# SUMMARY RESULTS SAAMI FOOD - THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Through the project, Saami food - threats and opportunities Slow Food Sápmi has studied threats and opportunities as well as the importance of quality systems in a Saami context and in relation to the interest from the General society, food systems and indigenous people's perspectives. We have collected and studied a large number of documents. The study is made from a grassroots perspective, we have used Slow Food Sápmi's experiences that have been supplemented by some new in-depth interviews. The project is funded by Pawanka Fund Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Learning. The work is done by Anneli Jonsson, Annelise Harnesk, Ella Carin Blind and Victoria Harnesk 2018 - 2020. The content may form the basis for continued processing, research proposals and a Saami food strategy. This summary is appended to the final report, the documents we have studied can be found on our website [www.slowfoodsapmi.com](http://www.slowfoodsapmi.com). The translation from Swedish in this is not made by a practicing translator, linguistic errors can occur. For questions, contact Victoria Harnesk, [victoria@slowfoodsapmi.com](mailto:victoria@slowfoodsapmi.com).

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## Objective 1: MAPPING THE THREATS

*By interviews and studies of external reports we look mainly at: raw materials, food sovereignty, health, women, traditional knowledge, gender equality, climate change, quality work and development potential.*

METHOD AND ACTIVITIES: The study was conducted from a grassroots perspective according to the nine focus areas of the project plan. We have included raw materials and products from reindeer meat, wild berries and herbs and wild caught fish. We have had meetings where we evaluated the tasks and brainstormed. We have collected a large number of documents, reports and published material that has direct and indirect links to the project's focus areas or other relevant. We have designed a template for interviews. Through discussions with seniors and interested Saami people as well as saami businessmen at the hobby level, as well as those active in public limited company, we have mapped the threats. The interviews have been valuable for the in-depth study. We have weighed in with our own experience of work at the organizational level and involved the Svenska Samernas Riksförbund, SSR (association of the saami people in Sweden) in the work, in some questions we have had discussions with researchers. All material is stored, further processing and collaborations are needed, but it has not been possible to accommodate this project. As part of the surveillance of the world, we have taken into account news reporting from the Saami media in Public Service, we have not written down the journalistic material as it had no decisive significance. In order to chart the interest of the outside world, we also had to follow other media, but the hours in the project were not enough.

RESULTS: Threats exist on various levels, from the practitioner's physical and psychosocial work environment to lack of influence in local and national decisions. Obstacles are found in regulations, lack of research, weak legal position, lack of funds and in attitudes around the world. The industry lacks salaried representatives who work strategically, overall and carry out sample kitchen operations. The scope of challenges is difficult to handle for individuals who want to invest genuinely and sustainably in Saami food. The industry does not reach its full potential and only a small part of what can be sold reaches the market.

Most of the factors we point to are already known. We have known them and they are in reports from, for example, the SSR, the Saami Parliament, the UN and the OECD. The challenges for Saami food begin far from the plate. Working with reindeer husbandry is difficult and challenging. Threats come from many directions, for example from mines, wind power, tourism and predators. Saami lacks influence where decisions are made, in consultation there is no opportunity to stop processes. The fact that Saami villages (legal association to conduct reindeer husbandry) only have the right to use the land they usually weaken their legal position and force them into long and costly legal processes. Decisions that have negative effects on reindeer industry are often sanctioned by the government and have a high level of support from the public whose ignorance means that the understanding of consequences and Saami perspectives is low. Political issues are referred to the courts and vice versa.

Saami rights aspects are not made clear and at various levels of society there is a political and civil unwillingness to meet and accept them. Perhaps the most obvious is that the government has not ratified ILO 169. In everyday life, reindeer herders are exposed to threats and sabotage, reindeer damage, run over and killed in what must be regarded as a statment against the reindeer industry. The situation has escalated and gained more attention from the media after the so-called *Girjasdommen* where the legal system established a stronger Saami right than the state's to decide on hunting and fishing in the mountains.

The level of traditional knowledge among the Saami is decreasing as many provide livelihood outside their own culture. Traditional knowledge is not rewarded by the social systems. In reindeer herder families, women are usually found in a different type of professional life, they work in non-traditional jobs at different levels in society. In addition to threatening the traditional transfer of knowledge, this means that women do not develop their business activities in reindeer husbandry and traditional industries or food production, it increases the polarization between women and men. Statistics and studies show that men now own most of the reindeer and that the reindeer husbandry law is uneven. But lack of statistics and facts about what the industries can bring to the economy and culture creates obstacles, it is difficult to argue both against the outside world and before itself.

