

ARCTISEN online benchmarks

FEEDBACK BY BENCHMARK PARTICIPANTS 2021

ONLINE BENCHMARKS

From April to June 2021, ARCTISEN organized [online benchmarks](#) that replaced the originally (pre-COVID-19) planned physical benchmarks, such as the benchmarking trip to Greenland in 2019 (read more [here](#) and [here](#)).

DATE	PARTNER	THEME	READ MORE:	
26.04.2021	Norway	Representing culture in Arctic tourism <i>Moving away from stereotypes</i>	Take-aways	Blog-post
18.05.2021	Finland	Sharing local ways of life with guests	Take-aways	Blog-post
03.06.2021	Sweden	Sharing knowledge as part of an innovative business-model to deal with Culturally Sensitive issues	Take-aways	Blog-post
09.06.2021	Canada	Experiences of Culturally Sensitive tourism in the Canadian Arctic	Take-aways	Blog-post

Since COVID-19, digital platforms have been more useful than ever and as an alternative for the physical benchmarks, ARCTISEN aimed to connect different tourism actors online. This report shows how the digital benchmarks were received by the participants based on a survey that the ARCTISEN team sent out in June 2021.

Shared thoughts:

“[Learned about] Cultural sensitive tourism”

“We got some new ideas for guest speakers for our annual conference AND for the entrepreneurs business supporting program we offer”

“(.) Canada is further behind the [culturally sensitive tourism] work done in other Scandinavian countries”

“My understanding of the different areas and their specialities became wider”

“Plan the [guiding tours/trips] from the tourist’s point of view”

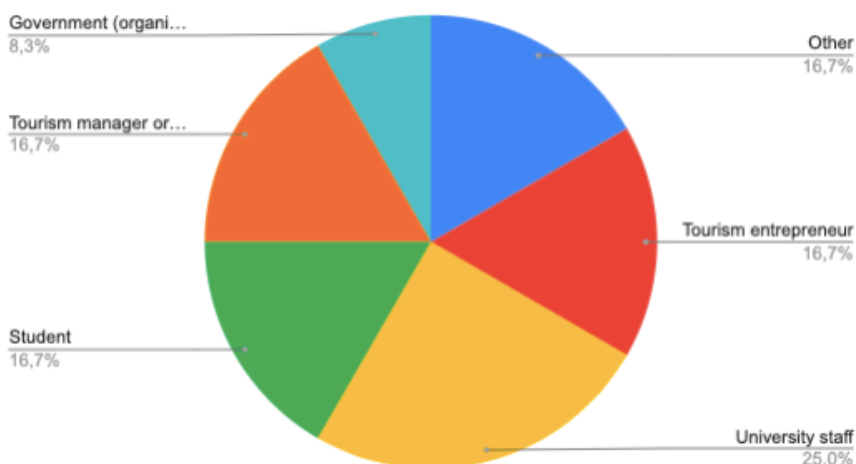
“I learnt a lot, mainly about the differences and similarities between the countries. Important for me was the discussion of stereotypes (Norway) and certificates (Sweden) and also to understand the high quality of the presented companies in Sweden”

The respondents

WHO?

In total, 92 people participated in the online benchmarks, of which 13 responded to the feedback survey. The main target group of the benchmarks are tourism entrepreneurs. However, due to the online format, other tourism actors have been invited as well, which has resulted in a diverse group of participants.

Participants: Line of work



83%

found the webinar(s) very relevant and useful.

33%

indicated to have made new acquaintances

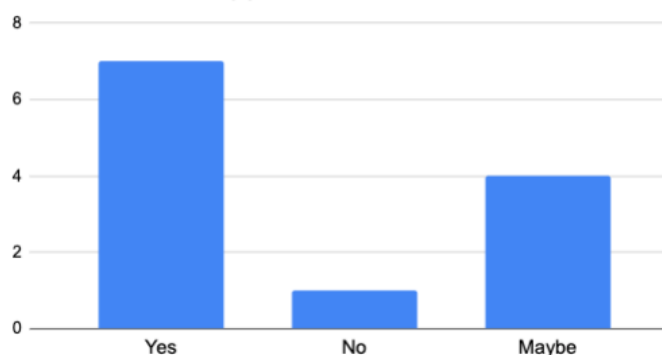
58%

have (maybe) expanded their network.

