



# Tourism, nature and sustainability

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A REVIEW OF POLICY INSTRUMENTS  
IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES





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*Hogne Øian, Peter Fredman, Klas Sandell, Anna Dóra Sæþórsdóttir,  
Liisa Tyrväinen and Frank Søndergaard Jensen*

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# Preface

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economies of the world. This does not only imply that economic growth is increasing, but also that more travellers demand a greater variety of destinations and attractions and that the experiences tourists are seeking are becoming diverse. In view of these changes sustainable development of tourism are becoming an increasingly complex matter to achieve. Recently, the Nordic countries have experienced a rapid growth in numbers of visitors. At some popular nature attractions this has resulted in crowding, environmental damage, costly rescue operations and overload on public infrastructure. Economic instruments such as entrance fees are frequently proposed to regulate and manage the volume of tourists to vulnerable sites and nature in general. While being common in many countries throughout the world, economic policy instruments seem to have a somewhat limited applicability in the Nordic countries, mainly due to the public rights of access. In view of this, the aim of this report is to make some assessments of the extent to which economic instruments can be implemented in the various Nordic countries. This question is approached not only by looking into the effects economic instruments in view of management goals, but even by considering consequences within a broader sustainability perspective. In addition to reviews of current trends in tourism, in both global and Nordic perspectives, and the legal situation of public access to nature areas in the Nordic countries, this report also contains a section based on a selection of international research literature on sustainable tourism development and the various policy instruments and management strategies. Together these reviews form the basis for an assessment of the applicability of various policy instrument for a more sustainable tourism development in the Nordic countries. While the Norwegian Institute of Nature Research has taken the main responsibility of completing this report, it is a result of collaboration between researchers based in all five Nordic countries.

April 18, 2018

*Hogne Øian*

Lillehammer, Norway



# Executive Summary

Recently, the Nordic countries have experienced rapid increases in the influx of tourists. Unprecedented growth in the numbers of visitors to some nature attractions and destinations has resulted in crowding, environmental damage, costly rescue operations and overload on common goods such as public infrastructure. The most immediate answer is the further development of infrastructures, such as improved transport solutions and extended onsite services. These kinds of measures are often designed within a short-term perspective and may prove to create further sustainability challenges in a long-term perspective. Achieving a sustainable development of tourism implies complex processes that require policy and planning to take environmental, social and economic dimensions into consideration within a long-term perspective.

Responding to the dramatic increase in visitation to certain vulnerable nature areas and sites, regulation of the volume of visitors by the use economic instruments has been proposed. In the Nordic countries some of these instruments, such as entrance fees, are challenging due to both legal and political principles of public rights of access. While revenues from concessions and licence permits given to tour operators can contribute to management budgets, these instruments can also serve to control the scale of visitation. Due to the legal and administrative restrictions on commercial operations of activities in nature areas, especially in protected areas, as well as the public rights of access, it is uncertain how attractive concession and licence permits will be for tourism companies in the Nordic countries.

To cover some of the expenses caused by the increasing influx of visitors (e.g. overloading the existing infrastructure), tourist tax and an increased VAT on typical tourist products (accommodation, guiding and tour services, etc.) have been proposed in both Norway and Iceland. Currently, this seems to lack sufficient political support. An alternative solution is destination management organizations (DMO), which is based on collaboration between different private and public stakeholders in funding and operating the management of attractions and destinations.

Adaptive management approaches based on the inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders in the planning processes have been implemented in the management of nature areas in many parts of the Nordic countries (see e.g. Kaltenborn, Mehmetoglu, and Gundersen, 2017; Andersen, Gundersen, Strand, Wold, and Vistad, 2014). With respect to the zoning of activities and the channelling of traffic, adaptive management appears as a relatively efficient way of achieving sustainable solutions at much-visited nature attraction sites. In addition, adaptive management strategies often involve so-called soft management strategies associated with information, knowledge transmission, guiding, etc. Since guides can play a significant role in influencing visitors' behaviour, recruiting guides with good skills in programmes visitors find attractive can be an efficient instrument. While it often requires extensive and long-running

processes, adaptive management must be based on adequate knowledge obtained through monitoring and research. This is even more important in view of the rapid changes in scales of visitation, and the subsequent altered composition of visitors with respect to aims, motives and experiences. Adaptive management requires planning processes that must take several and often contradicting interests and objectives into account, which must then be integrated into a common solution to achieve the required legitimacy among stakeholders. Adaptive management can also involve some important legal and administrative instruments. Planning and nature diversity acts, as well road traffic acts and penal codes, can in many instances be used for regulating tourism visitation. While this so far has not occurred in many instances, considering the new situation it should be examined more closely as to what extent these various acts and codes could be used more extensively to prevent a non-sustainable development of tourism in the Nordic countries.

Tourism is often seen as sustainable if tourism-specific planning and management systems take full account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts. To achieve this, a horizontal integration of non-tourism sectors (transport, energy, waste management, heritage, etc.) in policy design and planning processes also seems to be required

## Recommendations

- The administration of user fees at nature attractions can be both impractical and costly. In addition, there are legal and political challenges connected to the public right of access. It should be considered more closely to what extent entrance fees could be implemented by redefining the status of popular iconic nature attractions to be more in line with museums or heritage sites supported by public authorities.
- The opportunities for implementing concessions and licence permits should be balanced against the consideration of maintaining public access to the natural areas to which the concessions or licences apply. Issues to be clarified are thus whether even tours organized by NGOs must be subject to such schemes or not, and to what extent concessionaires will represent a more or less total commercialization of access to an area. Furthermore, questions arise as to whether the management of the areas concerned is to be financed through contributions from concessions and licences, as this may potentially affect the objective of management.
- A stronger commitment is recommended to strengthening the role of destination companies, with the aim of bringing together private and public stakeholders for collaborative management of destinations, for the development of visitor strategies, and for contributions to the funding of required infrastructures.
- Further development of adaptive management strategies that include zoning and channelling of traffic, as well as so-called soft management techniques, such as

information and guiding. Related to this, one should also consider how more extensive use of available legal and administrative instruments can contribute to sustainable development of tourism.

- Policies that promote the dispersion of visitors on to a larger number of attractions or destinations should be developed. This can be achieved by using marketing strategies and by developing infrastructures to make more attractions more easily available and more attractive.
- A stronger commitment to policies emphasizing the development of tourism that can be economically sustainable without any further growth in the number of visitors. This requires that a proper sectorial integration on local, regional and national levels is ensured, which will enable policy and planning processes to better take environmental, social and economic dimensions equally into consideration in a long-term perspective.



# 1. Introduction

The Nordic countries have experienced an increase in tourist arrivals during later years. While some of this growth has been expected and in part planned for, there are also unprecedented increases. In either case, the Nordic countries face challenges concerning a sustainable development of tourism. The tourism industry is now among the largest industries in the world, and nature-based tourism (NBT) is often said to be the fastest growing element. NBT has long dominated in the Nordic countries, and involves excursions to national parks and wildland areas, as well as activities in more developed and populated areas (Hall, Müller and Saarinen, 2008; Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010). While contributing substantially to economic growth on national, regional and local levels, the degrading effects of NBT on the environment, crowding problems and overload on public infrastructures have become a subject of concern in the Nordic countries. The concept of sustainable tourism development has arisen accordingly with the aim of reducing the negative impacts of tourism activities. Applied in tourism policies and management strategies, the complex concept of sustainability tends to bring about several paradoxes and dilemmas as the three dimensions of economic, social, and environmental concerns are difficult to balance. What may appear as sustainable solutions in a short-term perspective, might turn out to be unsustainable in a longer time perspective.

While the intensified mobility made possible by low-cost, rapid transportations modes represent huge economic and social benefits for tourists and the tourism industry. This change has also created some major sustainability dilemmas (Becken, 2006; Aall, 2014).

First, increased tourist mobility results in traffic congestion and noise, accidents, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, resource depletion and other environmental problems. Second, tourist attractions have become more available to more people. Because of this, many travel destinations have changed from being regional or national sites to global destinations. Third, as tourist demands have increased rapidly, the gap between the number of people who wish to visit popular sites, and the numbers of visitor destinations can receive in sustainable ways has widened (e.g. Libosada, 2009, Schwartz, Stewart, and Backlund, 2012). Fourth, forecasts of global tourism demands predict an even faster growth rate in tourism volumes, as the middle class of China, India and other emerging Asians markets are expected to continue to expand at an accelerated rate. Fifth, despite their limited capacities, popular tourism attractions attempt to match increasing demands for a variety of visitor experiences. Consequently, social, political, and environmental concerns (such as public access, fairness and protection and conservation) become more acute.

## 1.1 Sustainable and unsustainable tourism

During the last couple of decades, the sustainable development of tourism has been researched and debated extensively (see e.g. Buckley, 2012; Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005; Saarinen, 2006). The key theme is how tourism development should be based on environmental, socio-cultural and economic pillars of sustainability (Buckley, 2012; Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005; Mowforth and Munt, 2015).

Nature environments are seen increasingly as assets for national tourism branding strategies and for the economic viability of regions and local communities (see e.g. Wall Reinius and Fredman, 2007; Puhakka and Saarinen, 2013). In line with the general tendency of commercializing (Margaryan, 2016; Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010) and productizing nature experiences (Tyrväinen, Silvennoinen, and Hallikainen, 2017), scholars have gradually started to focus on how tourism should be seen in relation to wider social-political and socio-technical structures (see e.g. Bramwell, Higham, Lane, and Miller 2017; Williams, 2013). Whereas the term sustainability formerly tended to be perceived as a threat to the profitability and competitiveness of tourism businesses, it is now more and more seen as an asset (Pulido-Fernandez et al., 2015). Sustainability is recognized increasingly as a prerequisite for maintaining the resources tourism businesses depend on for developing their products (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010). What is defined or perceived as sustainable landscapes and environments have even become part of the tourism products.

Tourism is held to be sustainable to the extent tourism-specific planning and management systems take full account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts. The interests of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities should accordingly be balanced against each other (Gössling, Hall, and Weaver, 2009; Williams and Ponsford, 2009). Increasing differentiation, specialization and individualization of tourism practices (in part influenced by the information flow in social media) have made development trends less predictable and tourism more difficult to manage. Some destinations (nations, regions, places) have recently experienced unprecedented increases in the numbers of visitors, resulting in: 1) an increased pressure on nature resources and biodiversity, 2) reduced personal safety related to tourism activities and strenuous nature visitation, and 3) conflicts of interests between actors who are involved in- or affected by tourism. Examples of such increases and associated problems have emerged in many settings and destinations within the Nordic countries (see e.g. Sæþórsdóttir and Ólafsdóttir, 2017).

Through their individual constituents, or in sum, the above three mentioned dimensions might cause unwanted and unsustainable development processes: First, visitor activities can induce undesirable effects to the various ecological components on which tourism depends. Vegetation can be trampled, soil eroded, water quality altered, and wildlife disturbed. In part depending on the activities in question, and on variations in biotic aspects (such as types of vegetation, soil composition and terrain), the extent of negative effects tends to increase with the scope and intensity of visits, often making certain hot spots vulnerable (Pickering, Rossi, and Barros, 2011; Monz, Pickering, and Hawden, 2013). Second, in some areas (e.g. dramatic and challenging mountainous



landscapes), increased visitation may result in frequent accidents due to visitors' lack of experience, unfamiliarity with the specific natural environments and insufficient abilities in terms of skills, experiences and fitness (Fletcher, 2010; Rantala and Valkonen, 2011; Jeuring and Becken, 2013). Accidents sometimes result in costly rescue operations (Uriely, Schwartz, Cohen and Reichel, 2002). During recent years, there has been a noticeable increase of fatalities at attractions such as Trolltunga and Preikestolen in Norway and Reynisfjara in Iceland, to name a few. Third, an increased scope and intensity of visits to iconic attractions can result in conflicts between various categories of stakeholders, such as between residents and tourists, between user interests and conservation-oriented management policies, or between various categories of visitors pursuing diverse types of activities or interests (see e.g. Øian, Aas, Skår, Andersen, and Stensland, 2017; Flemsæter, Setten, and Brown, 2015; Sæþórsdóttir, 2013).

Since management is becoming a more urgent and complex task, there are many examples throughout the world on how policy planning, physical measures (fencing and shelters), legal regulations (e.g. zoning and protection provisions), site-specific visitor strategies (e.g. information boards and guiding), often in combination with various kinds of economic instruments (taxation incentives, governmental funding policies, use of penalties, access fees) have increasingly been taken into use. Responding to the unprecedented increase in visitation to certain vulnerable nature areas and sites in Nordic countries, using economic instruments for regulating the volume of visitors has been proposed by some policymakers, managers and tourism businesses, often by reference to established practices in other parts of the world. However, these kinds of instruments are particularly challenging in the Nordic countries due to how the freedom to roam and traditional open access have been transformed into general public rights (Kaltenborn, Haaland, and Sandell, 2001; Sandell, 2006a/2006b).

Restricting access by using physical barriers and user fees will not only encounter legal barriers. Measures like these can also be contested on political and moral grounds, since dominant socio-cultural practices of outdoor recreation are closely associated with the legal principles of public rights of access (see Øian, 2013; Øian and Skogen, 2016; Sandell and Svenning, 2011). On the other hand, environmental codes, as well as planning acts represent an instrument for political and administrative authorities to decide how different interests are to be balanced and prioritized at any given time with concern to land use (see e.g. Overvåg, Skjeggedal, and Sandström, 2016; Olesen and Carter, 2017; Jóhannesson, Huijbens, and Sharpley, 2010). In Norway for instance, arrangements which in practice imply quotas of visitors have been implemented to prevent traffic from adversely affecting specific wild reindeer migration routes (Andersen, Gundersen, Strand, Wold, and Vistad, 2014).

## 1.2 Tourism and megatrends

The growth in the number of visitors to Nordic tourist destinations must be understood in a context of more general and global trends. Demographic, economic and social changes, as well as technological advancement and the neo-liberalization of policies and management approaches, contribute to both increasing and changing demands among tourists (Buckley, Gretzel, Scott, Weaver, and Becken, 2015). These global megatrends have some effects that are more or less specific to nature-based tourism, which is dominant in the Nordic countries (Elmahdy, Haukeland, and Fredman, 2017). Urbanization, economic growth, increasing income and flexible working hours have all caused people to spend more time and money on nature-based experiences. In addition, tourists of the emerging economies of the BRIC nations, especially China and India, are expected to contribute to a significantly further expansion of tourism in the near future. Bringing along different behaviours, expectations and demands, Chinese tourists, e.g., are found to be more interested in passive enjoyment of natural scenery (i.e. sightseeing), rather than an active involvement in NBT activities (Elmahdy et al., 2017). Demands among international visitors, as well the relatively wealthy domestic senior citizen, urban middle-class customers, and an increasing share of female tourists, contribute to a growing demand for a diversity of nature-based tourism experiences, such as facilitated activities, with a focus on well-being as much as on strenuous adventures (Elmahdy et al., 2017). New management interventions are therefore required to accommodate tourists' diverse needs and expectations to prevent probable conflicts, and to ensure minimal damage to natural surroundings.

Technological advancements mediate and facilitate many aspects of the travel and tourism industry (Buckley et al., 2015; Elmahdy et al., 2017). Globalization and technology, including the Internet and faster, more convenient and inexpensive transportation systems, make destinations world-wide more accessible to more people (see e.g. Hall, Harrison, and Wall, 2013; Scott and Gössling, 2015). While improved transportation facilities are a prerequisite for development, particularly in geographically peripheral areas (Lund and Jóhannesson, 2014), destinations may not be prepared to host large numbers of tourists (Elmahdy et al., 2017). Consequently, the growth of mass tourism may lead to environmental degradation and thus undermine the very base of nature-based tourism (Puhakka and Saarinen, 2013; Sæpórsdóttir, 2017).

Travel marketing systems, computerized booking systems, interactive map and guide systems and web and social media-based reviews all have a direct impact on the tourism industry (Scott and Gössling, 2015; Elmahdy et al., 2017). By playing a key role in holiday planning, and in the online tourism domain in general, social media has empowered tourists as individuals (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). Today, there are numerous examples of how information and knowledge sharing via the Internet, with social media contributing strongly to the iconic status of certain attractions and destinations. The Internet and social media provide consumers with easy access to recommendations and information from both locals and fellow travellers. While tourist travels have always been part of self-identity processes, this has become even more manifest by how the phenomenon of the "selfie" appears to have become the end-goal

of the journey (see e.g. Pearce and Moscardo, 2015; Elmahdy et al., 2017). More sites will probably achieve an “iconic” status in this manner.

As will be elaborated in more detail later in this report, the megatrends sketched above clearly have repercussions for tourism in the Nordic countries. The composition of visitors is becoming diverse in terms of cultural and social backgrounds, and there is an increasing variety of motives, goals and expectations. While nature attractions and a wide range of nature-based activities are in high demand, the influx of tourists is less predictable and more difficult to manage and control. This has enlarged, and in part changed, the nature of sustainability problems.

Sustainability challenges are clearly linked to broad themes, such as fuel emission from travels, the development of infrastructures, commodity markets and energy consumption, and at all levels, from the local to the global. In view of the multidimensionality of the concept of sustainability, this report will, in addition to issues of the applicability of various policy instruments in a Nordic context, discuss dilemmas and paradoxes associated with implementations instruments for developing sustainable tourism.

### 1.3 Tourism development and the Nordic countries

The rights of access to nature areas, which the Nordic countries grant to the public, do not obviously represent sustainability problems in themselves. Instead, a central focus of this report is how these rights put restrictions on what kinds of policy instruments can be implemented with the aim of managing tourism in sustainable ways. While *indirect* regulations (e.g. limiting the availability of facilities such as parking and accommodation) can be an applicable instrument for controlling the volume of visitation to an attraction, implementation of *direct* regulations (e.g. entrance fees and fencing of nature areas) will easily be brought into conflict with the legal principles of the public rights of access, as well as with established outdoor recreation practices associated with these rights, and the political-ideological objectives the public rights of access are held to contribute to.