Poor finances are a real threat, and many young people consider themselves forced to find other livelihoods. Reindeer owners finance the Swedish state's predator policy through a loss of up to 40 percent of reindeer herds and the extra work that results from the predator attacks. To consult and protect against land exploitation for mining, wind power, tourism and more are eating up significant amounts that could have gone to their own development efforts. The fact that a large part of further processing takes place outside the Saami-owned companies is a loss of income.

Climate change means that important traditional knowledge about the interaction between animals, humans and nature must be re-evaluated. We as Arctic people are directly affected by climate change. Sápmi is one of the areas where the temperature increases the fastest, we need to fill up with new knowledge. Ice crusts lock down the pasture and forestry causes the lichen that grows in the old forest to disappear. Climate change combined with land exploitation reduces the availability of grazing. At the same time, the need for reindeer transport and motorized aids is increasing as situations with weak ice and busy roads can have a deadly outcome. Old relocation routes are cut, our green infrastructure is destroyed. All this is expensive and leads to an increased need for support feeding. In the traces of it, reindeer suffer from impaired fitness and disease.

Life in Sápmi has changed a lot in just a few generations. There is wear and tear between Saami groups, between those who move away from traditions and related legislation, and those who remain. That list of challenges has been made before, the analyzes can absolutely be deepened but as long as it does not lead to socio-economic perspectives it may seem pointless. Development is going too slowly. One can discern a Saami task, there are no own resources to solve the problems. The abandonment and inability to see opportunities for supply in the Saami food industry is a threat in itself.

Municipalities with Saami industries lack development plans for what the land can withstand from tourism and exploitation, facts and planning for Saami food production is lacking. Officials at the county administrative boards decide on which number of land the crops can tolerate, but some of them have neither sufficient facts nor the right knowledge. Banks and financiers also need to learn more about Saami conditions in order to be a good party for Saami traders. A dissertation emphasizes that the local business community does not invite Saami traders to development, they must take the initiatives themselves, whether it concerns the bank, the business corporation or the municipality.

We find that investment aid and EU funds cannot be used for various reasons, sometimes due to lack of national co-financing, liquidity and staff, but also to long administration times and that the aid may require greater investments than Saami entrepreneurs do. For Slow Food Sápmi, the lack of funds for the basic operations, which includes seeking project support, is an obstacle. This means that we cannot act directly when situations require it. In many respects, Saami entrepreneurs are left alone because they do not follow the societal norm and cannot demonstrate what their industries can give to society. A common misconception is that Saami entrepreneurs are multifaceted because they enjoy doing so. But the truth is often that they do not get their main job together. Working without pay leads to health problems.

The fact that there is another infrastructure and resources for industries in food, tourism and health preparations outside the Saami route creates an imbalance, where others have better conditions. There are examples of how Saami products are used ruthlessly by external players for financial gain. This may include plagiarism of raw materials not used by the Saami, putting Saami names, Saami symbols or pictures of Saami products without a connection, such as ham, liquor and health preparations despite Saami protests. Slow Food Sápmi has committed itself to the protection of those affected, we believe that society could offer stronger protection and contribute to a higher general knowledge of intellectual property rights. Challenges also exist in areas such as transport, seasons and buyers. The fact that the businesses are often located in sparsely populated areas is a challenge in itself.

The forest is an important part of nature and a home for reindeer herding, wildlife, fish, berries and wild plants. When taking part in forest programs, which are national programs, it becomes clear that steering and process groups that have worked out the content do not come from Saami society and business. The aspects of forestry are dominant, the imagery in process images clearly shows what it is about; felling forms the foundation and is shaped by a chainsaw, a garment embodies innovations in consumption areas and the elk symbolizes the forest's wildlife. The Saami perspectives are lacking and this is to the detriment of the Saami food production and the ability of the Saami to claim natural resources and their management.

Many Saami people express the feeling of alienation. When authorities describe regions and developments, it is non-Saami who are highlighted as typical citizens of the area. The Saami are referred to as "they", "them" and "the Saami" in a way that signals that the Saami are simply not part of normal society. One paradox to this is that the Saami are often told that they should not have any special rights but should be treated like all other Swedes.