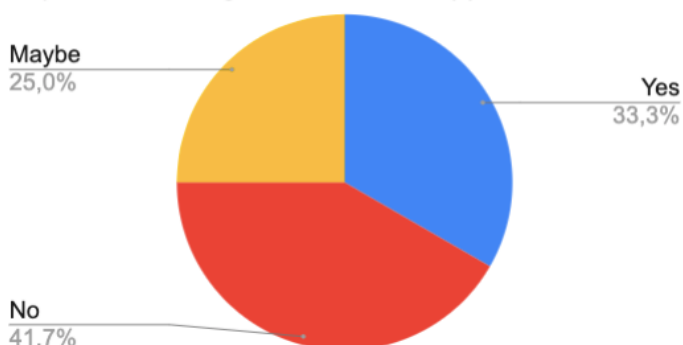
RELEVANCE

As the graph to the right indicates, the majority of the participants learned something new or got new ideas in relation to their work as a result of the benchmark(s). The quotes on the previous page highlight what they have learned.

Did the participants learn anything new, or did they get a new idea from the webinar(s) in relation to their work?



Did the participants expand their network/ make any new acquaintances during or after the webinar(s)?



NETWORKING

The benchmarks were held to facilitate and build a network of Arctic tourism entrepreneurs. However, this has been more challenging to achieve in an online format where the possibilities to meet and interact with each other are limited. Nevertheless, 33% of the participants indicate to have made new acquaintances and 25% have maybe expanded their network.

Exploring the country-specific benchmarks

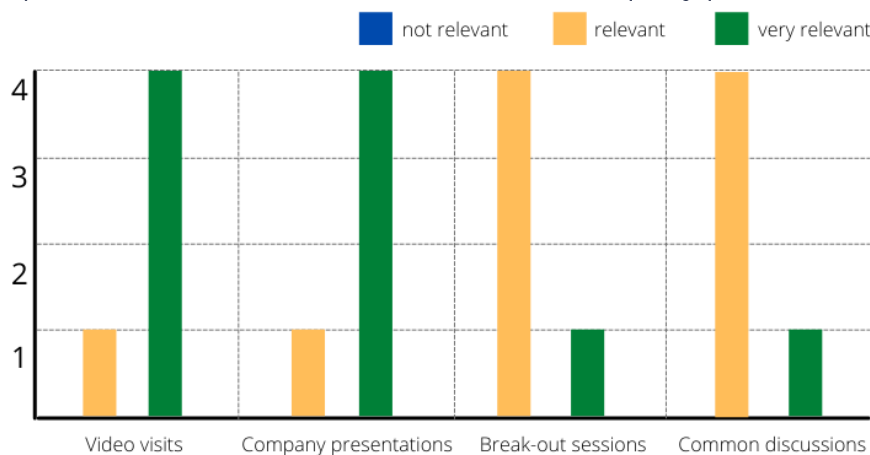
This section explores the participants' feedback in relation to each benchmark they attended and the specific features that were part of the benchmark webinars. The results indicate how relevant the online benchmarks have been to the participants.

FEATURES OF THE ONLINE BENCHMARKS:

- **Video visits:** Instead of visiting the companies physically, we showed videos of Arctic tourism entrepreneurs and their businesses.
- **Company presentations:** Local tourism entrepreneurs presented their company or were interviewed about their company in relation to the country-specific benchmark themes.
- **Break-out sessions:** All the online benchmarks, except for Canada, hosted break-out sessions, where participants could discuss and connect in small groups.
- **Common discussions:** There were also discussions where all participants could listen, ask questions and engage with the discussed topics.

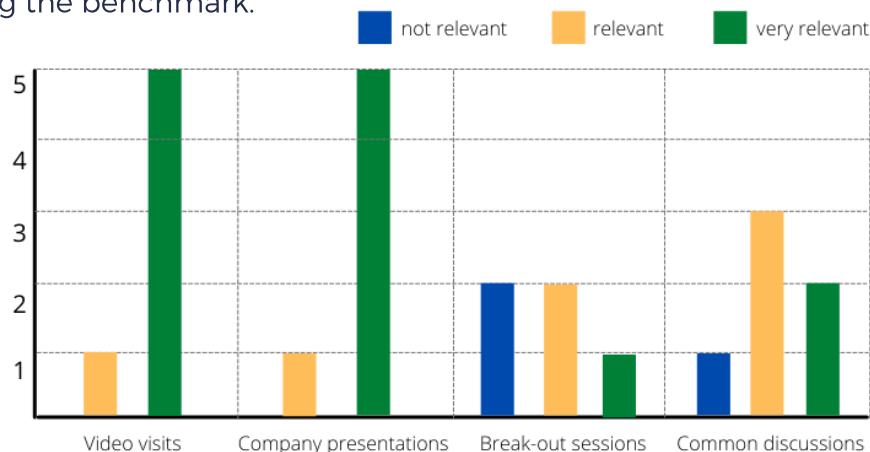
NORWAY

The participants of the Norwegian benchmark especially valued the features that revolved around the entrepreneurs, such as the video visits and company presentations.