International research literature on sustainability and tourism are for the most part based on cases in which access rights do not exist to the same extent as in the Nordic countries. Together with the recent financial crises and the emergence of neo-liberal governance, the growth in visitation to destinations and attractions have led to increased pressure on management agencies to look beyond public financing sources (Saarinen, 2016). In many cases, revenues from user fees and tourism operators are vital funding sources (Leask, Fyall, and Garrod, 2013). Entrance fees (Reynisdottir, Song, and Agrusa, 2008) and concessions (Wyman, Barborak, Inamdar, and Stein, 2011; Dinica, 2017) are central instruments in several cases.

While the public rights of access of the Nordic countries may seem to make several types of the economic instrument less applicable, the funding of infrastructures that the tourism industry depends on (national parks, tourist information, transport facilities, waste management) are at some destinations under pressure because of

increases in tourism. While the Nordic countries still clearly define public infrastructures as a governmental responsibility, recent developments have raised the question of whether tourists and the tourist industry should share the financial burdens.

Sustainable development refers to complex processes that involve economic, social and ecological dimensions. In addition, a multitude of stakeholder are frequently involved, often bringing with them diverse interests and goals that are not always easy to reconcile. Because of this, development processes with aims of achieving sustainable tourism often encounter dilemmas and paradoxes. For instance, while economic instruments can be expedient means for controlling the scope of visitation and easing the financial burden of management, this is at the risk of bringing the purpose of managing nature attractions closer economic objectives, and less to the preservation of habitat and ecosystems in themselves (see e.g. Sæþórsdóttir and Saarinen, 2016). Because of this, the implementation of economic instruments is rarely a sufficient measure for achieving sustainability goals. “Soft” approaches in terms of information, knowledge transmission and guidance are often required instruments, together with administrative instruments such as policy planning and collaboration between several types of stakeholders from different sectors and levels.

While nearly all visitors to Iceland arrive by air, a substantial proportion of foreign tourists in the other Nordic countries arrive by car, train or bus from neighbouring countries. Tourism in all the Nordic countries is dominated by what is often associated with nature-based tourism. Whereas tourism in Denmark to a greater extent than its Nordic counterparts is characterized by urban tourism, as well as coastal and rural tourism, tourism nevertheless includes many aspects of nature-based tourism such as fishing and mountain biking.

Iceland and Norway make a contrast to the other countries by their abundant iconic nature attractions, implying large numbers of visitors to geographically concentrated areas, and a recently unprecedented influx of tourists, for which neither the government nor tourism industry has been prepared for. By comparison, tourism in Finland and Sweden is characterized by a more even development. Accordingly, the two countries are not marked to the same degree by sustainability problems caused by extraordinary changes.

Despite some differences, sustainability problems produce similar challenges, paradoxes and dilemmas in all countries to a large degree, especially with respect to the development of infrastructures, legislation and the coordination of management policies. In the Nordic countries, use–protection issues on how to balance nature environments and visitation were until quite recently dominated by conservationist and eco-centred perspectives, particularly in Norway, and to some extent in Sweden (Higham and Vistad, 2011). A government writ in Sweden in 2001, and a similar one in Norway a few years later, which clearly address the nature protection–tourism nexus for mutual benefits, appear to have represented a turning point in this respect (Skjeggedal, Overvåg, Flognfeldt, and Ringholm, 2013; Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010). The shift towards the commercialization of nature (Castree, 2008; Job, Becken, and Lane, 2017) is consequently recognizable in the current trends of policy and planning in all Nordic countries. The touristic attractiveness of natural areas is increasingly valued

for offering potential income to local peripheral communities struggling with economic restructuring. Coordinating conservation and utilization of nature is accordingly more and more considered advantageous for both conservation, and for local and regional development goals (see e.g. Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010; Saarinen, 2016). As discussed by e.g., Puhakka and Saarinen (2013) and Sæþórsdóttir and Ólafsdóttir (2017), with reference to Nordic contexts, this shift has implications for how problems related to a growth in tourism is met in terms of policy solution, since short-term solutions focusing on economic development engender further suitability challenges in a long-term perspective (see also Bramwell and Lane, 2011; Buckley, 2012).

While all five Nordic countries are affected by the recent changes in tourism outlined above, problems related to congestion caused by sudden increases in the scale of visits are nevertheless far from equally distributed between the five countries, nor within each country. Iceland, and to some extent Norway, have experienced a dramatic rise in popularity among international tourists. First of all, this affects iconic attractions and destinations more than the entire countries or regions. In addition, the increase is driven by forces other than planning and marketing strategies to a large degree, and therefore also something one has often not been able to prepare for.

Since crowding is clearly a pressing problem at some sites, there is an urgent need to find adequate policy instruments to handle the situation. In the other three countries, a more gradual increase has been met by the development of infrastructures, which makes the situation less precarious. Even though increases in number of visitors in these cases appear to be relatively manageable with respect to immediate problems of congestion, there are still some important sustainability challenges to be discussed. First, a sustainable development is not only challenged by growth in number of visitors. As goals and motives for visits have become more diverse, the ways in which visitors perceive and engage with attractions, the nature environments and communities attached to them, vary more than before. Second, the ways in which destinations adapt to- and accommodate for these changes can have consequences for the sustainability of further tourism developments. For example, a relatively large-scale development of infrastructure as a response to increased and altered visitation can result in landscape changes and a reduction of biodiversity, hence making it less attractive for the original main weight of visitors.

#### **1.4 Literature search and selection**

This report contains a section based on international research literature on the use of various types of policy instruments and management strategies, in particular with regard to nature related tourism and questions connected to sustainable development of tourism. Using a selected set of relevant search terms in combinations (such as sustainable tourism, sustainability, tourism development, destinations, attractions, visitors, visitation, national parks, protected areas, development, nature-based tourism, management, adaptive management, policy instruments, policy(-ies), user fees, concessionaires, guiding, infrastructure, facilitation, revenues, tax, taxation,

funding, financing, common goods, , monitoring, Nordic, Scandinavia, and the name of the five Nordic countries), searches were made mainly via Google Scholar. More than 325 publications in peer reviewed journals were scanned for relevant content. A total of 127 journal articles from a relatively wide range of journals, published between 2005 and 2017, were examined closer. In addition, a snow-balling method has been employed. When particular references in one of the sampled publications were deemed as highly relevant, they were added to the sample of 127 articles. Moreover, various publications highlighting the particular features of the development in tourism in the Nordic countries have been included. This report is hence based on a total of 199 scientific publications, research reports not published in refereed journals included. The contemporary trends in sustainable development and tourism research, with special attention to economic policy instruments, have accordingly been captured, based on studies published over the last 12 years. With respect to issues concerning the Nordic situation, a number of non-scientific documents, such as governmental white papers as well as newspaper reports, are referred to in footnotes.

## 1.5 The main aims and structure of this report

In consideration of what has been outlined above, the aim of this report is as follows:

- Describing the unprecedented increase in visitation to nature areas and sites, and reviewing the sustainability problems this may result in.
- Discussing the ways in which efforts of developing comprehensive, site-specific visitor strategies encounter dilemmas and paradoxes in face of legal restriction and established socio-cultural practices in the various Nordic countries.
- Suggesting paths to adequate policy choices with respect to how different management instruments could be implemented to meet present and future challenges in legal, cultural and ecological contexts of the Nordic countries.

The first part of this report contains a review of current trends in tourism in all five Nordic countries, with an emphasis on nature-based tourism and challenges in the management of destinations, attractions and growing visitation. This is followed by a review of the public rights of access in all five Nordic countries. Based on a review of international research literature on management strategies and policy instruments concerning tourism and sustainability issues, the last chapter represents a discussion of the applicability of various instruments, and the potential effects of their implementation in the Nordic countries. While economic instruments, as mentioned above, are prominent in part of the literature, instruments related to information strategies and other “soft” means are taken into consideration, in addition to instruments related to policies and administration, such as planning and collaboration between government agencies and private stakeholders.

## 2. Tourism in the Nordic countries – current trends

While nearly all visitors to Iceland arrive by air, a substantial proportion of foreign tourists in the other Nordic countries travel by private cars, trains or buses from nearby countries. Tourism in all the Nordic countries is dominated by what is often associated with nature-based tourism. To a greater extent than its Nordic counterparts, tourism in Denmark is characterized by both urban and coastal tourism. These forms of tourism nevertheless include many aspects of nature-based tourism, such as fishing, mountain biking and swimming.

While tourism in many parts of the Nordic countries has been mainly limited to the summer season, the development of skiing and polar destinations now attracts more visitors during the winter season. Moreover, Northern light tourism has added substantially to winter tourism in Iceland and the northernmost parts of Norway, Finland, and Sweden (Heimtun, Jóhannesson, and Tuulentie, 2015). A central feature of this change is represented by visitors from emerging Asian markets. The number of Chinese visitors at Keflavik Airport has increased more than fivefold over the past four years.<sup>1</sup> The current growth in the number of tourists visiting Finland is mostly due to the increase in tourism from China. During 2016, 356,000 Chinese tourists arrived in Finland, which represents an increase of 35% compared to the previous year.<sup>2</sup>

The development of management policies of protected nature areas in Finland, Sweden and Norway is described in basically similar ways by Holmgren, Sandström and Zachrisson (2017), Puhakka and Saarinen (2013) and Higham, Haukeland, Hopkins, Vistad, Lindberg and Daugstad (2016): Whereas conservation management in the Nordic countries is anchored in historical traditions of the outdoors, there has been a gradual movement towards including recreation and nature-based tourism development as a goal for managing protected nature areas. In comparison to countries such as New Zealand, the legislative frameworks are centred on biocentric values, while provision for outdoor recreation in national parks has largely been accommodated to relatively low-scale visitation in more or less non-commercial settings.

Due to economic growth, the development of technology and infrastructures, protected areas have become more accessible to the public than before, hence contributing to an increase in the number of visitors. During the latter two decades, protected areas have gradually become more closely connected to their economic and social environments, with an emphasis to integrate national parks to wider regional and local development processes (see e.g. Puhakka and Saarinen (2013). This is reflected in

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<sup>1</sup> <http://icelandreview.com/news/2017/08/11/icelandic-nature-and-nordic-society-draw-chinese-tourists>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005131043.html>

changes in national policies and governance, with the aim of creating favourable environments for economic development. In peripheries, closer connections between the tourism industry and national parks are used as tools. While the original biocentric conservation policy used to be characterized by top-down governance, stakeholders of the local communities and the tourism industry are today increasingly involved in adaptive management strategies.

## 2.1 Iceland

Tourism has been among the fastest-growing industries in Iceland in recent years. During the last three decades, international tourist arrivals to Iceland have generally increased, including by 25% over the past six years. The number of international visitors to Iceland was approximately 2.3 million in 2017, which is almost seven times more than the entire Icelandic population. In addition to visitors arriving by plane, more than 128,000 cruise ship passengers came to the country in 2017, with an average increase of 13% per year since 2010 (Icelandic Tourist Board, 2018). Tourism is now one of the main pillars of the economy and represents the country's largest export sector. It accounted for roughly two-fifths of total exports of goods and services in 2016, thus exceeding the fisheries, which have been the foundation of the Icelandic economy for centuries. Approximately 13% of the total work force was employed in the tourism industry in 2016 (Statistics Iceland, 2018).<sup>3</sup>

Tourism in Iceland is dealing with problems related to seasonality, a high concentration of visitors and a relatively small number of destinations, consequently putting stress on fragile environments and causing a risk of overcrowding (Sæþórsdóttir, 2013; Jóhannesson, 2015; Sæþórsdóttir, Guðmundsdóttir, and Stefánsson, 2015). According to the Icelandic Tourist Board, the recent proportion of all international visitors who arrived in Iceland during the three summer months (June, July and August) has decreased from about 50% to 35%, while the increase of visits has been particularly high in the winter months, creating a whole new challenge for managers regarding nature protection and safety issues at the destinations.

According to the Icelandic Tourist Board, approximately 80% of international visitors to Iceland are drawn by natural attractions. The geographical distribution of travellers is highly concentrated at a few destinations, such as Gullfoss, Geysir, Þingvellir and Jökulsárlón. Research on the carrying capacity of tourist experiences (Sæþórsdóttir, 2013; Sæþórsdóttir et al., 2015) indicates that the density of tourists at popular sites is about to have a negative impact on the visitors' experiences (Sæþórsdóttir and Saarinen, 2016; Sæþórsdóttir, 2013; Sæþórsdóttir et al. 2015). During the last decades, few studies have been carried out in regard to the ecological impact of tourism (see overview from Ólafsdóttir, 2007 and Ólafsdóttir and Runnström, 2013).

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ferdamalastofa.is/is/tolur-og-utgafur/fjoldi-ferdamanna/heildarfjoldi-erlendra-ferdamanna> (Heildarfjöldi erlendra ferðamanna með skipum og flugvélum 1949-2016).



The Central Highlands of Iceland is one of the largest wilderness areas in Europe. This area is visited by around one-third of international tourists during the summer months. In 2015, Iceland established a land use plan (National Planning Strategy 2015–2026) to help ensure sustainable use of the nature and landscape resources in the Highlands (Jóhannesson, 2015; Ólafsdóttir, Sæþórsdóttir, and Runnstrom, 2016; Sæþórsdóttir and Ólafsdóttir, 2017). Based on the recognition that tourism development in Iceland is heavily dependent on the preservation of nature, the National Planning Strategy 2015–2026 emphasizes the necessity of diverting visits toward the edges of the Highlands and at certain zones adjacent to the main roads crossing the area (Sæþórsdóttir and Ólafsdóttir, 2017; Jóhannesson, 2016). However, wilderness preservation is at odds with other land use aims, such as hydropower and high tourism development. As pointed out by Sæþórsdóttir and Ólafsdóttir (2017), these conflicts become mutually exclusive options at different stages in the long-term planning process of the Highlands, as the National Planning Strategy equally emphasizes the necessity of ensuring that tourists have access to proper accommodation and services. Since the various stakeholder groups have different visions of how to utilize the destination resources upon which tourism relies, the National Planning Strategy does not engage with some of the more controversial issues in the Highlands (Sæþórsdóttir and Ólafsdóttir (2017). Therefore, the potential for strategic planning is weakened, and a space is left open for interpretations of how much tourism development should be allowed in the Highlands, and within which areas. The Arctic and sub-Arctic natural environment is vulnerable to degradation in face of increasing visitation. The rapid increase in international tourist arrivals has accordingly given rise to concerns about to what extent Iceland is able to manage wilderness tourism, while also preserving the quality of its wilderness (Sæþórsdóttir and Ólafsdóttir, 2017).

The official execution of tourism policies, in terms of goals and regulations, takes place at the state level and within municipalities. Since all Icelandic ministries are connected to tourism in one way or another, the legal and administrative framework of tourism in Iceland is complex. The Icelandic Tourist Board represents the primary governmental body and is subject to the Ministry of Industries and Innovation. While this board is assigned the task of implementing tourism affairs on behalf of the government, the public-private partnership agency Promote Iceland is responsible for the promotion of Iceland as a destination. In many cases, responsibilities are uncertain, and the organization of the sector is unclear.

The Icelandic authorities and public support system have been rather unprepared for the sudden and rapid growth in tourists' arrival to Iceland. As a response to the new situation, the Tourist Site Protection Fund Act was approved in 2011, with the aim to provide financial support for the development of tourist destinations, and to protect nature and secure the safety of travellers. Recognizing the urgent need to reduce pressure on the most popular tourist destinations, an additional purpose of this act is to increase the number of tourist destinations. While an entire range of various tourist destination projects have been funded, today only private or municipal land can receive financial support according to a recent change in the Tourist Site Protection Fund Act.

In other words, destinations on state-owned land (e.g. national parks) are now excluded from this financing source, while the size of the fund has been significantly increased.

In 2014, the Ministry of Tourism proposed a Nature passport, which would include entrance fees at the most popular nature destinations in Iceland, both from international and domestic tourists. The proposal caused conflicts with the public right of access, which allows people to travel on foot around the country, including private property, and which has been an integral part of the Icelandic culture since the early days of the settlement of the country. Whereas the political majority rejected this proposal, the media have reported on the public's negative reactions on landowners' efforts of collecting various types of entrance fees to attractions on their properties.

Hiking the VAT on typical tourism products to the general VAT level was planned to be implemented during 2018, assuming this could slow down the growth of tourist arrivals to Iceland, in addition to contributing to the financing development of required infrastructures. However, this has been put on hold as a part of the agreement of the three political parties forming the current government.

Sustainable tourism has been set as a goal by the Icelandic government since 2006, with the Tourism Plan for 2011–2020 highlighting sustainability.<sup>4</sup> A so-called Tourism Task Force has been founded and will operate for the next five years. Its board is comprised of four ministers closely related to tourism, as well as four representatives from the tourism industry and two from local authorities. The Task Force shall coordinate the various government administrations and municipalities, the industry itself and other stakeholders.