The slaughter industry as it looks today is based on the needs and methods of the western world, it contributes to related industries such as the Saami craft being without important traditional raw materials. Food raw materials with high nutritional value and good taste are thrown away, which is a threat to Saami traditional knowledge and economy. The Saami do not get out of situations where they are referred to a too small part of the profits and they can not affect product development sufficiently. The handling is not resource efficient and means that interesting products do not reach the market. Pure blood goes straight into the drain, slaughter by-products that can become dog food are buried and important waste material is destroyed. It is not worthy of the animals that give their lives to humans. Read more about the waste in the section on quality systems.

Researchers point out that more research is needed on Saami food and health. One of the project's goals was to inform about the health effects of the Saami food, which we have not been able to do since we have too few facts despite the indications of nutritional benefits. Health linked to food can be viewed from a nutritional perspective. It can also be seen from a psychosocial health context associated with the meal and food production. Coupled with food production, you can also highlight physical aspects such as work injuries and health benefits. There is research showing a high degree of physical problems in driving motor vehicles in primary production of reindeer meat.

Since reindeer and game constitute only a small part of global meat production, it is not studied separately, it is ignored instead. When the disadvantages of large-scale meat production are highlighted and more and more consumers choose green, no one stands up for the Saami food production. But what is considered negligible a little for the large mass is for the reindeer owner everything. Many Saami people do not consider themselves to have the knowledge, facts or capital enough to enter the discussions. More research is needed in cultural geography and anthropology, social science fields on the interplay between humanity's relationship to earth. These are needed to put the Saami relationship, diet and nature in focus. Cultural geographic studies often take into account contextual conditions, such as underlying structures, institutions, culture and history.

## Objective 2: MAPPING OF THE POSSIBILITIES

*Through interviews with relevant Saami people. There are surveys made by us and others; Saami parliament has done ”Needs Analysis of Saami Food Enterprise" and the state ”Sweden's Food Strategy" as well as different Food Quality Systems, we will take note of these.*

METHOD AND ACTIVITIES: We have worked in the same way as in Objective 1.

RESULTS: Just as in the case of threats, there are opportunities on many different levels, from the practicality of primary production, further processing and sales. Adaptation of regulations and laws can be simplified without prejudice to animal health and food security. Indigenous knowledge can contribute to research and spread through education. Local dialogue in the municipalities can lead to sustainable planning and development. Interest in Saami food is increasing, new technology is shortening the way to customers. All in all, there are great development opportunities for the Saami food industry. Development contributes to increased growth, environmental goals, reduced waste, increased self-sufficiency and biodiversity.

Saami food production, like other indigenous food production, contributes to biodiversity. The media reports on research that supports reindeer herding to curb global warming. The good environmental effects, if they reach out, can provide increased support for Saami food production and focus on what is needed for the natural grazing to continue. The climate threat is recognized by more and more, clean food is valued more than before. Saami food production can give regions higher status, people see the importance of an increased degree of self-sufficiency. Saami food systems lead to national and global environmental goals in wetlands, lakes, mountains and forests.

Food production has a clear context in the global work of Agenda 30, which aims to eradicate world poverty, hunger and is to protect equality and nature. It complies with parts of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which is good for Sweden. In 2006, the government recognized the right of the Saami to self-determination in a report on compliance with the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Sweden has signed the UN Declaration on Indigenous Law (UNDRIP), which emphasizes indigenous peoples' right to control natural resources, which provides support for Saami food production. There are more than the mentioned documents that support the Saami.

Approved quality systems can increase value added. Raw materials such as wild-caught mountain fish and intestinal food can regain their place as an important Saami supply resource and become a nutritional supplement in the home. Interest in such has increased, which means that marketing can increase sales. Raw materials from reindeer, game, fish, berries and herbs are available and have good processing potential.

We are seeing increased interest from Saami youth and there are still senior Saami who can and want to be mentors and knowledge transferers. Saami entrepreneurs and chefs are important resources. More thoughtful marketing is an opportunity, in which storytelling can contribute. The Saami educational centers in Jokkmokk and Umeå University are institutions that can be activated and play an important role for learning and scientific research in food sovereignty, health issues, dietary and meal sciences. Gastronomic University of Braa, Italy, and networks with other indigenous peoples of the world are other entrances to our network. Slow Food Sápmi also has relationships with other international researchers and we are constantly asked about collaboration in various projects. More scientific research on Saami food and health can contribute to increased awareness, product development and sales.

There are surveys, target programs and other established documents that can be used to drive the development of the Saami food industry. In addition, there is a Saami willingness to invest in, and eat their own food, research shows that entrepreneurs in Saami food are very creative. There are various development initiatives going on around Sápmi and the Saami food is interesting to the outside world.

