico Eagle's homepage, 2016)

Agnico Eagle's website emphasizes the company's efforts to achieve local acceptance. It also points out that the company employs many locals and that it is working for the benefit of the local residents, for example by organizing a variety of events and by sponsoring Kittilä's football field and indoor hockey rink (Kittilä 2014). If a mine is expected to increase well-being, the local communities tend to have a positive attitude toward its operation in the area (Kokko et al. 2013).

In a website section addressing the local communities the mining company emphasizes its desire to be a "good neighbor" and to promote social, economic, and sustainable development in the communities affected by the company's activities (Agnico Eagle Finland 2016b). The company has in fact listed a variety of operating principles to achieve its objectives, which emphasise supporting the local communities and their sustainable development. This support can be provided for example by using local suppliers and by hiring local labour. Also feedback can be submitted to the company.

The local perspective has clearly been taken into account on Agnico Eagle Finland's website, and the company emphasizes that the local people are part of the company's operations. The homepage also has a link to the company's publications, through which the company provides information about its activities, the impacts of its activities, and its future plans.

The Boliden Kevitsa mine in Sodankylä employs 380 workers and 200 independent entrepreneurs. Boliden bought the Kevitsa mine in June 2016, which is quite recently, but it is a leading metals company that has activities in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Ireland (Boliden 2016).

The website of Boliden Kevitsa has three language versions. However, the sections concerning the company, such as About Us, Development, Media, etc. are all in English. The Finnish pages have a brief presentation of the Kevitsa mine and the related job opportunities in Finnish – the other sections are in English.

The language choices on the website indicate the target groups of the information. However, the company's small investment in the Finnish language reveals that the data is primarily intended for investors and customers instead of the local residents (see also Sairinen et al. 2016, 178). The two mining companies discussed above differ from each other in terms of communication. The Agnico-Eagle Finland website is in Finnish and stresses local cooperation. The local perspective is also attested by the publications link and feedback channel made available to the audience. The Boliden Kevitsa pages are mainly in English. Only the sections dealing with job opportunities and operating sites are provided in Finnish. The disparity may be explained by the fact that Agnico Eagle has operated in Kittilä since 2008, whereas Boliden purchased the Kevitsa mine only recently.

3 The forest industry

Forestry is a substantial industry in Finnish Lapland. Metsähallitus is a state enterprise that administers state-owned land and water areas. Its mission is to take care of and administer the use of these areas to the benefit of Finnish society (Metsähallitus 2016a).

As a major actor in forestry and as an employer, Metsähallitus has a broad and multi-dimensional network of stakeholders. The use of state-owned land and water areas is planned through a variety of interactive practices. For example, Metsähallitus organizes events in which future projects are introduced and advice is given to local residents. The company interacts according to the principle of participatory planning with those who are interested in the use of state-owned land. In this way, it aims to reduce conflicts and to achieve widely accepted solutions. At the same time, Metsähallitus receives important information about the specific characteristics of the regions, stakeholders, and local objectives (Metsähallitus 2015b).

The activities of Metsähallitus have a major impact on a regional basis. Metsähallitus employs 1,500 people, more than half of whom work in Northern Finland. It also employs many forestry entrepreneurs, such as lumberjacks, in various projects (Metsähallitus 2016c).

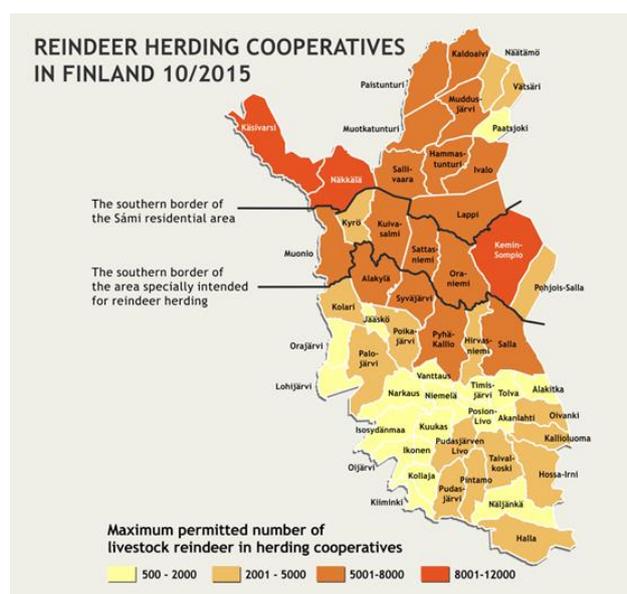
Metsähallitus is responsible for designing the use of various types of areas, including protected ones. Its decisions affect the special rights of local residents, for example those related to hunting and reindeer husbandry (Metsähallitus 2015d).

The website of Metsähallitus is extensive and gives a comprehensive account of local and stakeholder action. The company describes its activities, cooperation methods, stakeholders, and cooperation agreements on its pages. Forestry has a strong influence on both local residents and other industries in an area. Therefore, successful cooperation between the stakeholders is in everyone's interest. A number of studies and reports have been made on the collaboration and participatory planning carried out by Metsähallitus (e.g. Pitkänen 2003; Väisänen et al. 2004).