In 2015, the government and tourism industry joined forces and created a Road Map for Tourism,<sup>5</sup> which is a new tourism strategy that points out the research and information needed before Iceland can make a long-term vision for a sustainable and profitable tourism industry by 2030. The Road Map recognizes nature as the main attraction for tourists visiting Iceland, and therefore the foundation for the tourism industry. It points out the necessity to steer tourist traffic to restrict stress on nature and contribute to a sustainable use of nature. The Road Map further suggests the collection of service charges at nature destinations for added value services (Ministry of Industry and Innovation and The Icelandic Travel Industry Association, 2015). The Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources is currently reviewing the preliminary clause in the Nature Conservation Act concerning concessions and licence permits for tour operators in national parks and other areas under nature protection. Similar changes have already been made in 2016 with the law for the Vatnajökull National Park.<sup>6</sup> The Road Map also proposed to define some tourist destinations as "model destinations", and that these should be systematically developed as such. Two exemplary models from New Zealand are pointed to, both being UNESCO World Heritage locales: Tongariro and Fiordland. The Road Map also points out the necessity

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<sup>4</sup> Alþingistiðindi 2010–2011. 139. löggjafarþing. Þingskjal 758 – 467. mál. Tillaga til þingsályktunar um ferðamálaáætlun 2011–2020. [The 139st legislative assembly A. Parliament paper 758 – 467. case. Parliamentary resolution on tourism policy 2011–2020]. Retrieved February 22, 2018, from <http://www.althingi.is/altext/139/s/0758.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/atvinnuvegaraduneyti-media/media/Acrobat/Road-Map-for-Tourism-in-Iceland.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Law on change of Vatnajökull National Park Act (nr. 60/2007): <https://www.althingi.is/altext/stjt/2016.101.html>

to develop an access management plan built on environmental and social carrying capacity concerns, as well as tourist safety issues.

These issues are being dealt with in a new law called, the National Policy and Action Plan for Infrastructure Development [on tourism sites] to help conserve nature and cultural heritage. It is a strategic 12-year policy (2018–2029), which builds on the ideology of a recreational opportunity spectrum (ROS) regarding the development of the physical infrastructure at specific sites (ranging from toilet facilities to road construction). A parliamentary proposal built on the law is to be introduced at Althingi during the spring of 2018. It defines and zones for tourism development and nature protection, securing the necessary investment in infrastructural improvements and the outlining of a policy about the accessibility of natural attractions, which have been among the most urgent unresolved tasks during the recent years (see e.g. Maher et al., 2014).

The case of Iceland, with an unprecedented increase in visits, shows that using nature as a tourism product in a sustainable way is a complex matter which requires planning that weighs conflicting considerations against each other (Cságoly, Sæþórsdóttir, and Ólafsdóttir, 2017; Sæþórsdóttir and Ólafsdóttir, 2017). On the one hand, the development of infrastructure and organization structures is now needed to accommodate the growing number of visitors. On the other hand, since experiencing relatively intact nature environments dominates as the main reason for visiting Iceland as a tourist, sustainable development of the tourism sector depends on the conservation of the natural environment. While this can represent a dilemma, the development of infrastructure and organization of the tourism industry can also be used as a tool for protecting nature environments since a planned development can influence the stream of tourists in time and space.

#### **2.1.1**     *Main trends and challenges*

- The sudden increase in tourism during a relatively short time span.
- The development of organizational structures and infrastructures to accommodate the growing number of visitors.
- The need to establish adequate visitation management measures to avoid unsustainable congestion at the most popular attractions.
- Generating planning and policy processes that will integrate diverse stakeholders' interests and perspectives on sustainability issues.
- Finding ways to utilize Iceland's nature and wilderness for tourism in a sustainable way, and at the same time preserving its qualities.
- While the development of infrastructures may contribute to sustainable tourism, it might also result in further growth and more diverse visitation patterns, producing various kinds of sustainability problems that must be solved.

## 2.2 Sweden

According to the Swedish *Tillväxtverket*,<sup>7</sup> tourism consumption in Sweden was estimated at SEK 300 billion in 2016, with tourism employing approximately 170,000 persons (an increase of 7% compared to 2015). The consumption of foreign visitors in Sweden represents an export value estimated at SEK 120 billion, which means an increase of nearly 13%, corresponding to roughly 6% of Sweden's total exports (SOU, 2017). Whereas Swedish tourists account for 75% of all overnight stays, the recent yearly increases have primarily been caused by the growth of foreign visitors. Since 2012, the number of overnight stays by Chinese visitors has increased by 25%.

Reporting to the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth and Visit Sweden AB are responsible for developing tourism at the national level and marketing Sweden as an international tourist destination. The umbrella organization for local and regional authorities, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) has increased its engagement in tourism through partnerships with the industry organizations. *Svensk Turism* launched the *Strategy for Swedish Tourism in 2010* to promote destination development, marketing, and industry co-ordination. The vision is to double overall tourism revenue to SEK 500 billion by 2020. Increased product and destination development are also identified as a crucial component to reach this target.

Sweden has no specific tourism taxes. Even so, the VAT on restaurants and catering services was lowered from 25% to 12% in 2012 to help stimulate employment. This is believed to have contributed to an increase in employment with 4,000 full-time jobs and 2,335 new companies.

While the demand for nature experiences attracts visitors to Sweden, the potential for developing tourism is somewhat hampered by the fact that the most attractive NTB experiences tend to be found in geographically remote regions. In addition to connectivity and transport challenges, the industry is dominated by small or micro firms, which in general are preoccupied with day-to-day survival, rather than strategic management such as market development (Brouder, 2014). These businesses tend to be constrained by such factors as a lack of capital and an inadequate infrastructure. NTB entrepreneurs are often motivated by non-monetary objectives, making management priorities different from larger businesses (Lundberg and Fredman, 2012). The NTB in Sweden consists of a large part of enterprises with multiple business operations, with guided activities in nature and accommodation being the most important business activities, though with much of their activities restricted to the summer season (Fredman and Margaryan, 2014). Seasonality is therefore also a challenge.

In rural and peripheral areas, where development opportunities are relatively few, tourism development is a recurring strategy in local planning (Müller, 2011; Brouder 2014). The two northernmost counties, Norrbotten ("Swedish Lapland") and Västerbotten constitute 34% of the area of Sweden and 5.5% of the Swedish population. While the region is characterized by a decreasing and ageing population,

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<sup>7</sup> <https://tillvaxtverket.se/vara-tjanster/publikationer/publikationer-2017/2017-06-19-fakta-om-svensk-turism-2016.html>

with an economy mostly based on forest production, mining and hydroelectric power production, tourism has become of increasing importance during the latter decades (Müller, 2011). The main attractions in the mountainous areas are ski resorts, large national parks such as Laponia and the authentic Sámi culture with reindeer herding. Attractions in the boreal forest are fewer, but include the Ice Hotel, the Tree Hotel and fishing and rafting in the rivers. While NBT contributes to local development, this takes place in accordance with some major sustainability dimensions to the extent they help to diversify the economy, giving rural areas an endogenous development platform (in contrast to a dependency on exogenous platform such as the mining industry and hydropower development), thus contributing to maintaining livelihoods and settlements in local communities (Brouder, 2014).

Sweden has not experienced the sudden and dramatic increase of visitation to certain iconic attractions to the same degree as Iceland and Norway. There is nonetheless an increasing demand for experiencing the Swedish mountain landscapes. Currently, a significantly increase in the interest of climbing Kebnekaise, the country's highest mountain peak, have been noticed.<sup>8</sup>

While hiking trails and cabins are the most dominant types of infrastructure, forests, lakes, rivers and waterfalls are the most important types of nature environments, implying that hydroelectric dams, wind power plants and forestry play an integral role. Both research papers (Fredman, Wall Reinius, and Lundberg, 2009) and governmental documents (SOU, 2017:95) emphasize the diversity of stakeholders within NBT, implying a multitude of interests and goals that call for more efficient coordination and leadership on local, regional, national and international levels.

Climate changes and deteriorating snow conditions have negative consequences for ski resorts and other winter-oriented tourism activities (Brouder and Lundmark, 2011; Moen and Fredman, 2007). There is also a need for developing more diversified and specialised NTB products, e.g., connected to the slow concept (Boulder, 2014). Recent research on trends in Swedish mountain tourism shows a greater variety in types or categories of visitors, and an increasing demand for facilitation in terms of information boards, marked trails and mountain lodges. This indicates that visitation will be more geographically concentrated in the near future, and that the emergence of behavioural patterns and motives differs from what has been the dominant theme up until now (Fredman, Wall Reinius, Sandell, Lundberg, Lexhagen, Bodén, and Dahlberg, 2014; Wall-Reinius, 2009). Motorized activities are increasing (snowmobiling, boating), and are associated with changing behaviour (free riding), hence implying that there is a need for considering how this trend could result in increased conflicts. While some restrictions against commercial use have recently been taken away from the National Park plans, guidelines for NBT in national parks have been suggested but have only been implemented to a limited extent so far (Fredman et al., 2014).

Despite the increased demand for facilitation, the opportunity of experiencing peaceful and quiet nature surroundings, and the opportunity to meet only a few other

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.svd.se/fler-toppbesok-pa-kebnekaise>

visitors in the mountains, are still significantly valued among visitors. A further consequence might therefore be conflicts of interests between visitors with differing motives and demands, whereas the concentration of visitors may potentially have negative effects on non-touristic stakeholders, such as reindeer herders (Fredman et al., 2014). Since the development of facilities in part represents the response of commercial stakeholders to public demands, planning, management and investments need to take into consideration how these processes might result in crowding and land erosion (Fredman et al., 2014).

A recent White Paper on tourism issued by the Swedish government on tourism (SOU, 2017:95) proposes a national strategy for sustainable tourism. It divides tourism into nine strategic development areas, paying attention to competence within each sector, improving infrastructures and accessibility (transport and digitalization), nature- and culture-based tourism, entrepreneurship and collaboration for increased market shares, innovation and research, and finally the strengthening of public control and supervisory arrangements at various administrative levels.

The Swedish strategy to double tourism revenues by 2020 has started several development initiatives, which include professional international market analysis and product development, as well as stronger local and regional networking among tourism stakeholders. The major challenge for Swedish tourism is to increase its international competitive share and acquire more local destinations into the international market.<sup>9</sup> Other challenges are national legislation and regulations, such as restricted commercial tourism access to national parks, and the clash of interests concerning property rights, tourism and the right of public access to nature in Sweden (Sandell and Fredman, 2010; Sténs and Sandström, 2013). The potential of conflicts exists between tourism development and forestry, mining and reindeer herding (Müller, 2011).

### **2.2.1     *Main trends and challenges***

- Increased variety in NBT activities and more diversity in the way people engage with nature, and the potential conflicts and negative impacts on environment associated with this.
- National legislation and regulations, such as restricted access for commercial tourism operations in national parks, and the clash of interests concerning property rights, tourism and the public's right to access nature, in addition to conflicts between tourism development and forestry, mining and reindeer herding, representing some of the main challenges with respect to tourism development.
- The diversification of visitors' motives and demand must be integrated in future planning and management strategies, management and investments.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.mynewsdesk.com/se/tillvaextverket/pressreleases/turismens-aarsbokslut-2013-vaexande-turism-skapar-tusentals-nya-jobb-1012132>

- The more recent demand for facilitations in mountain areas might result in crowding, land erosion and conflicts between user groups.
- Increasing visitation from outside Europe might open for the development of new NBT products, which could pose new sustainability challenges to be considered in management, planning and policies.
- Long distances and a lack of infrastructure.
- A lack of capital for investments.
- Small-scale businesses, lifestyle-driven.

## 2.3 Finland

In recent years, tourism in Finland has grown more than in other sectors. In 2016, accommodation establishments in Finland recorded 20.3 million overnight stays, of which domestic tourists accounted for 14.6 million and foreign tourists for almost 5.8 million. The foreign demand for accommodation services grew by 4.7%, and the domestic demand by 2.4% compared with the previous year. According to the Visit Finland Visitor Survey, Finland received 7.7 million foreign visitors in 2016, bringing €2.5 billion to Finland.<sup>10</sup>

Since 2014, the state-funded organization Finpro has been responsible for supporting Finnish SMEs in international markets, and for encouraging foreign direct investment. In addition, *Metsähallitus*, the state-owned enterprise, which administers more than 12 million hectares of state-owned land (including lakes), plays a key role in managing important resources for outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism (including national parks and hiking areas). Most of Finland's nature areas are privately owned, in particular in southern Finland. The volume of NBT monitored through visitor surveys, was carried out in national parks and state-owned hiking areas. The use of national parks has doubled during the past 10 years, with a total of 2.8 million visits recorded in 2016.<sup>11</sup>

The Regional State Administrative Agencies carry out all legislative implementation, steering and supervisory functions within Finland's regions. By offering financial, advisory, consulting and training services to tourism businesses, the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY) manage the regional implementation and development tasks of the state administration. A sector manager acts as a national expert on tourism for all ELY Centres. The Regional Councils, as joint municipal authorities, oversee regional planning and supervise the development of the tourism sector. While 30 regional tourism organizations have been

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<sup>10</sup> In 2015, a total of EUR 13.8 billion were spent on tourism in Finland. This includes the consumption expenditure of Finnish and foreign tourists. Foreign travellers accounted for 27 % (EUR 3.66 bn) of total tourism consumption. See <http://www.visitfinland.fi/en/tourism-in-finland>

<sup>11</sup> Visitor number in Metsähallitus national parks in 2001–2016; available: <http://www.metsa.fi/kansallispuistotyhteensa#sthash.bvvLgbAD.dpuf>

established in Finland, tourism issues are also handled by municipalities and local tourist information offices.

Tourism growth has been significant in Finnish Lapland. The tourism development of this region has been based on a division of destinations into various categories, from burgeoning to strong, and on establishing tourism zones surrounding the destinations in order to enhance development between destinations and rural communities close to destinations (Tyrväinen, Uusitalo, Silvennoinen, and Hasu, 2014). This model has turned out as a successful way to develop tourism in peripheral Arctic areas. However, the quality of the growth and its limits have not yet been comprehensively discussed (Hakkarainen and Tuulentie, 2008; Tyrväinen et al., 2014). Efforts to improve the sustainability of tourism services in Lapland include improvement of eco-efficiency of land-use, sustainable energy solutions and waste management (Staffans, Hasu, Merikoski, Paatero, Tyrväinen, and Valkeisenmäki, 2011).

While the governmental Roadmap for Growth and Renewal in Finnish Tourism for 2015–25 defines NTB as the most promising growth area, it also outlines strategic aims for tourism product development within what is called a competitive environment. This is to be achieved by more efficient marketing and increased accessibility by improving travel chains. This nationally coordinated tourism development programme is supported by Outdoors Finland (summer activities) and Cultural Finland (culture and tourism) in umbrella programmes. The roadmap includes a commitment to sustainable development and the promotion of appropriate training and certification programmes for tourism businesses, as well as supporting solutions that encourage future consumers to make sustainable choices. The road map can be seen in part as a response to increasing visitation and growth in the expenditure of foreign tourists. Russians remain the most frequent visitors to Finland, whereas Chinese visitors comprise the fastest growing proportion of visitors. It is estimated that one-third of all foreign tourists participate in nature activities.

Even though the diversification of nature-based tourism products (such as well-being) has resulted in forest areas beyond the northernmost region of Lapland becoming increasingly relevant as destinations, Lapland is still the key development area. Typical commercial tourism services in Finnish Lapland consist of programmed services, such as snowmobile excursions to reindeer or sled dog farms. Despite the relative remoteness and wilderness-like attributes of the tourism destinations in Lapland, the typical programmed services, especially the ones offered in the winter season, are generally considered to be less adventurous (Rantala and Valkonen, 2011).

From 1990 to 2013, the number of tourists visiting Lapland increased from 1.25 million to 2.4 million (of which 1.3 million were domestic visitors). In addition, the actual number of tourists in 2013 was estimated to be three times the registered number, since a considerable part of overnight visitors are non-registered ones. In 2013, foreign tourists mostly came to Lapland from Great Britain, Russia, Germany and Japan. The main tourist season takes place from February to April. The summer and autumn seasons attract primarily Finnish hiking tourists while the Christmas season with British and Russian tourists starts in November and lasts until January.



As of 2011, there were 1,586 tourism enterprises in Lapland. The number of tourism companies increased by 6.4% during the years from 2006–2011, and by the end of this period the turnover of tourism companies was 471 million euros. While most of the tourism enterprises employ less than 10 people, tourism businesses employed 4,497 people in total in the year 2011. The employment in tourism grew 3.5% during the years between 2006–2011, which was approximately 1.5 times more than the growth in forestry, and almost 5 times more than the growth in mining. Young people in particular find employment in the tourism sector. In the municipalities of Western Lapland, the share of tourism industry in employment varies from 39% to 46%. (Kyyrä ed., 2013).

Current challenges for developing tourism in Finnish Lapland relate to accessibility and seasonality. Since Lapland relies heavily on winter activities, there is a need to develop products that can attract tourists during the summer season (Rantala and Valtonen, 2014). Few flight connections, small numbers of airlines operating, and the threat of closing airports in Lapland, as well as a need of improving railway connections, are mentioned as notable hindrance for further development (Strategy for Lapland, 2011–2014).

In general, development plans for- and trends of nature-based tourism in Finland have raised concerns about sustainability. The government has defined a set of sustainability goals associated with four main thematic areas: well-being (e.g. services related to sauna and clean water), culture (e.g. the relationship with nature, local narratives), summer (e.g. non-motorized nature activities) and winter (e.g. ice and snow technologies, northern lights, Christmas tourism) (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2014). It is estimated that Finland has a total of approximately 5,700 entrepreneurs, who base their business partly or solely on products related to nature experiences. A large share (3,700 enterprises) provide accommodation services, with approximately 1,000 enterprises offer programme services (Petäjistö and Selby, 2012).

Finland has 40 national parks, in which tourism largely focuses on nature-based activities and experiences. NBT in northern Finland mostly takes place in state-owned land, often in protected areas, though commercial forests owned by the state are used for diverse types of safaris. *Metsähallitus* has launched sustainability principles intended to guide sustainable tourism operations in all national parks, nature sites and historical sites managed by Parks and Wildlife Finland.<sup>12</sup> These principles are also implemented in all UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Finland. The entrepreneurs are expected to promote sustainable tourism so that their operations in these areas will: 1) *support the preservation of valuable features at the sites and promote their protection*, 2) *minimize the load on the environment*, 3) *strengthen local aspects*, 4) *promote use of the sites to increase health and well-being*, 5) *promote growth and job creation in the local economy*, and 6) *communicate together the values and services of the site*.