The Renbruksplan (plan for reindeer husbandry needs and land use) could be used with a clearer link to food production. The Saami Parliament develops and uses them together with Saami villages, forest companies, county boards and others. They are based on traditional knowledge, research and GIS technology, they provide image support and the opportunity to import climate data from SMHI. These identify and show the need for green infrastructure. Green infrastructure is a prerequisite in the ecosystem that allows reindeer husbandry, nature and Saami culture to survive. To the Renbruksplan there are manuals for mapping out environmental factors, information on competing land use such as agricultural land, dams, mines and other infrastructure, some of which are also useful in the food systems.

Saami's food, like other indigenous food, is interesting from a health perspective. Research, training and product development can lead to Saami producers holding the role of being the desirable original. By reporting nutrients instead of kronor per kilo, the focus can be shifted from the fact that the products are expensive. There are models to start from. Medical research can be developed from traditional knowledge, as can research on the importance of traditional food for psychosocial health aspects in harmony with nature.

Saami women are often highly educated, which is a resource. Food production gives more women and young people the opportunity to stay and find livelihood within their own culture. It can contribute to a reduced loss of knowledge transfer, the food can also increase the number of jobs, expand networks, create interest and understanding, and include intoxicated in the Saami culture. The knowledge can develop new methods so that more wild raw materials are used and the waste in production is reduced.

By tracking the spill, you can build up the refinement. Collaboration with craftsmen can transform surplus raw materials from food production into craft and design products. Innovations in this area can further expand the market. The products can in turn make visible and increase the world's knowledge about natural resources. Digital media offers many opportunities to sell, disseminate knowledge, market and for traditional knowledge transfer. Saami food production has development potential for sparse and rural areas.

The Saami food sovereignty can be strengthened, with the possibility of an increased degree of self-sufficiency, which follows national goals and international commitments for Sweden. It provides increased opportunity for indigenous women and young people to start small-scale food processing and their own education and product development. Increased product selection and sales to consumers means that more money stays within the Saami community. It can create strong and interesting regions that can serve as gastronomic tourist destinations, and by extension it is a way of controlling and adapting local tourism. Slow Food Sápmi exists as an established organization that is ready and can play an important role in the work on food sovereignty, coordination of Saami food production and a Saami food strategy.

## Objective 3: STUDY QUALITY CERTIFICATION

*List the criteria of SlowFoods Ark and Presidium Products. Compare the advantages of the disadvantages with a method. Can a method help to preserve and develop the food culture?*

METHOD AND ACTIVITIES: We have worked in the same way as in Objective 1 and 2.

RESULTS: Quality systems are useful in production, control and sales. It helps the entrepreneur, the industry and the consumers. Renlycka, marking for reindeer meat from Swedish Saami villages, is today the only Saami quality mark for food. It arouses interest, creates dialogue and good starting points for pricing. No paid person continuously works with strategies, current affairs or sample kitchen activities. Through more research, existing quality systems can be supplemented and become part of the development and visibility of clean, game, fish, berries and wild plants from the Saami kitchen.

The food industry offers quality systems for fish, berries and wild plants, these need to be put in a Saami context. Weighing in more aspects than what the current system encompasses can be an opportunity, but in-depth work is needed to determine exactly what can be included and how it should be accounted for.

Today there is only one Saami quality label for food, Renlycka, a seal for reindeer meat. Saami themself has developed it through projects by the SSR. However, there is no money to work continuously with Renlycka. Slow Food's Ark and Presida products system fits traditional Saami food. Through "The ark of Taste", knowledge is gathered about traditional products that have a superior taste, are small-scale produced, ecologically sustainable and threatened. It has already been used successfully on Suovas and Gurpi. The efforts are financed with project funds. The Saami visitor industry developed the certification Sápmi Experience, which can also lift Saami food as a travel reason. None of the mentioned Saami labels have fixed funding today, which is a major shortcoming. In this study, we have not been able to look at how others finance their quality systems.

At present, there is no official who works overall with quality systems and development of Saami food. In 2016, the Swedish Board of Agriculture procured a review of Saami quality markings, it does not seem to have been possible, no results have been reported. The Saami Parliament has a national mission to make the Saami food visible, they point out Slow Food Sápmi as a party to the work, but we have not been allocated funds. The fact that the authority takes the money itself is counterproductive and does not develop the Saami industry organization that Saami entrepreneurs have been asking for for a long time. The Saami Parliament arranges courses for individual entrepreneurs but hands over overall work to an industry organization without fixed funding. There are voids that no one fills.