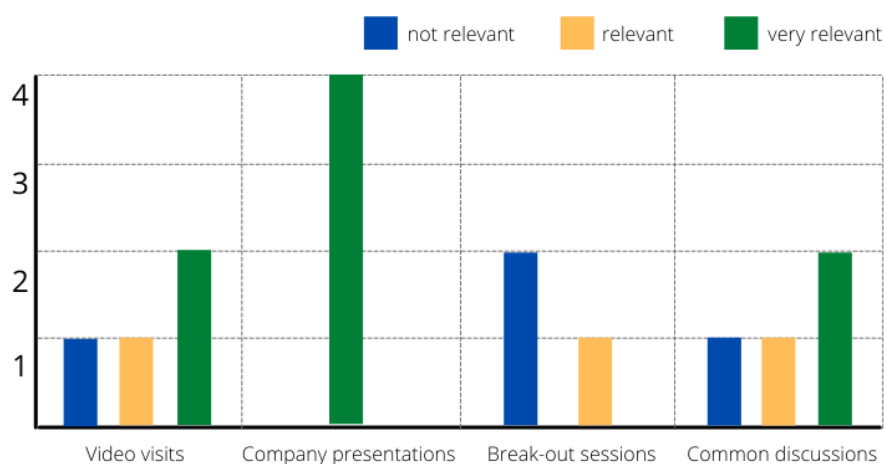
FINLAND

The video visits and company presentations were most relevant for the Finnish benchmark participants. The Finnish team visited the companies physically and showed videos of these meetings during the benchmark.



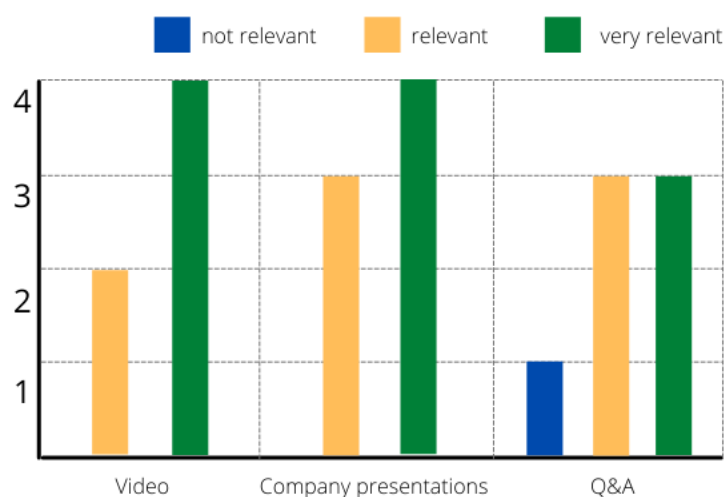
SWEDEN

The results showed that especially the company presentations, the common discussions and the video visits were relevant to the participants. During the Swedish benchmark, there was more focus on the company presentations and common discussions than on the break-out sessions.



CANADA

The Canadian benchmark did not include break-out sessions. The participants found the videos and company presentations, where the entrepreneurs shared their experiences, most relevant. According to the survey respondents, the discussion during the Q&A was also a valuable feature.



Summary:

COMPANY STORIES

Includes videos and presentations

Result: Most relevant feature

How come: This can be due to (1) both a visual and auditory experience of experts in the field: the entrepreneurs and (2) the ability to identify oneself with the entrepreneurs including their challenges and stories.

Recommendation: Experiment with these kind of features in both digital and physical future benchmarks

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

Result: Least relevant feature

How come: There was a limited amount of time to introduce oneself and to discuss the themes related to the benchmarks.

Recommendation: Experiment with longer sessions and clear questions to discuss.

TAKE-AWAYS

- Online benchmarks were a good format for knowledge exchange.
- Tourism actors have gained new inspiration from the experiences of the entrepreneurs.
- Making new connections has happened, but shows to be more challenging in an online format