Roughly 70% of all forest areas in Finland are private forestry estates. However, the recent expansion of rural tourism implies that these areas have also become relevant for tourism development. Consequently, there is a growing need to maintain the

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.metsa.fi/web/en/sustainablenaturetourism>

recreational qualities of the landscapes that are believed to be the main pull factors of nature-based tourism (Tyrväinen et al., 2017). One of the suggested approaches to integrating forestry and tourism is to provide private landowners compensation for managing and enhancing landscape and biodiversity values in their forests (e.g. Tyrväinen, Mäntymaa, and Ovaskainen, 2014).

Legally binding master plans for nature protection are executed in the tourist resorts, such as those of Lapland, and set a framework for land use and the provision of accommodation and other services. Using these terms, Lapland tourism has gone through a development process over the last few decades within the frames of regional strategic planning and investments for infrastructure allocated to the primary tourism destinations. This has contributed to a significant increase in visitors, and tourism is currently the most important economic sector of this region. By a further boosting of infrastructures, the aim is currently to double the annual visitor rates by 2020. Lapland's tourism strategy aims at being the leading destination for sustainable nature and experience tourism in Europe by 2020. As in Iceland (see above), this big-scale initiative to develop infrastructures for receiving tourists is under threat of undermining its own foundation to the extent that development will result in crowding, the development of natural areas and deterioration of the ecological landscape (Tyrväinen et al., 2014). In other words, current trends and ambitions raise concerns about how tourism destinations in the future can meet visitors' expectations with respect to landscape and nature qualities.

In a recent summary study looking at the status of NBT and outdoor recreation sectors as a whole, the sector was identified to provide significant opportunities for business development (Tyrväinen et al., 2017). The work focused on analysing sustainable business models and what the productization of nature-based tourism means for development of the sector's information resources, as well as novel financing and operating models to safeguard the biodiversity and attractiveness of nature environments. Altogether, 25 proposals for the sectors' development were presented. The development of the sectors is hampered by the fragmented state of the knowledge base and by a fragmented administration of the development. For the growth prospects to be realized to their fullest extent, it is important for the authorities to have a common vision of the sector's goals. Additionally, more intensive cooperation is needed within the sector, as well as between the natural resources sector and tourism and recreation providers.

### **2.3.1**     *Main trends and challenges*

- Regional strategic planning and investments for infrastructure allocated to the main tourism destinations have thus far been able to receive increasing visitation in a relatively sustainable manner.
- This big-scale initiative to develop infrastructures for receiving tourists is under threat of undermining its own foundation to the extent that development will result in crowding, the development of natural areas and a deterioration of the ecological landscape.

- The diversification of NTB products (such as well-being tourism) makes forests areas beyond Lapland relevant for tourism development, which may imply that different kinds of conflicts of interests should be integrated into planning and policies to achieve sustainable developments in these areas.
- Fragmented knowledge base and administration.
- Undeveloped/Inadequate business networks with the sector areas.

## 2.4 Norway

Tourism is now Norway's largest service-export industry. Since Norway is a high-cost country, changes in exchange rates from 2015 clearly contributed to an increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting the country. In 2016, there were 4.1 million international tourist arrivals at Norwegian hotels, which is an increase of 12% from the year before, according to Visit Norway.<sup>13</sup> Approximately 10% of the total work force was employed in tourism-related businesses or organizations. This represents an increase by 18 % since 2008.

The governmental implementation of tourism policies, in terms of development goals and regulations, takes place at national (ministries), regional (counties) and local (municipalities) levels. By offering strategic project funds and financial means for the development of human resources and knowledge, not to mention certain kinds of infrastructures, county councils operate as strategical partners for destination companies. Being responsible for a number of facilities and infrastructures, such as waste management, traffic facilities, tourist information and tourist attractions within their borders, local municipalities play an important role in the tourism industry in terms of public planning and regulation. In many cases, local authorities have put in place strategies for tourism, and some even provide financial support to local destination management companies.

Sustainable tourism has been defined as a goal by the Norwegian government since 2007 (Aall, 2014). Through several projects, the state-owned company Innovation Norway (IN) has been responsible for the most extensive part of the implementation process. With the aim of attracting a higher proportion of international tourists to Norway and increasing profitability within the sector, the main tasks of IN are product and business development, international promotion and brand-building. To achieve these goals, various projects have been initiated in partnership and cooperation with the tourism industry. IN provides financial support to a variety of development projects, including within the tourism business.

With responsibilities shared between the government, IN and the tourism industry, a Plan of Action was drawn up to increase tourism sustainability, resulting in the launch of a sustainable destination standard in 2015 (with a revised version in 2017). These standards include 45 criteria and 108 indicators to be measured, registered and

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.visitnorway.no/innsikt/statistikk-for-visitnorway-2017/>

monitored, covering nature, culture, environment, social values, community involvement and economic viability. A White Paper on Norwegian Tourism in 2016 (St.meld. 19, 2016–2017), issued by the government, defines policies that will support the profitability and competitiveness of tourism. Based on this policy, IN is responsible for a Sustainable Destination programme. According to a set of criteria, destinations can qualify for this label of sustainable destinations.

NHO, the main representative organization for Norwegian employers, issued a road map for sustainable tourism development in 2017.<sup>14</sup> The document includes recommendations for governmental tourism policies and Norwegian tourism companies, on which choices should be made in the short and long term to contribute to sustainable society by 2050, with the aim of improving competitive power in a changing future.

A noticeable and relatively recent change concerning tourism development in Norway is the increase in second homes in forests and mountain areas. While there is a long-standing tradition of privately owned cabins in relative remote nature areas, this tradition has been transformed towards easily accessible and fully facilitated second homes in designated areas, in most cases close to Alpine skiing and networks of groomed cross-country skiing trails (Aall, 2014). During the last decade, a number of second homes have been doubled, many have increased in size and standard, and are located in areas easily accessible by car; they are taken into use much more frequently than before (Aall, 2014). While these destinations used to rely on hotels and self-service, rental apartments, the tendency is now to self-own second homes (houses or apartments). Second homes are lucrative business for landowners and investors, and represent considerable tax revenues for some rural municipalities, particularly in the cases in which the numbers of second homes are larger than first homes, with the market value of second homes exceeding that of the inhabitants' homes. Second-home villages close to the urban centres are in the process of being urbanized, with relatively grand-scaled development of new second-homes and apartments building, shops and service centres.

Much of the tourism in Norway is related to nature landscapes. Depending on definition criteria, the estimate is between 2,000 and 3,000 NBT businesses in Norway, mostly consisting of small or micro firms employing one to three persons, of which about half were in a start-up or a growth phase, with a substantial part (20–38%) operating inside or in the border zones of national parks (Stensland, Fossgard, Apon, Baardsen, Fredman, 2014). More than 18,000 cruise ships visited Norwegian harbours in 2016, an increase of 5% from the previous years. This represents almost 660,000 passengers, who in total made 2.7 million day-visits at various onshore destinations. This is an increase of 8.5% compared to 2015. It is expected that the increase will continue in the coming years.<sup>15</sup> The cruise ship market has played a role, as Northern light tourism has been developed into a core winter product in the northern part of

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nhoreiseliv.no/vi-mener/barekraftig-reiseliv/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.innovasjon Norge.no/contentassets/f54a747a65234acba432537cfce68e59/innovasjon-norge-cruiserapport-2016-2017.pdf>

Norway during the last two decades (Heimtun et al., 2015). Whereas a shorter winter season and unreliable snow conditions have raised concerns related to climate changes, this also implies that the summer and autumn seasons can be extended, which provides more opportunities for activities like hiking and mountain biking.

Norway has experienced a dramatic increase in visits to iconic nature attractions. These destinations have not been equipped to receive such large numbers of visitors and the negative effects of the trampling of soil and vegetation, as well as littering (including human stool), and other types of pollution now experienced as an emerging problem to be solved. In this sense, Norway encounters problems similarly to Iceland, as attractive nature environments increasingly become subject to congestion, with the subsequent need to regulate scales of visitation.

Spectacular mountain peaks, which had a rather limited visitation only a few years ago, today attract several thousand visitors every year. The public rights of access entail that a nature area cannot be closed off without violating the right to roam. Even though the Outdoor Recreation Act provides the municipality with opportunities to restrict access to an area, e.g., due to security risks, the implementation often involves several practical and administrative difficulties. In part because visitors increasingly arrive on individual, self-organized journeys, in many cases arriving without adequate knowledge and equipment, the risk increases when people visit unsafe attractions despite warnings. Because of this, costly rescue operations have become more frequent during the later years.

The relatively large number of visitors at certain destinations and attractions has also raised concerns about pressure on public services caused by tourism. This concern has actualized debates on common goods and sustainability. Firstly, tourism in Norway capitalizes very much on public access rights to nature, and even on access to other kinds of public or semi-public goods such as facilities for outdoor recreation managed by NGOs, as well as roads, parking spaces and public waste management systems. Much of these common goods are the responsibility of the municipalities, which lack funding for developing infrastructures to handle the diverse problems an influx of visitors' causes. The budgets and income of municipalities are primarily decided by the number of inhabitants, not by the stream of tourists. While an unprecedented increase in the numbers of visitors to certain attractions and destinations results in environmental damage, costly rescue operations and overload on local infrastructures, entrance fees have been proposed as a measure for limiting visitation and covering maintenance expenses.

While Norwegian authorities and legislation used to put severe restrictions on commercialized activities in relation to protected nature, policy documents from 2003 opened for commercial activities, such as tourism, in particular in the border zones. In 2010, the government transferred the management responsibilities to local boards comprised of politicians from municipalities and county councils. The present model implies that the role of government agencies at different administrative levels and across sectors is not sufficiently defined, which gives rise to problems for tourism stakeholders. An insufficient coordination of implementation of policies accordingly

represents a hindrance for the development of tourism connected to protected areas and national parks (Overvåg et al., 2016).

Since national parks represent important tourist destinations, the Norwegian Environment Agency (*Miljødirektoratet*) has issued a Brand and Visitor Strategy for Norwegian Protected Areas.<sup>16</sup> The aim is to provide national parks with a consistent identity, attract more visitors to the national parks and increase the economic value for the surrounding areas, but without affecting conservation values. The visitor strategy manual states in short that the required management measures, infrastructures, and facilities (e.g. information, physical adaptation, zoning, supervision) should be specified in each case with the aim of balancing the diverse goals of protection, attracting visitors, and creating economic value for the local societies in the border zones. Thus far, there have been no scholarly evaluations of the effect of these kinds of visitor strategies.

Increased mobility due to improved transport facilitates the, marketing and promotion of iconic attractions, information sharing on social media, new types of motives for visiting attractions, and large-scale increases of second home villages in forest and mountain areas, have all contributed to concentrating outdoor activities and tourism visitation to certain demarcated areas to a much greater extent than ever before. The question of whether one should modify legislation to make a sharper distinction between non-organized and organized, or between non-commercial and commercialized, activities and traffic in nature landscapes has been raised by legal scholars (Reusch, 2012).

Despite the examples of dramatic increases in visitation and concentration of use given above, tourism in Norway is still characterized by individuals or small groups (such as families) organizing their travels on their own. Even though there has been an increase in the numbers of private businesses operating a variety of activity products in nature (e.g. angling, rafting, wildlife safaris, and guided mountain hiking), this kind of commercialization has not created much controversies, such as in relation to landowners. With a relatively few exception, it has neither resulted in mass invasion to attractions.

#### **2.4.1 Main trends and challenges**

- Unprecedented visitation to iconic attractions creates challenges related to congestion and risk, as well as environmental, social and financial problems.
- Tourism destinations are transformed into second home villages, creating pressure on nature landscapes, as well as new challenges for the tourism industry.
- While public and semi-public facilities, and the public rights of access, represent a resource for tourism development, it also raises issues of free rider problems and represents challenges concerning how to limit or structure visitation in space and time.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Tema/Verneomrader/Ny-merkevare-for-Norges-nasjonalparker/>

- Municipalities lack the financial resources to handle large influx of tourism.
- Even though new legislation and policies open for tourism activities in protected areas, policies, funding opportunities and management need to be better coordinated.
- Ambitious sustainability goals make innovative modes of coordination and collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders necessary to implement the required measures.

## 2.5 Denmark

According to Visit Denmark,<sup>17</sup> tourism accounts for 3.5% of total Danish exports. Increasing by 4.7% from 2015, foreign and Danish tourists made a total of DKK 51.5 million overnight stays in Denmark in 2016, of which the foreign market represented approximately half (Visit Denmark, 2018). While tourists' total consumption amounted to DKK 97.5 billion in 2016, spreading across many types of goods and services, tourism generates 118,000 jobs in Denmark. Although Denmark has experienced a substantial growth in tourist-related bed nights from long haul markets such as China, Australia and Brazil, the neighbouring European countries continue to be the mainstays of Danish tourism (Visit Denmark, 2018). Overall, inbound tourism in Denmark has increased in recent years, especially city and business-related tourism, while inbound coastal and nature-related tourism have remained constant.

The first Danish law for tourism came into force in 2015, with the aim of achieving a greater investment impact in the sector every year. The main instrument is the improvement of coordination at the national, regional and local levels. The Danish National Tourism Forum is given the primary responsibility of developing a national strategy for Danish tourism up to 2025, defining the central priorities and goals for Danish tourism and coordinating the public promotion of tourism based on the national tourism strategy. Three tourism development agencies – Danish Coastal and Nature Tourism, Danish Business and Conferencing Tourism and Danish City Tourism – have also been established under this legislation. Their responsibilities are to generate growth in their respective sectors, based on their own strategies, but under the umbrella of a national tourism strategy. International branding and marketing of Denmark is managed by Visit Denmark, which is also responsible for market research and trend monitoring. Visit Denmark cooperates with the Ministry of Business and Growth, Danish National Tourism Forum, and regional tourism development agencies. The Ministry of Business and Growth co-operates with several other ministries, such as the Ministry of Environment and Food, including the Danish Nature Agency (*Naturstyrelsen*), the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the

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[https://www.visitdenmark.dk/sites/default/files/VDK\\_Website\\_images/Pdf\\_other\\_files/Analyser/2018/prognoserapport\\_2018\\_o.pdf](https://www.visitdenmark.dk/sites/default/files/VDK_Website_images/Pdf_other_files/Analyser/2018/prognoserapport_2018_o.pdf)

Ministry of Culture, which also includes the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces (*Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen*).

While global tourism grew substantially from 2011 to 2012, Denmark saw a decline in the number of international bed nights, with the Danish Parliament agreeing on a plan for growth in Danish tourism, which includes the promotion of coastal and nature tourism to attract new tourists from Denmark's neighbouring countries. The strategy will also include national goals and guidelines for the development of the tourism industry, as well as plans for particular geographical areas, incorporating medium- and long-term objectives to be achieved by 2025. The strategy governs the activities of the three tourism development agencies, Visit Denmark and local projects. It facilitates the coordination of the national tourism efforts and includes provisions for private sector support and collaboration.

Even though tourism in Denmark is dominated by urban tourism and diverse forms of rural tourism, focusing on beaches, food tourism, heritage, etc., there is a growing interest for typical nature-based tourism activities in coastal areas and forests (Hjalager, 2017). Danish forests are more openly accessible than those in many other countries, and today off-road biking opportunities attract both domestic and international tourists. Specific areas and tracks have been dedicated to off-road bikers in several locations. An attractive infrastructure for off-road bikers is emerging, using both tracks and trails, in addition to support and service facilities, such as accommodations, training tracks, the renting of bikes, etc. Several regions in Denmark are competing to become off-road bike destinations. Legislation sets relatively strict limits on opportunities for developing infrastructure for recreational biking in forests, and there are recent examples of an innovative collaboration between governmental agencies, landowners, tourism and recreational interests to prevent implementation from being compromised by conflicting interests (Hjalager, 2017). The Minister for Environment and Food has (via the Danish Nature Agency) recently issued guidelines to ensure a nationwide offer of easily accessible and marked off-road bike trails.<sup>18</sup>

A recent revision of the Planning Act in Denmark has resulted in relaxed regulations for housing and commercial development in the countryside. The original act regulated housing and business development in the countryside relatively strictly to keep urban sprawl in check, to secure land for agriculture and to preserve natural environments. According to Olesen and Carter (2017), the revision can be seen as a response to a decline in tourism during the latter years, in particular in the coastal areas. The political proponent of the revised act argued that the act had represented a severe obstacle to economic investments in rural areas, where traditional jobs are limited.

The coastline has been protected from large-scale tourism development and construction for more than 80 years. In the wake of the revised planning act, the government has now opened several tourism development projects. In their review of several pilot tourism development projects within Denmark's coastal zone, Andersen, Blichfeldt and Liburd (2016) concluded that short-term economic effects and benefits

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<sup>18</sup> <http://naturstyrelsen.dk/media/230575/retningslinjer-for-naturstyrelsens-mtb-tilbud.pdf>



were overshadowing a holistic, long-term approach that would include assessments of social, cultural and environmental effects, and that instruments for controlling the user intensity effects on the quality of life and well-being of locals and tourists were not taken into account. As the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of beaches and coastal zones are well-documented, along with the effects of coastal zone development projects, Andersen et al. (2016) point out this paradox since tourists' motivation to visit Denmark is found in their appreciation of environmentally friendly destinations with open access to the coastline, sea and beaches.