Through its dedicated members, Slow Food Sápmi has during its ten years built up knowledge and continuity that differs from other people's short hires of staff and consultant purchases. But everyone at Slow Food Sápmi works without pay except for externally funded projects, it takes a lot of unpaid time to procure and administer project funds. Working free of charge in addition to their acquisition work is tearing up human capital and threatening quality work. Long-term means of working with quality systems can make a difference that benefits many.

Since today's food and quality system is based on the production of Swedish home cooking, it is important that those who work with the Saami food have the right kind of expertise so that one can draw conclusions in a Saami context. The status of traditional knowledge needs to be raised, in some cases to a scientific level, so that there will be another weight on the Saami argument. The Saami who contribute their knowledge must also be able to get paid for their services. One obstacle in development is that Saami entrepreneurs are allowed to spend considerable time on educating external players, which is another example of work performed by Saami free of charge. Quality systems would also facilitate in these contexts.

Manufacturers who label their products with Renlycka testify that it arouses consumer interest, creates dialogue and good starting points for pricing. The same indications come from Sápmi Experience-marked entrepreneurs in the Saami hospitality industry. Slow Food Sápmi awards restaurants, which is a selling point and helps in the restaurants' supply and quality work. Today, there are a handful of award-winning restaurants, as many have reported interest in efforts. However, we do not have the resources today to work continuously with new awards and follow-ups. This is done by applying for externally funded projects, we have such an application right now. Studies show that the investments made in Saami food and quality work resulted in price increases.

The question of quality systems leads to a related need, a Saami test kitchen is needed for development efforts, training and analysis work for the entire industry. This type of direct need has been captured by the Saami Parliament, but we cannot see anyone working on the issue. Such a test kitchen was in project form through the Samerinas utbildningscentrum (Saami educational center) in Jokkmokk. During the test kitchen project, some important analyzes of nutrients were made. Among other things, the fat of the reindeer turned out to have unusually good properties and thus development potential. More similar analyzes need to be done and the results must be managed. The use of certain bodies is hampered by legislation, we have indications that barriers of this kind can be removed if efforts are made in the area of food safety. It is therefore of utmost importance that the test kitchen be reinstalled and can work with both meat, fish berries and herbs. These resources can to a greater extent than today contribute to sustainable Saami industries and a vibrant culture, a higher degree of self-sufficiency and biodiversity. To get there, it is important to organize methods and quality systems in a context where the Saami knowledge is implemented from an indigenous perspective.

Resources and knowledge linked to raw materials from the reindeer have been mapped in different places in Sápmi, but a holistic approach is needed to take it further. The absence of an industry organization with financed personnel is an obstacle. In order for quality work to be carried out by the contractors, access to micro loans, counseling and other efforts is needed. Saami women are one of the target groups for this. With the quality work, opportunities will also be set for both municipalities and business operators. Map-based systems with the possibility of documentation and import of data could be useful technologies to develop for quality work in food production.

In Norrbotten, reindeer husbandry is the second largest primary producer of food, which is why the issue is important. It is important to be able to make a sustainable planning of the use of natural resources and because resources from the reindeer are not utilized today. Pure meat is classified after inspection by a veterinarian who checks that the animals are healthy, without damage and clean enough. The classification affects the price to the reindeer owner but does not affect what the end customer pays.

The quality systems we see are not holistic, they are based on the individual animal and, for example, do not take into account the composition of the herd as a whole. They are not based on Saami knowledge, values and needs, but follow the industrial animal husbandry, the slaughter industry's demand for efficiency and how cooks and consumers have become accustomed to raw materials being delivered.

Today, more young reindeer are slaughtered than before. This means that, for example, leavssusbuoidi, the net fat that sits around the fat adult animal's stomach, has become more rare. That fat is used for the traditional product Gurpi, which through processing creates important revenue for Saami food producers. Too many useful raw materials are handled as slaughter by-products and waste today, thus consumers are missing out on good and interesting products. Pure blood goes straight into the drain, slaughter by-products that can become dog food are buried and important waste material is destroyed. The craft industry is affected, for example, raw materials that are not available to the same extent as before are craft horns from older reindeer. Bellings, skins for sewing shoes, cannot be used after industrial slaughter because they are cut. Of what is thrown out today, much more is used. Research and quality systems can help you get more out of every reindeer, fish, wild plants and herbs.