4 Reindeer Herders' Association

The Reindeer Herders' Association provides expert counselling and advice on reindeer husbandry in Lapland. Among other things, the association acts as a link between reindeer herders and develops reindeer husbandry in general (Paliskuntain yhdistys 2016a).

The reindeer husbandry area is divided into 54 cooperatives that administer reindeer herding in their areas. Each cooperative has an appointed chief of reindeer herding.



(Image by Reindeer Herders' Association, 2015)

The association's website is widely referred to in various situations related to reindeer herding because it provides information and advice to reindeer owners and other parties of interest. Among the most common situations are reindeer accidents, for which the website has a section explaining how to proceed in case of an accident. There is also general information, for example the names of the herding cooperatives and their chiefs, as well as a map of the reindeer herding cooperatives.

The website addresses problems caused by reindeer, such as damaged vehicles and crop losses. Being free-grazing animals, reindeer sometimes wander to areas where they are not wanted. The damage they cause may have an adverse effect on the acceptance of reindeer herding. The association's website gives advice on how to avoid damage caused by reindeer (e.g. fencing of crops) and explains what has been done over the years to prevent them. As

an example of the preventive measures, an experiment was carried out in 2014 in which reindeer antlers were tagged with reflective paint in an attempt to reduce collisions with cars during the dark season.

The website also describes the association's mission, focusing on sustainable development, ecological activities, the benefits of reindeer husbandry at the national level, and the versatility of reindeer products. The livelihood is portrayed as the oldest and most sustainable one in Northern Finland. Reindeer herders are considered to be active local leaders, who maintain security and a sense of community in the northern villages. The site also highlights the importance of the industry for maintaining the vitality of Northern Finland.

Reindeer herding exploits extensive and diverse pastures and affects other uses of land. Then again, other types of land use have an effect on reindeer herding in terms of food resources, grazing areas, and potential accidents. Land use and reindeer husbandry are linked to each other because virtually all land use affects reindeer herding in some way (Paliskuntain yhdistys 2016b).

5 Tourism

Tourism is one of the key industries in Lapland. The unique nature, the seasons, and the fells attract tourists – domestic as well as international. Finnish Lapland is defined as a getaway providing amusement, relaxation, and freedom. In marketing, Lapland is turned into a carnival. (Keskitalo-Foley 2006, 137.) The advertising is focused on winter and Christmas, which are also the busiest seasons of the year. Santa Claus, the northern lights, the polar night, and the vision of a "Winter Wonderland" are utilised to lure in tourists.

The report examines the websites of three major tourism companies: Lapland Hotels, Lapland Safaris, and Levi Ski Resort. The website of Lapland Hotels states that it is Finland's largest private hotel chain. The chain consists of 16 hotels, two of which are located outside of Lapland (Oulu and Tampere), and it provides ski resort activities in Ylläs (near the Äkäslompolo

village), Luosto, Olos, and Pallas. Lapland Hotels also owns a part of Lapland Safaris (Lapland Hotels 2016).

Lapland Safaris provides tourism services consisting of nature tourism, activities, and catering. The services are typically associated with Lapland's nature, the northern lights, the midnight sun, outdoor recreation (canoeing, trekking, and snowmobiles), reindeer, and other issues related to Lapland (Lapland Safaris 2016).

Levi Ski Resort is Finland's leading ski resort, offering a wide variety of downhill and cross-country skiing services and other activities in Levi, including the Alpine Skiing World Cup event (Levi Ski Resort 2016).

The websites of the three tourism businesses are very similar. They contain pictures of Lapland's beautiful nature combined with a range of activities to engage in. They are clearly targeted at customers, with only a small section briefly presenting the companies, their histories, and their contact information.

The Lapland Hotels website describes the company's long tradition in the tourism business and its development. The company started as a family business and expanded to its present size as a result of hard work. The website has a large number of pictures from Lapland and some slogans. For example, the following characterizations can be found: the source of Lapland's nature, a genuine Lappish village atmosphere, Santa's hotel, a village of tradition, and the cradle of Sámi culture. There are also photos of the fells, the snow, and the Sámi. The site is obviously aimed at tourists and does not tell much about the company itself. For example, social and environmental responsibility are not covered.

A conflict has occurred between Lapland Hotels and the Sámi because of the way the company advertises its business on the website using Sami costumes that are not genuine (Kinisjärvi 2016).

LAPLAND'S LEADING HOLIDAY PROVIDER



Lapland Hotels is the largest and the most diverse hotel chain in Lapland. As the leading holiday provider, it offers experiences and services in nine destinations, from Rovaniemi to Kilpisjärvi.

Lapland Hotels offer you 12 hotels to choose from, each with their own character and personality, and they are all located in the most beautiful part of Lapland. The accommodation options arrange from hotel rooms to high quality holiday apartments. Each destination is unique - you can spend your holiday in an Arctic city environment, a vibrant fell village or in the tranquillity of the wilderness.