#### **2.5.1**     *Main trends and challenges*

- Increased commercial development in the coastal zone/countryside.
- Increased diversification and demand of NTB products (such as active versus "slow" tourism – like off-road bike holidays and relaxation/reflection holidays), which might imply that different kinds of conflicts of interests have to be integrated into policies, planning and management to help secure sustainable development.
- Lack of knowledge regarding public rights of access, among both national and foreign visitors.
- Securing high quality products and qualified staff in certain areas.



### 3. Public rights of access in the Nordic countries

The public rights of access are more extensive in the Nordic countries compared to most other countries. While these rights clearly represent a resource for the tourism industry, they also set some limits for which kinds of policy instruments can be implemented in the Nordic countries.

#### 3.1 Norway

Norway codified *allemannsretten* in the Outdoor Recreation Act in 1957, with the aim of safeguarding the public's right of access to the countryside. While non-owners can walk through uncultivated land at any time provided they exercise due care, the same rights of access apply to cultivated land in the winter months. The legislation specifies regulations and responsibilities that follows with access rights to land in detail, e.g., regarding picnicking and camping (Kaltenborn et al., 2001; Robertson, 2011; Reusch, 2012). In cases when interpretation of the statute is required (for example what distances from a house are acceptable for entry), the municipality can issue a statement on the specific matter. While landowners are not allowed to charge any kind of rent or fee for access, one may rent a property to an individual or a group of individuals for certain types of outdoor activities (e.g. hunting). Moreover, a landowner can charge fees for access to beaches, camping and picnic areas or similar types of recreation areas that require certain kinds of facilitation in terms of construction or similar, but only after obtaining permission from the municipality (Reusch, 2012). This is also based on the condition that these kinds of measures do not prevent the public to access the area in general. The law specifies that the fees should be reasonable, implying that the facilitations should be more to the advantage of outdoor recreationists than to the commercial business of the landowner. When attractive nature sites are used for extensive commercial tourist arrangements, a distinction can be made between arrangements made for visiting a site and mobility defined as outdoor recreation in general (Reusch, 2012). The North Cape represents one of the very few examples where such a distinction is made, in this case to allow a private company to charge entrance fees to a limited and fenced nature area.

### 3.2 Iceland

Icelandic law includes public access to both privately and state owned land, as defined in the Nature Conservation Act (Robertson, 2011): Persons traveling through the countryside must show consideration for the interests of the landowners. In addition, the law encourages visitors to follow marked paths where possible. Visitors may also enter uncultivated lands as long as this takes place without the use of motorized vehicles, while cyclists and equestrians should use roads and designated tracks wherever possible. In addition to a distinction made between cultivated and uncultivated land, these features place Iceland's law close to Norway's codification. In contrast to Norway's restrictive regulation of motorized traffic in natural areas, which is subject to its own legislation, motorized vehicles are allowed on snow covered rural land and glaciers in Iceland (Robertson, 2011). Landowners cannot put up fences that will block a traditional route and should install a gate to provide access in cases where fences are necessary for agricultural reasons. In contrast to Norway, visitors need to have the landowner's permission before picking berries for anything other than immediate consumption. Visitors may set up tents and camp on uncultivated land without permission but must obtain permission before camping close to residences or farms.

### 3.3 Denmark

Public access to forests and beaches is primarily secured through the Danish Protection of Nature Act. According to this act, everyone may enter public land and all beaches for recreation. While these rights include collecting berries and mushrooms, one is not allowed to camp, light fires, take firewood or engage in other activities that may be viewed as damaging or disruptive (Robertson, 2011). Compared to Norway and Iceland, public access to private land is more limited. In private forests, access is restricted to the use of roads and gravel paths, and only short stays are allowed. Like in the other Nordic countries, the right to fish and other wildlife resources goes with ownership of the land, and the owner may sell or rent these rights to a third person.

Landscapes typically covered by the law were substantially reduced in size during the latter part of the 20th century (Højring, 2002), as were the number of freely accessible roads and paths (Caspersen and Andersen, 2017). As a result, there has been a fragmentation of what used to be a dense road grid, thereby reducing the legal access of the public to hike or cycle through the countryside and lawfully reach uncultivated areas and forests under the legislation. Denmark holds the rights of private ownership in high esteem. For example, to somehow balance out the restrictions of activities allowed on private land, the Danish Nature Agency has during recent years expanded the activities allowed on public lands by permitting one-night camping in more than 200 forests without asking for permission

### 3.4 Sweden

Sweden and Finland differ from the three other Nordic countries in that the public rights of access appear in their constitution. Since the Swedish Constitution does not elaborate on what the right of public access means, or from where it is derived, it is left as something understood without further explanation (Robertson, 2011). Whereas private property is highly respected and protected against government intervention, except in the most urgent circumstances, the public's right of access to the countryside is something that is assumed, so private property is therefore not protected against public access (Robertson, 2011). On the other hand, and in much the same way as the encoded *allemannsretten* of Norway, the Swedish penal code sets forth punishments for persons who violate certain spaces within privately owned land. For instance, one may not enter cultivated land without the owner's permission, or land that could be damaged by the entry. Nor is one allowed to enter the area surrounding a home that is reasonable to perceive as a zone of privacy. The Swedish environmental code gives local administrators the authority to order the landowner to install a gate or stile, so the public can have access to the land within the fenced area. Like the penal code, the environmental code also protects the concept of *allemannsrätten*, but without defining it (Robertson, 2011). It does not elaborate on what it means to treat the land with care, although there are detailed guidelines published on this subject by several Swedish organizations, as well as by The Swedish Ministry of the Environment, and which is broadly consistent with what is specified in the Norwegian code.

In principle, the right of public access can be seen as a "free space" for recreation, but which is regulated by various kinds of legislative codes that pose restrictions on the rights of land ownership with respect to how the landscape can be used or changed (e.g. by forestry operations) (Sandell, 2006a/ 2006b; Sandell and Fredman, 2010; Sandell and Svenning, 2011). Due to a case of commercially organized canoeing in a specific place, it was made juridically clear in 1996 that even organized and commercial activities could take advantage of the right of public access, as long as sufficient considerations for the landowners' interests are taken (Robertson, 2011). Only in a few exceptional cases (e.g. provisions for passing through fenced-off areas to areas of recreational value) is it possible to maintain whether the landscape should or should not be utilized in certain ways based on the right of public access. It is also the landscape itself that must "tell" the user what the opportunities and restrictions are by means of land use, time of year, weather (e.g. for lighting fires), visibility (e.g. how close one can get to a dwelling house), etc., which of course is a pedagogical challenge in a globalized situation (Öhman and Sandell, 2016). Discussions and debates on boundaries and grey zones around the "free space" of the Swedish right of public access because of this arena continue (e.g. Åhman, 2009). For instance, one recurrent theme is the case of disturbances and land degradation due to horse riding (Elgåker, 2011).

### 3.5 Finland

Finland has a system of rights of access very similar to that of Sweden. *Jokamiehenoikeus* is so to speak the functional equivalent of *Allemansrätten* in Sweden (Robertson, 2011). The right is well understood to include the same rules of individual and environmental responsibility as *Allemansrätten* relies upon in Sweden. Like in Sweden, the concept is mentioned in the Finnish Constitution. People may cross land they do not own on foot, skis, horseback or bicycle, but not by motorized vehicle. Like in Norway and Sweden, one may cross privately owned fields in winter when the fields are frozen. Visitors may also pick berries, twigs and branches, mushrooms, flowers and so on, except for protected species. Like in Sweden, non-owners may not enter the area immediately surrounding a home. Camping on private land is allowed, but in a manner that will not disturb the landowner. Reasonable camping could include overnight or a weekend, though a longer stay would require permission of the landowner. As in Sweden, the Finnish government actively supports and promotes the concept of *Jokamiehenoikeus* by publishing the rules, including those that are not codified (Robertson, 2011). In contrast to Sweden, legislation in Finland set tourism operators in the sense that property owners (private or public) must unconditionally the landowner's permission.

### 3.6 Summary

Partly based on existing social practices with long historical roots, the public rights of access appear in the constitutions of Sweden and Finland, and is defined, not by positive laws, but rather by what is not criminalized or otherwise restricted or prohibited in the national laws (Sandell and Fredman, 2010; Robertson, 2011). A second Nordic conception of the legal framework surrounding rights of access is that of Norway, Iceland and Denmark. The specific codification of rights of access in these countries means that the rights are positively identified and delineated in detail (Robertson, 2011). Comparing Norway, Iceland and Denmark, there are nevertheless considerable variations with respect to how detailed the law is in describing the regulations and responsibilities that follow with the access rights. Furthermore, even in Sweden a provision on what is allowed or forbidden in various situations is set by the national and regional environmental authorities (Sandell and Svenning, 2011).

The codification of public rights of access protects landowners' interests in Norway and Iceland to a greater degree than in Sweden and Finland (where the access rights are given in general terms in the constitution, even though the landowners' rights are codified in various ways by the authorities). Even so, Iceland and Norway differ sharply from several European countries, such as Italy, where the protection of the landowner is given priority and where free access is rarely permissible, with the exception of public parks, public shore lands and other public lands (Robertson, 2011).

In view of the above, the Nordic countries have various degrees of public access rights to privately owned land. It can be argued that in Iceland, and to an even greater

extent Norway, the access rights of the public is somewhat more limited than Sweden and Finland, due to the comprehensive and detailed codification. In the latter cases, the absence of a detailed codification of the right of public access could open for more drastic limitations of the right of public access in the future as a consequence of public debate and conflicts (Robertson, 2011). In other words, if the content of the right of public access is not defined in the legislation, it could be both more extensive but more vulnerable for limitations.





## 4. Instruments involved in sustainable tourism management

### 4.1 Sustainability

Sustainability has become an important policy framework tool for the tourism industry. To the extent the concept is understood as finding a suitable balance between economic, sociocultural and environmental aspects in long-term development perspectives, it represents a holistic perspective (see e.g. Hall, Gössling, and Scott, 2015; Saarinen, 2015). Various measures have been used as indicators of successful sustainable tourism development, including increased or maintained profitability, improved environmental outcomes and dispersed community benefits (Becken and Simmons, 2008; Zeppel, 2015). Even though widely employed in policies and management and research, the usefulness of the concept of sustainable tourism has been questioned, as there are numerous examples of tourism destinations failing to meet the threshold of long-term or even medium-term sustainability (Bramwell and Lane, 2011; Buckley, 2012). Decisions that primarily serve to maintain the economic viability of tourism enterprises on a short-term basis are often given priority.

Key criticisms of the sustainable tourism concept have focused on both spatial and temporal scales. What can be defined as sustainable from a local perspective can be unsustainable from a global perspective, and the question of for how long arrangements will remain sustainable rarely get an accurate response (Becken and Schellhorn, 2007; Hall, 2007). Moreover, the question of what is sustained for whom is often difficult to clarify (Mowforth and Munt, 2015; Hall et al., 2015; McCool, Butler, Buckley, Weaver, and Wheeler, 2013).

While Hall (2009) identifies sustainable tourism as qualitative development with the aim of generating social and environmental well-being, he underscores the difficulties in accommodating sustainable tourism knowledge to reality, attributing this to an overall difficulty in transferring academic knowledge to the industry. Since there is no single and generally accepted definition of sustainable tourism development, the concept is often reduced to rhetorical use (Gössling et al., 2009; Hughes, Weaver, and Pforr, 2015).

On the one hand, sustainability can constitute a diversification strategy for the tourism industry, with important results in terms of profitability for individual tourism enterprises (see e.g. Bagur-Femenías, Martí, and Rocafort, 2015). On the other hand, tourism companies often find it difficult to incorporate sustainability in their operations due to a lack of specific tools, standards and methods (Ruhanen, 2008; Lew, Ng, Ni, and Wu, 2016). In part, because principles of sustainable development are often unattainable in practice, the public sector tends to misuse the term, incorporating it

into tourism plans as a driving principle, while prioritizing short-term objectives and actions that promote growth (Ruhanen, 2008).

Increasing demand for finite resources, and the dichotomy between environmental protection and economic growth, makes implementation of the sustainable tourism ideal difficult in practice. Factors such as climate change, accelerating changes caused by globalization and technologies, demographic changes, shifting political regimes and government policies will all have an impact on future tourism demand, which makes it hard to predict to what extent measures taken today will represent sustainable solutions in the relatively near future.

## 4.2 Economic instruments

There is a variety of economic instruments for managing capacity constraints, either by reducing the overall number of visitors or by structuring visitation patterns to reduce crowding, depreciation, pollution and so on. Some types of economic instruments, such as taxation, are implemented for compensating for expenses caused by the negative effects of visitation. While revenue management (revenues from e.g. entrance fees, sales of optional services and souvenirs) in many instances is instrumental in securing the financial capacity of site or destination management, it may also be used for capacity allocation by, e.g., reducing prices in shoulder seasons to reduce crowding in the peak seasons (Leask, 2016).

A large part of the relevant literature related to economic instruments is based on research on nature-based tourism in countries such as the US, Australia and New Zealand. In contrast to the Nordic countries, there is a comprehensive use of entrance fees and other economic instruments, such as revenues from equipment rentals, payment for lodging facilities and other services, in addition to concessions and various kinds of licence permits.

Like in many other parts of the world, the management of US protected areas suffers from reduced grants from public authorities. Accordingly, park administrations have had to rely more on revenues from tourism, such as various types of user fees. To capitalize on these revenues in the most efficient ways, fees are differentiated, e.g., by letting international visitors pay more than domestic visitors. In their study on the attitudes of canoeists in North Carolina, Kline, Cardenas, Duffy and Swanson (2012) demonstrate the advantages of a combination of payment arrangements (fees for canoeing, taxes on equipment and licences to paddle). Support for the various solutions varied according to gender, income level and degree of commitment to the activity among the canoeist. Some US research has also paid attention to the financial value of recreation trails (often in terms of a willingness to pay and consumer surpluses) or the economic effects. Noting that the Virginia Creeper Rail Trail (US) functions to the benefit of locals, as well as attractions for tourists, Bowker, Bergstrom and Gill (2007) report that the economic effect from tourists visiting the trail was considerable, in addition to the total annual value reported by resident users.

#### **4.2.1      *Taxation***

Various forms of tourist taxations are widely used in different countries, or within regions or cities. While taxes imply that foreign tourists contribute to the fiscal burdens of the host country (or region), and represent a price substitute for the public goods and services consumed by tourists, taxes can also represent environmental pricing in the sense that the taxes are earmarked for environmental protection (Gago, Labandeira, Picos, and Rodríguez, 2009). do Valle, Pintassilgo, Matias and André (2012) maintain that earmarking the revenues of any tax to finance environmental policies rarely represents a viable option because it easily limits policy programmes to specific tax resources, which may result in inadequate funding of environmental protection.

While taxation of tourism is often directly tied to accommodations, tourist taxation can also occur indirectly via taxes, such as VAT. In many countries, products that are in high demand among tourists, such as accommodations, are subject to low VAT rates, and function accordingly as a subsidization of tourism. There are relatively few examples of the use of VAT to cover some of the conventional costs of tourists' uses of public goods and services (Leask, 2016). Since it is difficult to establish an arrangement that would exempt residents from paying tourism taxes, external cost efficiency and equity considerations make the discriminatory treatment of tourists a controversial issue.

#### **4.2.2      *Revenue management***

Since sustainability raise the questions of temporal and spatial scales, it goes without saying that attractions at a destination, such as a museum or spectacular nature landscapes, cannot be viewed in isolation, as neither can a destination from the community it is part of. According to Leask et al. (2013), visitor attractions represent a domain that has been scantily researched, in spite of the fact they frequently form the basis for the development of tourism infrastructure and services at a destination. In some cases, economic instruments, such as various types of taxations or concessions, are restricted to the so-called flagship attractions of a destination. These kinds of attractions are often used to promote a destination and generate income to support the management of less popular attractions and the infrastructure of a destination (see e.g. Martin-Lopez, Montes, and Benayas, 2007).

Common features of revenue management of visitor attractions can be online pre-booking, a diversity of revenues connected to various products and optional services at the site, and controlling demand via variable pricing related to time perspectives (peak periods of days and seasons) and to categories of visitors (groups, age, etc.) (Leask et al., 2013). Revenue management can also entail the use of market segmentation for flexible and dynamic pricing, promotions and capacity allocation (Leask et al., 2013). A critical component of a successful revenue management strategy should address timing, capacity of the market and seasonality (Hoseason, 2006). In their comprehensive analysis of revenue management of Scottish tourism attractions, Leask et al. (2013) found that seasonal and time differentiated pricing was not widely

practiced, but that common price discrimination was based on the type of visitor, such as educational groups, senior citizens and families.

In the research literature, these factors are explored for the most part with respect to revenue management, such as price differentiation to attract micro-markets with a high willingness to pay or increasing visitation in off-season periods (Leask et al. 2013), in addition to what extent revenue management can contribute in limiting the general scope of visitation or to structuring the behaviour of visitors.

#### **4.2.3 Allocation mechanisms and public goods**

When the scale of visitation is perceived to exceed a site's capacity, the most common solution is to implement management policies directed at the opportunities to visit a site or a destination. This can be achieved by using regulatory mechanisms such as entrance fees or selection criteria based on factors such as pre-booking, number of visitors allowed at one time, limits on group size, etc. (Schwartz et al., 2012; Leask et al., 2013).

While tourism has long relied on instruments such as price discrimination within a purely private sector, public or semi-public managed attractions have recently been encouraged to adopt similar mechanisms. Based on a study of the Grand Canyon National Park, where most of its backcountry visitors are admitted via a fee-based reservation system, Schwartz et al. (2012) discuss the applicability of revenue management principles in the non-commercial setting US park administrations represent. Arguing that a slight modification of the park's admission fee structure would increase revenues and keep visitor capacity at the same level, the authors concluded that it would also probably result in the exclusion of certain user groups. They hence recommend taking carefully into consideration how allocation mechanisms and selection criteria might fuel conflicts of interest between various stakeholders.

