

CANADIAN ARCTISEN WEBINAR SUMMARY

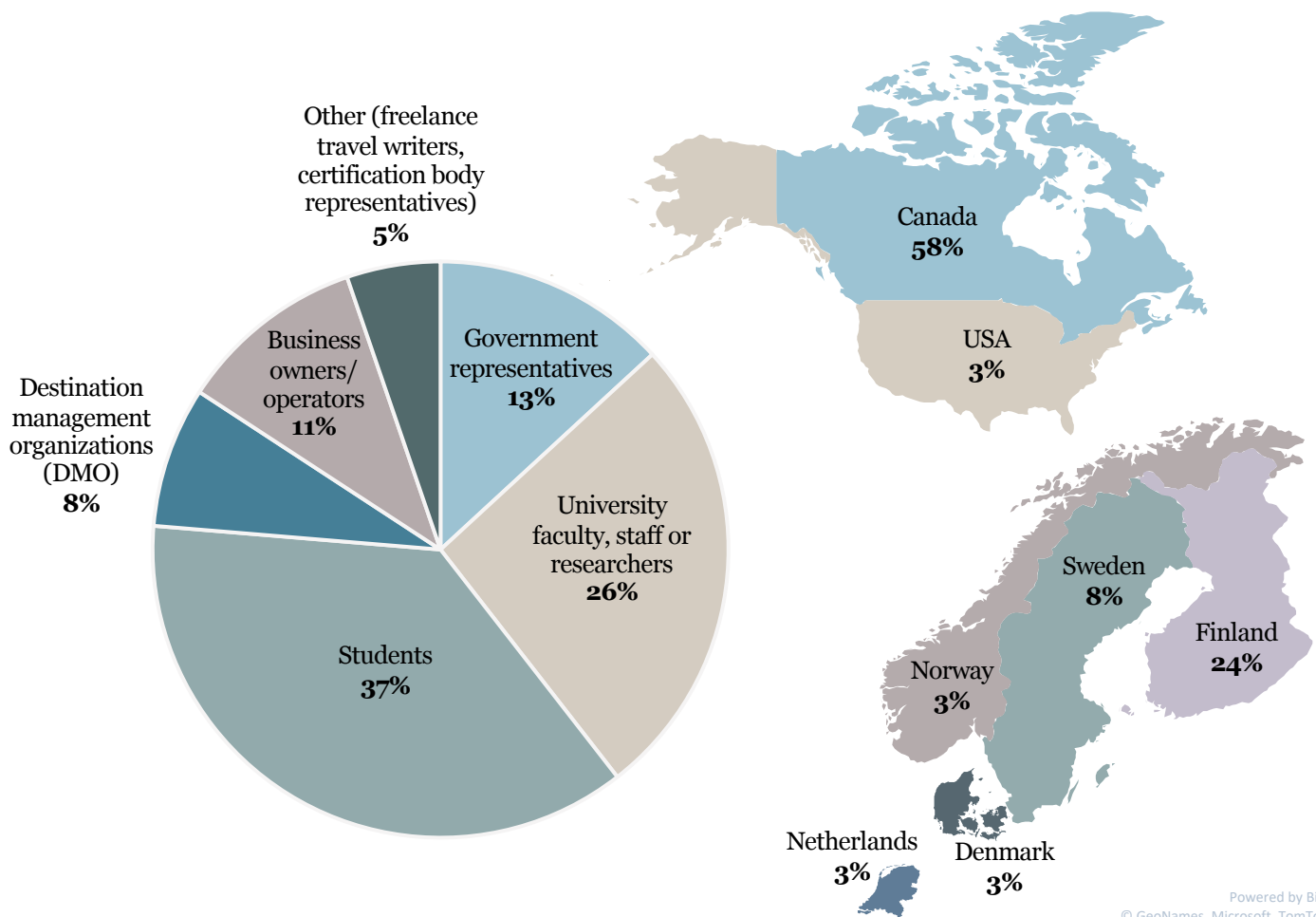
Experiences of Culturally Sensitive Tourism in the Canadian Arctic

June 9, 2021 | 1300-1500hrs EST

The project ‘Culturally Sensitive Tourism in the Arctic’ – [ARCTISEN](#) – develops a support system for start-ups and existing small and medium-sized enterprises offering innovative tourism products and services in the Arctic. The support system can be understood in many ways, but for us it means bringing together different actors and sharing knowledge and skills associated with culturally sensitive tourism. Moreover, it is important to build new knowledge and create better understanding of respectful relationships between Arctic communities and guests. This summary was generated from the Canadian webinar – one of four webinars hosted in collaboration with international partnerships – which took place on June 9, 2021.