The chain offers well-known Lappish à la carte- restaurants, atmospheric timber beam restaurants, family

(Image in Lapin Kansa, 2016. Original image by Lapland Hotels)

The Levi Ski Resort does not have an actual website, but information on the company's history, environmental responsibility, values, strategy, and vision can be accessed through the levi.fi website. The presentations are short and to the point. The company values focus on the customer, quality, safety, development, and the environment. The partner logos are at the bottom of the page. Levi's travel pages are aimed at tourists and their purpose is to market Levi utilising the appeal of Lapland. Local communities are not mentioned on the website.

Lapland Safaris does not differ from the other two. The company's site is aimed at tourists, marketing a variety of unique holiday destinations mostly through familiar themes: nature, the northern lights, and Santa Claus. They also briefly explain the company's approach toward social and environmental responsibility. In the section on environmental responsibility the company emphasises its environmentally friendly snowmobiles and the importance of nature in its activities. The social responsibility section highlights nature and culture as the starting points for all the activities of Lapland Safaris. The site also notes that the company employs 50 people throughout the year and around 450 people seasonally. Last, the website points

out that the company supports local people by employing them and by buying 50% of the services from local suppliers.



(Image by Lapland Safaris, social and environmental responsibility, 2016)

6 Conclusion

Finnish Lapland is a large and sparsely populated region with its own peculiarities. It does not have much industry, and its livelihoods, tourism and forestry in particular, are chiefly related to nature. Because life in Lapland is largely based on nature, combining the interests of industry (for example mining) and tourism is often a challenge (Suopajärvi 1999, 20).

A company needs the approval of the local residents to get a social license to operate. Once received, the SLO makes a company's activities easier and more acceptable. Trust between a company and the local residents is the key element in achieving the SLO. However, it is not always easy to define who is a local resident and how localness should be defined in general. Local residents do not constitute one single group; instead there may be multiple groups in the same area claiming the right to be heard in issues related to land use.

Table 1. Social license to operate and sustainability on the websites of industries in Finnish Lapland.

General appearance	Agnico Eagle homepage has pictures and slogans stating that Agnico Eagle is like a family. Pages are in Finnish. Boliden Kevitsa has a small section in Finnish, but pages are mostly in English.	Pages are extensive and full of information for locals, stakeholders, investors, etc.	The homepage has sections dealing with the Reindeer Herders' Association, reindeer herding cooperatives, advice, and reindeer damage. Locals are taken into account particularly in dealing with reindeer damage.	The webpages of the companies were similar; full of pictures and slogans about Lapland. There was no section for locals.
Environmental sustainability	AE: "We take care of our environment." Negotiation with local communities in restoration of mining area.	Multi-objective management of natural resources and securing ecosystem services. Nature conservation areas. Outdoor recreation. Habitat restoration.	Reindeer herding is dependent on nature. Reindeer herding needs broad and diverse pasture areas to function.	Nature is an important part of tourism in Lapland.
Social sustainability	Hiring of local labor. AE: supporting local communities. E.g. Leisure events.	Social responsibility. Participatory planning. Stakeholder co-operation. Employing locals. Metsähallitus also works to conserve cultural heritage.	Reindeer Herders' Association gives advice on reindeer husbandry for reindeer herders and other stakeholders. Stakeholder co-operation. Reindeer herding cooperatives are responsible for the damage that reindeer may cause.	Hiring of local labour. Locals are in the margin.
Economic sustainability	Hiring of local labour. Increasing the vitality of the municipality.	A major employer. Economic benefits to the region.	Reindeer herding is a traditional livelihood in Lapland.	Employing people (not just locals). Employment of local suppliers.

The company websites differ a great deal from one another. In the case of the mining industry, local communities were addressed on the Agnico Eagle website but not on the Boliden Kevitsa site. That said, it would be beneficial for a mining company to consider the thoughts and wishes of the local residents.

Metsähallitus (representing the forest industry) has thoroughly considered the interests of local residents and stakeholders on its website. Especially in Lapland, Metsähallitus uses participatory planning and seeks co-operation with its stakeholders. This concerns for example reindeer herding and forestry, which strongly influence each other.

The Reindeer Herders' Association represents reindeer husbandry. It takes other actors into account on its website, particularly in terms of the hazards and damage caused by reindeer. The adverse effects of reindeer herding may decrease its acceptability. The industry therefore creates ways to reduce the damage caused by reindeer, while highlighting the significance of reindeer herding in Lapland.

The tourism industry's websites pay little attention to local people. The sites are primarily aimed at tourists, with a brief description of the companies and their histories. There are no pages addressing issues related to environmental responsibility. Further, the sites do not bring out the advantages and disadvantages of the industry in view of the local people.

The industries occupy various positions: one business pays more and the other one less attention to the local perspective. The factors behind this may point toward the basic characteristics of an industry, its industrial culture, and tradition. For example, reindeer husbandry is a traditional family industry that often continues over generations. Tourism, on the other hand, often employs young people from other parts of the country. They typically stay in the community only for the duration of the work period and do not become attached to the place.

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