Debates on the optimal mechanisms and selection criteria have been going on among scholars and practitioners for some decades (e.g. Jacques and Ostergren, 2006; Lawson and Manning, 2003). With multiple goals, numerous constraints and a diversity of stakeholders, controversies related to allocation mechanisms and selection criteria can easily occur. Management of attractions in protected areas entails balancing the dual goals of protecting the site from visitor degradation and allowing access for visitors to enjoy the site. In many countries, destinations face budget and public funding cuts, while the costs of managing the site and its attractions are growing due to increased visitation. As a result, there are many examples of management policies paying more attention to revenue streams and cost elements at the expense of environmental and social concerns.

An increasing number of protected areas and parks regulate the scale and intensity of visitation using economic instruments such as those referred to above. The multiple purposes of management often hamper the efficacy and legitimacy of these types of measures. While securing a sufficient budget is an avoidable priority when management funds are based on fees and revenues, the purpose of management is also to sustain a resource for the long term, to manage visitor use to protect and minimize environmental degradation and to provide high-quality visitor

experiences. This complexity can rarely be understood without considering how the public goods that attractions and destinations rely on often relate to a diversity of stakeholders whose interests incorporate economic, political, cultural, social and environmental considerations, which are not always consistent with the allocation mechanisms discussed above. Adopting revenue management practices developed and implemented successfully by the private sector is consequently not a straightforward venue for the management of attractions based on public goods and managed by public agencies.

#### **4.2.4 Entrance fees**

Entrance or user fees can be taken into use as an instrument for revenue management, and for structuring the scope of visitation to a site. Most of the relevant literature discussing fees explores the management of protected areas in various parts of the world (Reynisdottir et al., 2008). In view of the growth in numbers of protected areas globally, accompanied by shrinking funding from governments, a common underlying theme is the need for finding alternative funding sources for securing sustainable management (Mitchell, Wooliscroft, and Higham, 2013; Whitelaw, King, and Tolkach, 2014). The latter can be related to austerity policies in the wake of the finance crisis and neo-liberal policies in general, as well as increased or changing visitations and use patterns.

The relationship between tourism and protected areas is complex because of the distinct economic focus of tourism and the contrasting conservation focus of protected areas (see e.g. Wilson, Nielsen, and Buultjens, 2009). In many countries, it is expected that protected areas should be self-funded. Management agencies are consequently forced to look in new directions for financial sources, and to adopt innovative approaches combining use and conservation aims (Mitchell et al., 2013). Some scholars have emphasized the noticeable increase in the development of facilities and services at nature attraction sites. This can be both the result of- and caused by the commercialization of visitation (see e.g. Wang, Park, and Fesenmaier, 2012). Since excessive visitation can damage natural assets, which in turn reduces the intrinsic value of an area and its attractiveness for subsequent visitation (Wearing and Neil, 2009), user fees are seen as an instrument for both reducing the volume of visitation and structuring the behaviour of visitors. In other words, user fees are considered as an effective visitor management tool in coping with social (e.g. crowding and poor quality of facilities) and environmental impacts (e.g. corrosion of vegetation and contamination). Entrance or user fees in a Nature-Based Tourism (NBT) context are utilized as tool to control the overall visitor number, diverting recreational activity to a specific area and encouraging visitors to reduce individual per capita impacts during activities (Buckley, 2003).

### Effects of user fees

User fee studies have mainly explored the question of visitors' willingness to pay (WTP), identifying environmental concerns, past payment history and making use of some socio-demographic characteristics, such as income, nationality and education as the most common predictors. The results of these studies have nevertheless been mixed, and there is some uncertainty about the effect of user fees (Reynisdottir et al., 2008). While some research shows that the introduction of fees may result in a decreasing number of visitors (see e.g. Schwartz and Lin, 2006), research results also indicate that user fees do not cause a dramatic reduction in demand (Reynisdottir et al., 2008). Under some circumstances, a small fee can have a substantial influence on visitors' behaviour, as under other circumstances a large fee will hardly have any influence on their behaviour (Chung, Kyle, Petrick, and Absher, 2010).

The extent to which people are willing to pay entrance fees depends on several factors. For instance, while low-income groups are more sensitive to user fees, the effects are limited because these groups are underrepresented among the visitors (Burns and Graefe, 2006; Ostergren, Solop, and Hagen, 2005). As pointed out by Buckley (2003), effects of user fees can be difficult to predict since several factors, such as visitor characteristics, the way in which the fees are paid, the degree of crowding and the availability of alternative sites, can influence the effects of this kind of management instrument. Fix and Vaske (2007) found that beliefs about fees significantly predict the evaluation of fees. The more visitors understand the reasons behind a fee programme, the more likely they are to accept the fees.

A general conclusion that seems to be shared by many scholars is that people who demand specialized nature-based tourism or recreation products are more willing to pay entrances or user fees than generalists, e.g., people visiting a beach or hiking on a forest path (Buckley, 2003). This especially applies to tourists who have travelled far and whose motives are to experience "intact" nature environments. Moreover, there seems to be a general tendency that WTP increases with travel distance, and in cases where there are few or any competing attractions (Reynisdottir et al., 2008). A place with special attractions with a high scarcity value will result in higher levels of WTP than ordinary places.

### Questions of legitimacy and fairness

In addition to questions of a willingness to pay, there are issues related to legitimacy and fairness. Charges for using public leisure services can place constraints on some segments of existing and prospective users. Therefore, while user fee policies in national parks and other nature attraction areas can be justified from an economic perspective, as an alternative way to supplement insufficient government budgets and to improve services, it has been criticized as a socially unjust measure (Nyaupane, Graefe, and Burns, 2009).

Referring to Lindberg (1998), Reynisdottir et al. (2008) introduce a distinction between two opposing perspectives, the *public good view* and the *user pays view*, to highlight the various questions related to entrance and user fees in a NBT context. The *user pays view* primarily addresses issues of justice, fairness and equity, as it maintains

that individuals should be responsible for paying an appropriate price for using the resources and services provided at the sites they visit, thereby implying that only visitors who incur costs should pay the price without any non-visitor subsidies. This argument is also emphasized in relation to foreign visitors who do not contribute through national tax revenues. In the perspective of the *public good view*, charging national visitors fees would imply a double taxation if management is also funded through the national taxation system. In contrast, the *user pays view* implies the argument that tax revenues will often be insufficient to achieve recreation and conservation management objectives.

In situations where governments cut funding, facilitated nature areas increasingly become in demand for outdoor recreationists, and particular nature sites attract many visitors, so it can be maintained that user fees are a necessary instrument to safeguard management and preservation goals. However, an objection raised against user fees is that they can be expensive and impractical to administer, especially in cases where areas have no or many gates or entrance points. A second objection concerns issues related to how commercialization may negatively influence visitors' experiences. The *user pays view* entails the argument that user fees can provide opportunities to reduce the number of visitors, which in turn can reduce congestion and overcrowding (Reynisdottir et al., 2008; Schwartz et al., 2012).

#### **When, where and how?**

While these kinds of instruments are controversial, a restricted use of fees can be combined with other economic instruments (Reynisdottir et al., 2008). Whitelaw et al. (2014) make a distinction between areas with high use and low environmental values, and areas with high environmental values and low use (restrictions on the volume of visitation and types of activities). Referring to the former, the authors propose payment for car parking and other low-impact services, while the latter requires instruments that are suitable for achieving more limited and structured visitation patterns. Because they generally refer to the management of nature attractions depending on funding beyond governmental tax revenues, the authors emphasize arrangements that would generate revenue streams, such as licencing appropriately trained and skilled organizations to conduct guided tours and activities that are compatible with high-value environmental considerations.

#### **4.2.5 Concessions**

Concessions are becoming increasingly relevant in nature areas under governmental protection, as to a growing extent these depend on revenues from tourist activities to provide the necessary facilitation for visitors and raise sufficient funds for management tasks related to protection and conservation. Based on the view that governments, due to funding issues and lack of intensives and competencies when it comes to profit-oriented management practices, private businesses are increasingly given concessions to operate, with the risk that profit-oriented activities expand at the expense of conservation and preservation goals (Wyman et al., 2011).

In countries such as New Zealand, concessions and licences have become one of the primary means of engaging the private sector in the management of destination and visitors (Dinica, 2017): A business will have a concession agreement (such as a lease, licence, permit or easement) to operate their business within- or in relation to a tourist destination, or a special attraction within a destination. The contracts stipulate the key terms and conditions, such as duration, type of operation, environmental conditions and fees that the business must operate under. Tourism concessions may be given to firms operating ski areas, hotels, retail activities (such as fishing tackle or skiing equipment) and guiding activities (walking, hunting, fishing, rafting, mountaineering and rock climbing) and retail activities.

Like in much of the literature on nature-based tourism and visitation management, concessions are largely researched and discussed in relation to protected areas. It is hence emphasized that concessionaires may assist park agencies in achieving conservation goals, primarily through the revenues from fees and rentals, but also by improving the quality of visitor experiences. Concessions also bear the potential of providing links between local communities, rural development and conservation, since the economic outcomes may contribute to justifying investments in conservation (Wyman et al., 2011).

Concession arrangements are mostly discussed in relation to how they contribute to make visits more attractive, and how they increase the funds for managing protected areas (Wyman et al., 2011; Dinica, 2017). Concessions can nonetheless also involve increased public spending in terms of additional staff costs, operational services and damages caused by the activities concessionaires organize and sell (Dinica, 2017). In general, there are management costs associated with charging visitors and businesses for access and use of land areas, e.g., in terms of providing infrastructure, collecting fees and paying for damage caused by visitors and tourism operators. Funds from tourism will not necessarily exceed management costs (Wyman et al., 2011).

If concessions are used as an instrument to obtain the sustainable management of a tourist attraction, concession arrangements must be sufficiently attractive for relevant businesses. This may result in a stronger commercializing of recreation and tourism areas and does not necessarily in itself provide the adequate means of organizing sustainable visitations. Because it may provide jobs and income opportunities in remote areas, authorities will often hesitate to terminate concessions (Dinica, 2017).

Since concessions mostly represent a commercial function, operating largely on public conservation lands, or on private land where some public access rights apply, Dinica (2017) emphasizes that transparency, fair decision making and continuous improvement are vital principles that must be applied to this area of work. Information around the number of concessions, applications being processed, who concessionaires are, standard contract terms and consideration processes, as well as the ability for the public to be involved in concession planning, are all part of making the concession function transparent.

Referring to an empirical study of tourism development in New Zealand, where concession has been widely employed during recent years, Dinica (2017) argues that



monitoring and enforcement represent a weak point in this system, and that in particular environmental concerns in practice tend to be disregarded, since environmental initiatives and biodiversity gains are more or less left to voluntary measures by concessionaires. According to Dinica (2017), this must be seen in part as a result of recent changes to a demand-oriented policy as an adaption to the aim of attracting more international visitors, but within a supply-oriented legal-institutional framework that was originally accommodated to a lower-scale visitation pattern mainly consisting of individual recreationists, with the effect of a decrease in the value of “hot spots” because of overcrowding, pollution and biodiversity.

### 4.3 From hard to soft visitor management approaches

Mason (2005) makes a distinction between hard and soft visitor management approaches. Hard management approaches involve the regulation of visitors’ behaviour using formal rules and restrictions on physical access in terms of fences, gates and payment schemes. Soft visitor management approaches promote education, learning and interpretation aimed at modifying the visitors’ behaviour.

Mason (2005) further makes a distinction between three primary ways of managing visitation: controlling the number of visitors, adapting the resource to handle the number of visitors, and changing the tourist’s behaviour (see also Saarinen, 2016). Setting a limit on the number of people allowed to enter or introducing restrictions on how an area can be use-based on assessments of the carrying capacity, are both common hard management instruments used for controlling the number of visitors (Mason, 2005; Marion and Reid, 2007). Site management by hardening trails, allowing re-growth in areas, or building fences are examples of techniques to adapt the resource to be able to handle the number of visitors using national parks or protected areas (Mason, 2005; Marion and Reid, 2007; Saarinen, 2016). Since measures like these may alter the landscape and reduce the visitors’ satisfaction, “soft” techniques represent alternatives. Soft techniques can include education programmes focusing on the impact of the activities of visitors, often in combination with guiding, boards with information about the resources and the negative impacts certain behaviours can have, rules of conduct, etc. (Mason, 2005; Marion and Reid, 2007).

#### 4.3.1 Ecotourism and eco-certification

Ecotourism is often associated with a broad set of principles, namely environmental conservation and education, cultural preservation and experience, and economic benefits to local communities (Donohoe and Needham, 2006; Fennell, 2008). The promotion of local livelihoods through ecotourism has been seen as an important policy instrument for biodiversity conservation. The concept lacks precise definition and meaning (Gössling and Hultman, 2006), and mismatches in visions and practices have frequently been observed (Das and Chatterjee, 2015). While ecotourism used to be perceived as an alternative to mass tourism, today several scholars argue that the

concept and its labels frequently are used as a “green washing” marketing tactic (Haaland and Aas, 2010), and that what is labelled as ecotourism often has negative environmental and social effects (Courvisanos and Jain, 2006; Donohoe and Needham, 2006).

In their review of scholarly literature on ecotourism, Das and Chatterjee (2015) list a wide range of cases throughout the world where environmental conservation has become an asset for tourism-based development of local communities. However, the authors conclude that with an increased popularity of ecotourism, there is a noticeable tendency of prioritizing job opportunities and revenues at the expense of conservation goals. The emergence of eco-certification schemes can partially be seen as a response to the absence of effective legal, economic or technological regulations (Gössling and Buckley, 2016). Within the dominant neo-liberal logic, eco-certification has also been welcomed as a promising market-based solution to global environmental problems, as a self-regulating alternative to state regulation (Buckley, 2012).

Eco-certification has been available to the tourism industry for over 30 years and can at least in theory assist tourism suppliers in the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices. Because the demand for sustainable products has been growing, eco-certification was developed as a mechanism through which providers could achieve certain performance standards, as well as gain a competitive edge (Jamal, Borges, and Stronza, 2006). More than 100 eco-certification schemes are available globally (Esparon, Gyuris, and Stoeckl, 2014). Still, adoption rates are low and it is questionable as to whether eco-certification has contributed to a more sustainable tourism development (Gössling and Buckley, 2016). Whereas extensive research results indicate that tourists are positive about eco-certifications, the required investment to qualify for these labels, and uncertainty about returns and competitive advantages, imply that it is mostly larger firms that are certified. Having qualified for eco-certification, a business can display the label that follows with certification to signal to customers that their operations minimize negative environmental impacts, and that environmental sustainability is a part of the commodity. As pointed out by Haaland and Aas (2010), eco-certification and eco-labelling are accordingly sequential and non-identical concepts.

#### **4.3.2 Interpretation and environmental learning**

During the 1980s and 1990s, visitor management strategies mostly aimed to minimize negative impacts on the environment (Marion and Reid, 2007; Mason, 2005), relying on the resource-based notion of carrying capacity (Eagles, 2014). Today, management strategies are developed with a clearer aim of the mitigating effects of tourists without compromising the satisfaction of visitors (Mason, 2005; Eagles, 2014). This change can be illustrated by how visitor management of the Kalbarri National Park in Australia represents a combination of hard and soft techniques (Moore and Walker, 2008). In this case, managers used strategically planned path constructions that hardened the surface to concentrate the traffic of visitors. In addition, education programmes and the provision of information increased visitors’ understanding and awareness.

While visitor management in the Kalbarri National Park has been deemed more successful compared to a similar national park using hard techniques only (Moore and Walker, 2008), the effect of soft techniques such as education, interpretation and information depend on several factors. For example, information and knowledge can be communicated by both moralizing prohibition and explaining the reasons for the recommended behaviour (Marion and Reid, 2007).

Environmental interpretation is used as a management technique in national parks and other natural areas to communicate information, to spark interest and to provoke reflections (see e.g. Ham 2013), but even to persuade visitors to engage in behaviours that contribute to protecting the resource (e.g. Ham and Weiler, 2003; Marion and Reid, 2007; Brown, Ham, and Hughes, 2010). However, few studies have investigated to what extent the provision of interpretative information actually changes the behaviour of visitors, whether it increases compliance with regulations and whether instructions and rules accompanied by explanations are more effective in modifying visitors' behaviour (Acevedo-Gutiérrez, Acevedo, Belonovich, and Boren, 2011; Huneke and Baker, 2009). Furthermore, most studies use surveys of self-reported visitor's behaviour or intentions, and do not study the actual behavioural change (Huneke and Baker, 2009; Jacobs and Harms, 2014). With respect to modification of visitor behaviour in wildlife tourism, several scholars have accordingly emphasized the need for more research on the effectiveness of interpretation and other soft management techniques (Ballantyne and Hughes, 2006; Higginbottom and Tribe, 2004).

The effects of management strategies relying on information, interpretation and knowledge transmission will in part depend on the features of a destination, and on what types of visitors a destination attracts. In a study conducted in Antarctica, a destination difficult to monitor, the main visitor management strategies were to transfer responsibility to visitors by informing about the serious consequences of harmful behaviour (Mason, 2005). While this kind of interpretive activity had positive impacts on the visitors' behaviour in Antarctica, the results turned out to be mixed in the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Coghlan (2012) holds that compared to Antarctica tourists, visitors to the Great Barrier Reef in average have relatively little pre-knowledge about the nature resources and are less concerned about the effects of their visits on the environmental conditions of nature resources.

