

## 5.11 LOODUSVÄGI – The Nordic Superfood Series

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### The Company

OÜ Loodusvägi / LOOV, an organic food and drink producer in Estonia is dedicated to developing, producing and offering organic health food products to Scandinavian and European markets. The company produces and sells high-quality products and manages its activities bearing in mind the environmental impacts and sustainability.

The strategy of the company is to keep the number of management team small, but engage many people in their activities constantly. These people, seasonal and contract employees, and other stakeholders are also considered to belong to the 'family of Loodusvägi / LOOV'.



### Sustainability Innovation

Nordic Super Food products are unique organic forest series including berry powders which are true Nordic super-foods, exciting forest honey varieties, 100% cold pressed full juices, delicious full juice based glöggs / mulled wines, and 100% organic berry gummies. The highly nutritious wild berry powders, used separately and also in other Nordic Super Food products, are produced from the left-overs of berries after the juice is squeezed from these. The skins and seeds are dried at low temperature for 48 hours and the dried mixture is then milled into nutritious berry powder. The Nordic Super Food products are developed in co-operation with recognized food specialists, and innovative technology is used to preserve all the enzymes and vitamins.

In Estonia, LOOV is a company setting a good example in doing business sustainably. Company's vision is to be a bridge between people and the curative power of nature, and the mission is to offer healthy organic products through well-informed innovative product development and responsible production and marketing.

The activities and products of the company are value-based, including providing natural products to include in a healthy diet or complement to it; connecting people with the story of the food; contributing to and advancing the local community by promoting products from local farmers; creating a transparent value chain, by personally knowing every farmstead from where raw material comes into the products; having personal and trustworthy relationship with its partners: employees, clients and suppliers involving them in proactive dialogue and activities; and using environment-friendly packaging and promotion materials.

By preferring and giving added value to local organic raw materials, the company is doing its part to help develop and enrich the Estonian rural way of life, and also play an important role in making the whole country internationally recognized and valued producer of pure food. The company is actively raising people's awareness and helping them make healthier choices that support people's health and the environment.

## Engagement of End Users and other Stakeholders

The Nordic Super Food Series is the result of a multi-stakeholder effort, led by the founders and owners of the company and supported by many different stakeholder groups. During the development process the management team, including the founders of the company has been open and responsive to end-users and other stakeholder's feedback and suggestions. The initial idea came from the founders and owners of the company, and by involving and engaging other partners the ideas have been formed into successful products. Being open to critics and ideas from others the products have been developed constantly and new products groups are created.

The management team has involved the best professionals, food therapists, consultants, and researchers in the field to find most suitable technological solutions and create new products bearing in mind the most recent information and research results about organic food and the nutritious value of wild berries. The whole process has been transparent for all stakeholder groups and partners who are involved. Communication has been very active, all decisions made after open discussions considering the ideas and suggestions from internal and external stakeholders.

The main partners / stakeholders who work constantly for LOOV and are engaged in company's activities include board members, management team, people from Polli Horticultural Research Centre and Academy of Life Sciences, food therapists and consultants, suppliers of berries and other raw materials, clients and product distributors. All products are created as the outcome of close collaboration of all those partners according to the needs and expectations of end users.

**End-users:** End-users have been involved throughout the whole development process. The purpose of this proactive engagement is to get valuable information from users and product distributors about the needs and expectations of the end users in order to make necessary changes in the product development. At the same time LOOV is willing to educate end users and product distributors about organic and healthy food products and how to make better and more qualitative choices.

**Food therapists and consultants:** Collaborating with food therapists has helped to use the knowledge from the latest scientific research results and find the best balance between different ingredient in order to produce these healthy and nutritious products. Food therapists have given expertise in healthy food made a detailed analysis of the potential products.

**Polli Horticultural Research Centre / Estonian Academy of Life Sciences:** Close collaboration with Polli Horticultural Research Centre has enabled the company to get the know-how and best technological solutions to create products that meet the users' needs and expectations. The Centre has the test kitchen where the products are created and

produced and researchers can develop further their projects to find more sustainable solutions.

## Benefits of the Stakeholder Collaboration

The ongoing and open collaboration and communication with employees, outsource service providers, suppliers, academic collaborators, food therapists and consultants, distributors, clients, and external partners has resulted in reciprocal and mutually enriching relations. This has enhanced the brand reputation, fostered trust and transparency, created sustainable value networks and helped the company to produce and offer products which are highly valued and appreciated by the customers locally and internationally.

According to the feedback gathered from the users about the engagement process, they have been satisfied with the company's activities and their products. They have positively remarked LOOV's flexibility, willingness and ability to react fast to environmental needs, to do everything on time and find solutions that satisfy different stakeholders during the process.

LOOV has also been proactive and willing to engage users in increasing awareness about healthy eating choices. Educating the customers and involving them in the education process has got very positive feedback.

An important reason for such a smooth engagement process has been the fact, that all people involved consider sustainability an important factor in increasing the quality of life in Estonia and other countries.

The recent years achievements of LOOV have been recognized by Estonian society and sustainability professionals - in 2013 and 2014 LOOV was awarded the Estonian Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility Index Gold Label and received the Award for Tallinn's most responsible business. LOOV is a member of the Responsible Business Forum in Estonia.