AUDIENCE

Through a video conferencing platform, an international audience of 38 attendees with diverse professional backgrounds attended the webinar. Below is a breakdown of the attendees:



SPEAKERS

The webinar featured five speakers, who each brought valuable knowledge and insight related to culturally sensitive tourism in the Canadian Arctic. Read about each of the presentations below:

OPENING SPEAKER



Jean Becker

Inuk from Nunatsiavut, Labrador

Senior Director, Indigenous Initiatives, Operating as Interim Associate Vice President of Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion, University of Waterloo

Jean began the webinar by welcoming the audience and giving thanks to the land that sustains us and the relationships that brought together the attendees, organizers, and presenters. Jean oriented our hearts and minds towards listening and learning from each other, and being grateful for the knowledge and stories being shared.



Jillian Larkham

Inuk from Makkovik, Labrador

Director of Tourism, Nunatsiavut Government

→ Visit [webpage](#)

Jillian's presentation included a broad overview of Nunatsiavut Tourism initiatives, with a focus on the Hebron Mission National Historic Site (NHS).

Developing an Ambassador's Guidebook to preserve the stories of the land, culture, and peoples forcibly relocated from the site in 1959; recognizing that these stories are attached to traumas that resonate beyond the site and that relocatees should be the ones to determine which stories are told.



Meta Williams

Member of the Little Salmon Camaraks First Nation and the Wolf Clan

Co-owner, Long Ago People's Place

→ Visit [webpage](#)

Meta's presentation focused on how she and her partner developed their interpretation camp, *Long Ago People's Place*, with integrity.

Spoke to the importance of stories – stories as belonging to the culture and families, communicating through stories (both at the camp and with Elders), and ensuring that the stories shared with visitors are ones that can be shared.



Kylik Kisoun Taylor

Inuvialuk, Gwich'in, and Scandinavian descent

Owner, Tundra North Tours

→ Visit [webpage](#)

→ See the [webinar video](#)

Kylik's presentation highlighted his commitment to tourism as a way of sharing culture with visitors, while also contributing towards a better quality of life, cultural revitalization, and improved mental health for Indigenous peoples living in the Arctic.

Working to build a sustainable village on the land, North of Inuvik. The village focuses on connecting people to their culture through resources, and to a lesser extent, sharing transformative experiences with tourists.



Dr. Sonya Graci

Associate Professor, Ted Rogers School of Hospitality and Tourism Management

Sonya's presentation focused on sustainability issues associated with the Indigenous tourism sector, including the impacts of COVID-19.

Informed by the 2017 *Naut'sa mawt Declaration on the Development of Sustainable Indigenous Tourism*, Sonya focused on the conditions under which tourism practices may empower Indigenous peoples, build relationships, and preserve culture.

PANELISTS

PRESENTER

KEY MESSAGES

Below are key messages that emerged from the webinar presentations and discussions:

Respect culture by only sharing knowledge that belongs to you, or is “true to your family, community, and region”; Not all stories can be shared with visitors.	Economic development and growth is not the answer to improve Indigenous livelihoods in the Arctic. More sustainable options are needed.	Maintain the integrity of what is shared with visitors, take care of land and water, and give thanks.	Tourism has the potential for transformative experiences; Visitors should come with an open mind, if not, they should not come.
We (people) are visitors on land, visitors within the habitat of animals and plants; Respect animal and plant life cycles and only take what you need.	Tourists seeking these experiences tend to have an interest in authentic experiences and addressing issues of sustainability (including impacts of climate change).	Culture develops around resources. When resources decline or are lost, so too, does culture.	Tourism can be an opportunity to grow local knowledge and connection to land and culture.

QUESTIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Throughout the seminar, attendees asked questions and shared thoughts about cultural sensitivity and tourism in the Canadian Arctic. Some of these questions included:

- Can or should there be a common set of guidelines, protocols, or codes of conduct outlining expectations of appropriate or responsible visitor behaviour in tourism?
- If destination-specific guidelines, protocols or codes of conduct are more desirable, how might we bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous priorities for preferred behaviour (e.g., water/electricity conservation, climate change realities, or buy-local messaging) without taking away from Indigenous priorities for culturally sensitive tourist behaviours?
- Among domestic and international tourists, “who” is attracted to and/or interested in Indigenous tourism products?
- How will climate change impact culturally sensitive tourism?
- What is the relationship between cultural sensitivity and climate change?
- What tensions arise when you combine sustainable living on the land with tourism?
- What kinds of certifications are required for guides/interpretation? For sustainability?

THANK YOU

Thank you to attendees, speakers, and ARCTISEN and Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme funders for helping to make this webinar a fruitful learning experience. We look forward to engaging in further constructive dialogue relating to the future of culturally sensitive tourism in the Arctic. Questions or comments about this webinar can be sent to bgrimwood@uwaterloo.ca.

Report prepared June 2021
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