#### **4.3.3**     *Codes of conduct*

In cases of a fundamental lack of regulations, codes of conduct might have the potential of being an important instrument. Research is scant on to what extent codes of conduct raise awareness and transmit knowledge among visitors, and hence contribute to reducing conflicts between stakeholders and minimizing negative visitor impacts on the social and ecological environments (Mason, 2005; Cole, 2007). Codes of conducts are often presented by assessing right from wrong according to rules and duties, but without explaining the rationale behind this, such as concerns for ecological sustainability (Cole, 2007). The codes also tend to be inadequately adapted to local conditions and are often presented in an authoritarian and prohibitive language instead

of encouraging a specific mode of behaving (Cole, 2007; Wheeler, 2003). Cole (2007) raises the question of whether codes of conduct are an adequate instrument, considering how tourists often experience themselves as being in an action space for self-realization, which makes them more reluctant to follow rules of conduct compared to their everyday life settings.

#### 4.3.4 Guiding

Tour guides have been a part of tourism since its early days (Black and Ham, 2005; Rokenes, Schumann, and Rose, 2015). Despite this, guiding has received relatively little attention in tourism research (Zillinger, Jonasson, and Adolfsson, 2012). This also applies to the relationships between guides and other tourism stakeholders (Valkonen, Huilaja, and Koikkalainen, 2013; Cetin and Sukru Yarkan, 2017). As pointed out by Rokenes et al. (2015) in their review of existing literature on the subject, tourist guides can incorporate many dimensions, such as information providers, sources of knowledge, mentors, pathfinders, leaders, mediators, culture brokers or interpreters, entertainers, planners, storytellers, choreographers, service providers, activity experts and environmental conservators. This multitude of roles and functions is reflected in a recent shift in research from focusing on the instrumental role of guides (e.g. managing tour logistics) to paying more attention to the manifold roles guides can have (Weiler and Walker, 2014). In addition, some researchers have explored the various accountabilities guides may have to a wide range of stakeholders (Valkonen, et al., 2013; Cetin and Sukru Yarkan, 2017).

Addressing a wide range of issues related to a sense of place and safety, as well as an interpretation of nature environments, cultural values, and social structures of the host societies, guiding bears the potential of being an important instrument in tourism management (cf. Zillinger, Jonasson, and Adolfsson, 2012). Guides may control visitors' physical access to a place, which influences the visitors' behaviour in interaction with the environment and the host community (Weiler and Yu, 2007). Through their use of various techniques for counselling and interpretation, guides can function as brokers of access, encounters and understanding (Weiler and Walker, 2014; Davidson and Black, 2007; LeClerc and Martin, 2004), and promote pro-conservation attitudes and behaviours (Ballantyne, Packer, and Hughes, 2009; Weiler and Kim, 2011). Tour guides can hence contribute to sustainable tourism outcomes by influencing on-site visitor behaviour, by helping visitors to identify with the natural and cultural environments (via nature and heritage interpretation) and by conveying, monitoring and role-modelling appropriate visitor behaviour (Ballantyne et al., 2009; Weiler and Kim, 2011).

According to Weiler and Walker (2014), several research results show that it varies as to what extent the above-mentioned potential of tour guides is fully realized in practice: Attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviours of guides cannot be taken as a given, as this depends on factors like an individual's skills and competencies, as well as collaboration with other stakeholders, such as those responsible for the management of a site or nature area. In commercialized destinations, for instance, a

gap is often observed between the guides' responsibilities and their actual portrayed behaviour (Overend, 2012).

#### **4.4 Policies and administrative instruments**

Like it is discussed in the section above, the relationship between tourists' stated desires and their actual behaviour is a complex one. A better understanding of tourists' behaviour can help to target tourism marketing more effectively and help to deliver high-quality tourism products (Komppula, 2006), in addition to contributing to planning and policies when it comes to sustainable tourism development (Tyrväinen et al., 2014; Eagles, 2014).

##### **4.4.1 Sustainability, planning and government policies**

While governments play a key role in sustainable tourism development (STD) through legislation and policymaking, the planning processes more than often take place with economic growth as the overshadowing guideline (Simpson, 2008; Farmaki, 2015; Ruhanen, 2013). In addition, clearly defined national policies or procedures to facilitate sustainable development are often absent (Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Aall, 2014; Aall et al., 2015).

STD is difficult to translate into practical development practices (Buckley, 2012; Hall, Gössling, and Scott, 2015; Mowforth and Munt, 2016; Saarinen, 2006). Sustainability is operationalized and measured in several ways with many options to choose from. Economic growth at the expense of the social and environmental dimensions is therefore often the end-result (Hall et al., 2015; Zeppel, 2015; Andersen et al., 2016).

Assessments of sustainability in tourism development processes often involve a wide range of dimensions, such as effects on local communities, economic benefits of tourism, tourism seasonality, energy management, user intensity of the area, water availability and water quality, waste management (Andersen et al., 2016). Indicators for sustainable tourism are usually grouped into the dimensions of the economic, social, cultural and environmental. The most common key economic indicators are economic growth, employment, new investment opportunities, leakages and multiplier effects. Environmental sustainability indicators are the loss of biodiversity, erosion, pollution, protection of nature, waste management and degradation of ecosystems. Important socio-cultural indicators include community participation/involvement, local empowerment, protection of local heritage (Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Simpson, 2008; Tosun, 2006). The measures and lists of indicators vary depending on factors pertaining to a specific destination, on tourism policy design and to what extent various types of stakeholders and local communities are included in planning processes (see e.g. Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005).

Since many tourism planning approaches primarily aim to promote tourism growth per se, Hall (2008) maintains that there is a need to challenge economic discourses that

take tourism as a means to development for granted, whereas Halkier (2014) warns against the short-term thinking that the dominance of economic growth perspective tends to cause among both public and private stakeholders (Halkier, 2014). In other words, an alternative sustainable tourism planning process should foster a holistic and progressive approach by integrating economic, sociocultural and environmental considerations and goals in tourism development. Recently, qualitative and subjective aspects have been included, such as quality of life and the well-being of locals and tourists Liburd, Benckendorff, and Carlsen, 2012; Simpson, 2008; Tosun, 2006).

Considering the governance challenges mentioned above, and in part based on concepts employed in research on rural development in general, some of the research literature calls for a better integration of tourism development processes, both horizontally and vertically (Ruhanen, 2013; Cawley, Marsat, and Gillmor, 2007). Vertical integration refers to integration on multiple levels with the goal of facilitating for sustainable economic growth in local communities and regions (Aall et al., 2015). Horizontal integration refers to networking and collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders to locally embed policy processes (Cawley et al., 2007). However, it can also refer to integration between policy sectors, not only on the local government level, but even on the national level (Aall et al., 2015).

#### **4.4.2 Collaborative and participatory approaches**

While the tendencies of giving privilege to the economic dimension of sustainability has long been consistent, today's tourism planning increasingly recognizes the importance of including socio-cultural, political, and environmental implications of tourism development (Mair and Reid, 2007; Okazaki, 2008). The public sector's "top-down" approach is accordingly replaced by a more "bottom-up", decentralized and inclusive form of governance, in which local communities and businesses are encouraged to take more responsibility for management decisions (Hall, 2008). With respect to licencing and other ways of involving stakeholders for management and funding purposes, collaboration between relevant stakeholder groups has been emphasized as important (Jamal and Stronza, 2009; Weiler, 2009).

Some see the emergence of collaborative policymaking as closely linked to the dominance of new public management and neo-liberalism, and the subsequent change of the role of the governments and states from the "provider" to that of an "enabler" (Vernon, Essex, Pinder, and Curry, 2005). The purpose of so-called "para-statal" models of private-public partnerships is to improve the funding of tourist destination management, and to make better use of revenues from private tour operators (Whitelaw et al., 2014). This arrangement often implies a greater autonomy to local agencies responsible for managing destinations, such as protected areas.

Community-based tourism planning is held by some to be a crucial step away from traditional "top-down" approaches (Mair and Reid, 2007; McCool, 2009), at least to the extent that stakeholders are involved throughout the entire planning process (Byrd, 2007). Collaborative policymaking and participatory planning processes will often involve conflicting perspectives and interests, which can make the planning process

costly and time consuming (Tosun, 2006; Okazaki, 2008). Including stakeholders is therefore often perceived from governmental perspectives as an obstacle to efficient planning. Conflict resolution, mediation and the building of a consensus about shared platforms should nevertheless be seen as an integral component of sustainable tourism development and planning (Hall, 2008; McCool, 2009).

In view of these complexities, some scholars have maintained that a systemic approach to tourism destinations is required. In other words, tourism should be considered in the context of other systems that interact with tourism (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). In this perspective, destinations are defined as open and flexible systems, characterized by a high degree of interaction between its constituent elements, such as firms providing tourist services, residents of destinations, local authorities, and tourists. A destination can thus be conceptualized as a network comprised of a diversity of interconnected public and private stakeholders, including those who are not directly involved in managing visitation or hosting tourists (Baggio and Sainaghi, 2011). This inherently complex, inter-related nature of destinations implies that destinations should be understood as composite entities, as systems made up of various components that may work with and/or against one another.

With so many different stakeholders involved in the tourism phenomenon of today, finding common ground among the various agendas represents a challenge. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) bring various interests and perspectives stakeholders together in collaboration processes (Fyall, Garrod, and Wang, 2012). The specific roles of DMOs are coordination, leadership and the development of facilities and provision of services, and even to function as a link between the destinations and external organizations (such as government agencies, tour wholesalers and travel agents). In this sense, DMO sometimes takes on the role as a management organization, as much as a marketing organization. While some stakeholders (such as hotels and local or regional government agencies) are vital to the success of DMOs because of their financial and partnership resources, there is a multitude of other relevant stakeholders whose views must also be considered. It is therefore difficult to determine what constitutes success for an organization that must address multiple stakeholders' concerns. While the role of DMOs in destination marketing has received much attention from researchers, the role of DMOs with respect to the policy and strategy dimensions of destination management has been paid less attention to.

Research literature on collaboration within a destination is rather extensive (e.g. Bornhorst, Ritchie, and Sheehan, 2010; Morgan, Hastings, and Pritchard, 2012). Collaboration between destinations has been less researched. This kind of collaboration can take place between regions as entities, as well as between stakeholders or organizations of the respective destinations (Fyall et al., 2012).

#### **4.4.3 Co-creation**

Some research results show that visitors in general are more aware than before of the sustainability problems related to tourism. Tourists with strong pro-environmental values are more inclined to be concerned with how choices and behaviours effect

sustainability goals at the sites they visit (Lindenberg and Steg, 2007; Tyrväinen et al., 2014). Yet, one cannot take for granted that this is reflected in actual behaviour. Despite their concerns, visitors rarely possess adequate knowledge as to which aspects of their behaviour will increase or decrease sustainability. Moreover, visitors are only liable to apply environmentally friendly behaviour to the extent they find it convenient, and they do often settle with more symbolic choices such as the reuse of towels and choosing ecological food products (Marion and Reid, 2007; Weaver, 2012).

A willingness to commit to sustainable behaviour and an understanding of how their behaviour contributes to sustainable tourism may vary between individuals, for instance, due to political-ideological positions and perspectives, but even between nations. As pointed out in Tyrväinen et al. (2014), tourists arriving in Finland from Eastern Europe were less willing to engage in sustainability practices, such as recycling and renewable energy consumption, compared to Atlantic Europeans visitors. And people are also less likely to engage in sustainability practices if they believe that their contribution makes no difference (Lindenberg and Steg, 2007).

The expectations visitors have for nature, landscapes and activities are not a pure reflection of pre-existing values and preferences. The ways in which the tourists value different aspects of the surroundings are also influenced by experiences made during the visit. To the extent that information, interpretation and education do not have a sufficient influence on peoples' actual behaviour, *co-creation* initiatives are proposed as a more efficient way of transferring responsibility to visitors (Campos, Mendes, Valle, and Scott, 2015; Prebensen, Vittersø, and Dahl, 2013). Co-creation implies that the tourists participate in the design, production and consumption of an experience, even collaborating in the creation of new products and services (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009). This is believed to result in a stronger identification with management goals. Summing up a vast array of literature on the subject, Campos et al. (2015) recommend developing tourism products that allow visitors to *do* things, rather than simply looking at them. In this manner, visitors will be directly involved in creating and choreographing their activities from one moment to the next. Co-creative interaction has recently been studied in many specific tourism contexts, such as vacation packages (Räikkönen and Honkanen, 2013). Nature-based tourism has been described as engaging with a space in which the staging of exploration, play and knowledge may activate tourists' involvement with on-site experiences (Mathisen, 2013).

Managers and tourism business operators are urged within these frames to focus their attention on the analysis of the process, rather than on the outcome of co-creation (Grissemann and Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). Similarly, at the destination level, co-creation is held to be a condition for competitiveness in the face of profound changes in tourist behaviour and expectations, while destination management organizations and tourism industry organizations are encouraged to develop new thinking and practices.



## 5. The applicability and consequences of implementation of policy instruments in the Nordic countries

The main objective of this report is to discuss some aspects of recent changes in tourism development in the Nordic countries. In broad terms these changes include a rather sudden increase in the number of visitors, as well as a changing composition of visitors. A further aim is to explore the implication these changes have for the achievement of a sustainable development of tourism. Based on the preceding review of international research literature, this chapter contains a discussion of how various types of policy instruments could be implemented to help achieve a sustainable development of tourism in the Nordic countries.

Opportunities and challenges brought about by the recent rapid increase in visits to certain attractions and destination are more or less common to all five Nordic countries. Problems related to congestion caused by a sudden increase in the scales of visits are nevertheless far from being equally distributed among the five countries, nor within each country. Iceland, and to some extent Norway, have experienced a dramatic rise in popularity among international tourists. This mostly affects a few iconic attractions and destinations more than entire countries or whole regions. Moreover, it is largely driven by forces other than planning and marketing strategies and is therefore also something one has not been able to prepare for. An enlarged influx of tourists in the other Nordic countries is less dramatic and less icon-centred, and to a greater degree the result of a planned and prepared process.

These issues should also be seen in the context of how nature areas are increasingly defined as an economic resource and less as something to be protected. This represents both a cause of- and response to increased visitation and changes in the features of visitors. The adequacy of policy instruments should therefore also be discussed in relation to more general development trends. In a broader perspective, the ways in which the tourism industry has become a significant user, stakeholder and element of change with respect to natural resources and infrastructures of local communities accordingly also belongs in this picture.

Much of the international research publications referred to in this report concerns cases that differ from outdoor recreation traditions, as well as from legislation and policies when it comes to the management of nature areas and tourism in the Nordic

countries. Firstly, the public rights of access, including the outdoor recreation practices closely associated with these rights, and which also have influenced how tourism has developed, create some prerequisites for how new tourist trends can best be met. Secondly, compared to many of the countries the international research literature builds its empirical cases and examples on, the management of nature and protected areas, has until recently been marked by a relatively strong eco-centric approach. The ways in which the Nordic countries differ in these respects imply that implementing economic policy instruments is likely to encounter a rather complex set of challenges.

Entrance fees to nature areas will easily be perceived to conflict with the principle of public rights of access, not only in legal terms, but also politically and ideologically. As explained in Chapter 3, public rights of access are rights that apply to individuals and which were originally designed with historically and culturally grounded outdoor recreation practices in mind. These practices did not entail large-scale and commercially organized visitation. Legislation and established administrative practices are because of this being poorly adjusted to recreationists and tourists who engage with nature landscape in ways that differ from what the public rights of access originally assumed. In other words, the public rights of access are not designed for visits of large groups traveling in organized and even commercialized ways. In Sweden and Finland, challenges arising from this paradox can be dealt with by penal and environmental codes, and by information and recommendations provided by environmental authorities and the tourist industry. In Norway, Iceland and Denmark, where the public rights of access is integrated in separate outdoor recreation or environmental acts, these legislations can be used to some degree as an instrument to handle some of the challenges. Yet, even though the Norwegian act specifies several aspects in detail, and allows for some local adaptations and interpretations, it nonetheless provides limited opportunities for regulating touristic uses of nature areas. On the other hand, as pointed out by the Norwegian legal scholar Marianne Reusch (2012), other regulatory options exist. For instance, defining an area as a nature reserve makes it much less accessible to the public. Norwegian legislation also allows local or regional authorities to ban traffic in areas exposed to dangerous natural events (such as mudslides). Accordingly, It is important to take into consideration what kinds of legislation and administrative resources can be used as instruments in regulating visits to nature attractions.

Due to the complexities of the concept of sustainability, efforts in achieving sustainable tourism development encounter several paradoxes and dilemmas. In addition, the implementation of economic instruments, which is common in many other countries throughout the world, as a means to limit and structure visitation to tourist attractions as well as to finance management, is made less applicable because of the public rights of access. These points will be considered more in detail below. This chapter will also contain a discussion of the need for broad-scale planning that includes not only legal and economic instruments, but also the use of so-called soft management techniques and more indirect means, such as information, knowledge transmission, guiding and zoning or channelling of traffic through the development of several types of infrastructures (e.g. specially facilitated and labelled hiking trails).

Lastly, it will be illuminated how policies and administrative measures could involve different forms of collaboration, as well as integration, between policy sectors, both locally and on a national scale.

### 5.1 Public rights of access and mass invasion

The unprecedented increase in visitation to some nature attractions is caused in part by what many consider to be a new kind of tourism, driven by an exchange of information via social media, such as Facebook and Instagram. This makes the structuring of visitation through planning and marketing difficult. In her review of the public rights of access in the Nordic countries, Robertson (2011) emphasizes how these rights apply to individuals are hence not fully adequate when it comes to what she calls *mass invasion*. According to Robertson (2011), mass invasions can be *induced* or *spontaneous*: Induced mass invasion occurs when many visitors enter a nature area/land property at the same time to engage in an organized activity or event. Spontaneous mass invasion denotes visits that are not facilitated for by NGOs or commercial tourism operators. Within this conceptual frame, an unprecedented increase in visitation organized by the tourism operators shows an example of induced mass invasion. By contrast, the more recent development of a significant increase in self-organized visits of individuals and smaller groups to popular nature attractions can be regarded as an example of spontaneous mass invasion.

While both types of invasions can occur simultaneously, spontaneous mass invasion may, to a greater degree than induced mass invasion, result in inconsistencies and problems with the interpretation of rights and obligations in accordance with customs, regulations and legislation. By providing guidance, information and interpretation, tour operators and tourism entrepreneurs may in principle be more able to structure the behaviour of visitors in accordance with both written and unwritten rules of the public rights of access. Compared to spontaneous mass invasion, induced mass invasion is likely to provide better opportunities of limiting and structuring visitation to the extent tour operators are willing to enter into collaboration with management authorities on issues like parking, accommodation and so on.

### 5.2 The paradox and dilemmas related to the public rights of access

The unsustainable development caused by the unrepresented influx of tourists has raised questions about whether one should implement stricter regulation of access to nature areas. Debates on who should be allowed to benefit from nature attractions have also been called for. Furthermore, the manners in which tour operators and other tourism stakeholders benefit from the public rights of access (PRA) and various kinds of public

goods are increasingly seen as problematic.<sup>19</sup> It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss legal changes with respect to the public rights of access. These types of questions also concern political and ideological issues that should be taken into consideration. In Chapter 3 of this report, it is noticed that the public rights of access are widely believed to contribute to social equality, welfare, well-being, and public health, as well as place attachment. While there are some differences as to how the public rights of access are regulated by law in the Nordic countries and how extensive the access rights are, the public rights of access can be regarded in all Nordic countries as continuations of long-standing practices, and hence also as culturally rooted. As Sandell (2006a/2006b) explains, the Swedish *allmansrätten* can be understood as a “free space” between various laws and regulations that puts restriction on how nature landscapes can be access and used. This space has as its main principle not to “disturb or destroy.” To know its boundaries, one must be able to “read” the signals of the landscape for soreness and disturbance risk. These embodied aspects of how to behave according to the individual rights and duties that follow from the public rights of access represent a challenge when visitors without the adequate pre-knowledge on a large scale enter nature areas in the Nordic countries.

The public rights of access of the Nordic countries appears to represent a paradox in view of sustainable development goals. On the one hand, it is the same rights that makes possible unimpeded visits on a large scale to nature attractions and destinations. In some instances, the public access rights even become part of the attraction. In addition, the public rights of access enable nature-based tourism enterprises to operate on land areas regardless of ownership. When being depended on for operating on land they do not own themselves, nature-based tourism businesses are more inclined to see the public rights of access as an asset than a hindrance (Sandell and Fredman, 2010). On the other hand, the public rights of access cause legal, cultural and practical difficulties when it comes to the handling of the sustainability problems these rights indirectly contributes to.

Instruments much used in other countries to delimit and structure visitation, such as entrance fees and concessions, will easily conflict with the public rights of access, not only in legal terms, but even politically, ideologically and culturally. Additionally, faced with an influx of tourists, the public rights of access often present management with a series of dilemmas and paradoxes. For example, when groups of tourists occupy designated outdoor recreation areas in Norway by taking it into use for camping, even though the area has not been facilitated for this, the somewhat diffuse boundaries the public rights of access set are stretched, as the Outdoor Recreation Act does not prohibit camping. According to the Outdoor Recreation Act, municipalities in Norway are allowed to respond by prohibiting camping, e.g., on the grounds that facilities (toilet, fireplaces, parking, etc.) are inadequate, and that camping on a certain scale will impair other people’s opportunities for use (see Reusch, 2012). While local authorities

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.lofotposten.no/debatt/reiseliv/lofoten/reiselivsnaringa-i-lofoten-ma-ta-ansvar/0/5-29-321950>

in this case can respond by issuing restrictions on use, this would also constrict the opportunities of ordinary citizens to enjoy the rights they are originally provided with.

### 5.3 Developments of infrastructure as a response to the influx of tourists

An obvious way of avoiding the paradox and dilemmas discussed above is to develop facilities and infrastructures that can accommodate growing numbers of visitors. Whereas the development of infrastructure can represent a solution to the most pressing sustainability problems in a short-term perspective, it can also generate further sustainability problems in a long-term perspective. The experience of “authentic” nature has for long been one of the major pull factors for tourism in the Nordic countries. A large infrastructure development can accordingly make Nordic nature less attractive to visitors.

Sutherland and Stacey (2017) maintain that a low population density outside the capital region and an abundance of natural attractions make it possible to manage tourism flows in Iceland in manners that can allow the country to host more tourists without encountering grave congestion problems, provided that adequate infrastructure is established. On the other hand, developing infrastructures will generally contribute to making nature attractions more easily available to tourists who demand convenient facilities, and who possess low expectations relatively speaking for intact nature landscapes and the preservation of biodiversity (Sæþórsdóttir et al., 2015; Cságyoly et al., 2017). In view of this, there is accordingly a risk of conflicts between diverse types of visitors, not only caused by different approaches to the same areas or resources, but also with respect to how landscapes and nature areas should be managed in terms of the scope of facilities and so on. This might even apply to relationships between different tourism operators and firms, since some tourism products rely on an intact nature void of any facility and infrastructure, while others depend heavily on the opposite. Moreover, when the demand for infrastructures and facilities increases, the tolerance limit for interventions in natural areas can also be lowered among policymakers and management agencies (Sæþórsdóttir, 2013; Puhakka and Saarinen, 2013).

For the most part, even though pressure will increase at the fringes of wilderness areas, wilderness areas will also become more easily available in general, and visitors who dislike crowding and development of infrastructure might move further on into less developed and visited areas (Sæþórsdóttir, 2010). Visitor satisfaction surveys indicate that the density of tourists at popular sites in Iceland is starting to have a negative impact on the visitors’ experiences (Sæþórsdóttir and Saarinen, 2016; Sæþórsdóttir, 2013; Sæþórsdóttir et al., 2015). Relatively unspoiled nature is a finite resource, and already as early as 2015 more than 35% complained about too many tourists in the Geysir area and 20% in the national park Þingvellir (Sæþórsdóttir et al., 2015). Tyrväinen et al. (2014) discuss similar processes in Finland, as large-scale initiatives to develop infrastructures for receiving tourists involve the risk of

undermining the foundation of tourism to the extent that it will result in a further crowding and deterioration of the ecological landscapes which represent a significant part of what attracts visitors.

## 5.4 Economic instruments in Nordic contexts

An unprecedented increase in the number of visitors to certain attractions and destinations has resulted in environmental damage, costly rescue operations and free rider problems with respect to common goods. Several economic instruments have been proposed to handle these problems. As discussed in Chapter 4, these instruments can be based on revenues from entrance fees, as well as on more indirect fees connected to e.g. parking facilities, but even on various kinds of taxes and VAT. Since most of the research on this subject focuses on the situations in countries such as the US and New Zealand, several issues that are more or less specific to the Nordic contexts are rarely mentioned. Primarily because of the dominance of nature-based tourism (in a broad sense of the term), and the extensive public access in the Nordic countries, economic instruments such as entrance fees, concessions and licence permits are likely to encounter challenges that would not occur to the same degree in other countries.

### 5.4.1 *Financing of common goods*

Recently, the large influx of tourists to Lofoten in Norway, and the unprecedented increase in visitation to the numerous nature attractions in Iceland, have raised the question of whether visitors should compensate for the sustainability problems their visits generate by paying a tourist tax, and whether the tourist industry should contribute a portion of their income to the financing of public goods their business imposes heavy loads on.<sup>20</sup> The relatively sparsely populated municipalities of Lofoten have proposed introducing a tourist tax to finance the development of necessary infrastructures. Not very different from the situation in Iceland (see Chapter 2), the Norwegian government, the national employer association (NHO) and the country's tourist industry have all rejected this, claiming that infrastructure is the responsibility of the public authorities, and that any additional tax will weaken the competitiveness of the tourism industry.<sup>21</sup> While the tourism business raises concerns over how tourist taxes and increased Vat rates could affect the competitiveness of the business negatively, there is also an issue of to what extent public revenues from tourism taxation in fact will be invested in infrastructures that will benefit the tourism industry itself.

An alternative solution is based on DMOs. Revenues from car parking services, with additional contributions from the public authorities and the tourism industries, makes

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.lofot-tidende.no/meninger/debatt/reiseliv/vurderer-fellesgoder-og-besoksforvaltning-i-reiselivet/s/5-28-21555>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.nrk.no/nordland/lofoten-ordforer-far-ikke-stotte-til-turistskatt-fra-eget-parti-1.13622391>

the DMO of Preikestolen in Norway able to manage the facilitated access to the attraction point (parking, toilet facilities, maintenance of paths, emergency preparedness). The DMO consists of public and private stakeholders from the surrounding municipalities. Despite this collaborative initiative, it is argued that the available budget is insufficient for a sustainable visitation management. Anticipating that the number of visits to Preikestolen will be double within 10 years (currently approximately 300,000 a year), the DMO's plan is to invest considerably in two different service buildings. Even so, there are discussions about whether a new 10-year plan of this DMO should disregard the limits set by the public rights of access and facilitate for commercialization on a large scale.<sup>22</sup>

The DMO of Lofoten (*Destination Lofoten*) is an inter-municipal company which includes private stakeholders (shareholders or as paying members of the organization). Initiating a process to qualify Lofoten for the Sustainable Destination label, based on the 10 principles of UNWTO for sustainable tourism, this DMO also discussed, without arriving at a decisive conclusion, to what extent private stakeholders should contribute to financing infrastructures and the maintenance of public goods.<sup>23</sup>

#### 5.4.2 User fees

In Chapter 4, it was mentioned that some research cast doubts about how efficient user fees are with respect to controlling the scale of visitation. In addition to the questions of how entrance fees could be managed in an efficient way, the research literature also refers to challenges when it comes to questions of legitimacy. To the extent that management of the attraction in question should basically be funded by government sources, entrance fees could be perceived as a double taxation. Moreover, entrance fees concern issues of social equality since it potentially could exclude low-income groups. As maintained by Fredman (2018), to the extent user fees should be implemented to contribute to funding of management of tourist attraction and amenities connected to these (such as mountain trekking trails), this should be adapted to local conditions, and to be perceived as fair fees must be based on a model that ensures that revenues are used in a way that the payers benefit directly from. The perceived legitimacy of the fees is, as discussed in Chapter 4, likely to vary with how far visitors have travelled as well as the degree of dependency of a particular place for a particular experience.

Implementation of user fees in a Nordic context will in many cases encounter legal challenges and will easily be perceived as conflicting with dominant political and ideological arguments and goals. The right to roam is esteemed as an important feature of social equality and welfare. Moreover, this right is also defined as a significant instrument in maintaining the Scandinavian outdoor recreation tradition, promoting public health through the provision of abundant outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as contributing to place identities and place attachment through identification

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.aftenbladet.no/lokalt/i/raegR/Vil-gjore-Preikestolen-til-pengemaskin>

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.nrk.no/nordland/\\_-ma-ta-penger-fra-skole-og-eldre-for-a-bygge-toaletter-til-turistene-1.13439475](https://www.nrk.no/nordland/_-ma-ta-penger-fra-skole-og-eldre-for-a-bygge-toaletter-til-turistene-1.13439475)

with nature landscapes (see e.g. Öhman and Sandell, 2016; Øian, 2013; Øian and Skogen, 2017). Even though entrance fees to national parks represent a legal option according to laws and regulations in Iceland, park managements tend, despite increasing needs of revenues, to rely on parking fees and revenues from services at the entrance gates.<sup>24</sup>

Since many nature attractions, such as national parks, in most cases have several entrance points, entrance fees can be costly to administer and impractical to implement. This type of economic instrument appears to be most applicable for geographically concentrated areas with few entrance points, such as steep mountain peaks or peninsulas. In Norway, the long-standing arrangement at the North Cape attraction makes an exceptional case. Being located on land leased by a private company, the area is fenced off and a visitor centre made into the only access point. The concession to fence the area and to charge entrance fees has been given by the municipality. The Norwegian Outdoor Recreation Act allows municipalities to grant stakeholders permission to charge entrance fees to particularly facilitated outdoor recreation areas. However, the act does state that the fee should be reasonable, indicating that it should not exceed the level of what would cover the cost of constructions and management (Reusch, 2012). In this case, the company's revenues are considered to exceed this level manifold times, which has caused strong criticism for violating the basic principles of the public rights of access.<sup>25</sup>

While the North Cape is on semi-public land,<sup>26</sup> the efforts of charging entry fees at certain sites in Iceland have primarily been on private land. Since owners of land bordering the Geysir area started to charge entrance fees, the Supreme Court of Iceland (*Hæstiréttur*) ruled this to be illegal in 2015, maintaining that the Geysir area belongs to the Icelandic government and should be accessible to all, free of charge. The court also ruled that that the fees landowners collected were of such a magnitude that it implied revenues, not only covering the cost of maintenance.<sup>27</sup>

The controversy over the exceptional case of the North Cape in Norway, and reports on resistance met by landowners in Iceland trying to collect various kinds of entrance fees to attractions on their properties, emphasize how these kinds of instruments have a weak legal, political, and social basis in the Nordic countries. In Sweden, there have been debates from time to time to what extent private landowners should be allowed to exclude organized and commercial activities taking place in their properties, as well as over their right to charge fees in these cases. Not very different from the North Cape case, the Eriksberg Nature Park in Sweden is located on private land, covering a peninsula, and is accessible only by payment of entrance fees.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> <http://icelandmag.is/article/icelandic-national-parks-not-looking-charge-entry-fees-instead-charge-parking>

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.nrk.no/finnmark/sperra-europaveg-med-bom-i-18-ar\\_-har-tent-millionar-1.13934621](https://www.nrk.no/finnmark/sperra-europaveg-med-bom-i-18-ar_-har-tent-millionar-1.13934621)

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.smp.no/ntb/innenriks/2017/09/13/Klart-for-forhandlinger-om-festeavtalen-for-Nordkapp-plat%C3%A5set-15300383.ece>

<sup>27</sup> <http://icelandmag.is/article/entrance-fee-geysir-deemed-illegal-supreme-court>

<sup>28</sup> [https://eriksberg.nu/sv/eriksbergs\\_gard](https://eriksberg.nu/sv/eriksbergs_gard)



### 5.4.3 Concessions and licence permits

Concessions or licence fees do not have any traditions in the management of nature attractions or protected nature areas in the Nordic countries. Legal, political and practical issues make it difficult to implement these kinds of instruments in a way that make authorized tour operators into exclusive access channels to nature attractions. The degree to which concessions and licence permits would function as instruments to control the scope of visitation to a site depends in part on how easily accessible attractions are for people individually organizing their visits. In cases of inadequate transportation and accommodation facilities, tourist businesses operating as concessionaries would probably be in greater demand. In cases of attractions, many find it too challenging to visit on their own, as the use of concessionaires and licenced tour operators could even result in the opposite of reduced visitation. Put differently, concessions might possibly enlarge the sustainability problems this instrument is meant to solve.

With respect to concessions and licence permits, there are some relevant questions as to what kind of tourism businesses should be given access to operate on special conditions within an area, or in connection to an attraction. As it was referred to in Chapter 4, based on research in New Zealand Ruhanen (2013) maintains that concessions and licence permits require transparent bureaucratic processes to make sure that purposes and requirements are clearly accounted for. In the Nordic countries, there are strict limits on what types of activities can be performed in protected areas, and even restrictions on organized and/or commercial activities in unprotected nature areas. A question therefore arises as to what types of activities or services may be subject to licencing terms, and whether those on certain conditions should be exempted from ordinary provisions. If concessionaires are to be limited to guided tours, using already existing infrastructures or what else is allowed according to the public rights of access and the regulations of protected areas, these arrangements would have little value as long as anyone in principle could do the same types of operations.

While concessions and licence permits could be complicated and costly to implement, a possible solution could possibly be found in restricting these kinds of arrangement to transport and parking facilities in connection to the nature areas in question, but also to the provision of service facilities such as accommodations, food and merchandise in connection to an attraction. Granting concessions to transport companies (busses and taxies) for bringing visitors to the entrance points of much-visited nature attractions could under certain conditions function as an instrument for structuring visitations in time and space.

As explained in Chapter 2, with the aim of developing means to control the scale of visitation, and to generate revenues from the tourism industry, legislative changes have recently been introduced in Iceland to allow for the use of concessions and licence permits for guiding in certain national parks. In Denmark, a transport company has been given the concession to transport visitors to *Grenen*, the northernmost point of

*Jutland.<sup>29</sup> A Danish municipality has also granted a local firm the concession for canoe rental for long-distance canoeing in the local river.<sup>30</sup> Since this NGO possesses a kind of monopoly on tourism operations in protected areas on the grounds of long-standing practices, which means that this NGO in some respects is exempted from protection regulations, it could be seen as a concessionaire de facto.*

While legislation opens for concessions and licences for other industries, such as the energy sector's use of helicopters and snowmobiles in protected areas, these have so far not involved the tourism industry. Assuming this will change in the near future, concessions and licences could incorporate some types of tourism operations that do not take place in nature landscapes and protected areas as of today. Recently, and with spectacular views of the waterfalls of *Vøringsfossen* in mind, the state-owned hydropower company *Statkraft*, in their regular licence application for helicopter flights into a protected nature area, also applied for a permit to bring with them cruise ship passengers landing in nearby ports.<sup>31</sup> To the extent cruise ship tourism continues to increase and become spread to several port destinations, the demand for these kinds of service could increase.

The purpose of concessions and licences is not only to structure visitation streams. The revenues it generates can also substantially contribute to the funding of management and conservation. As discussed in Chapter 4, this might potentially alter management objectives and instruments to serve the needs of concessionaires, hence putting a greater emphasis on the economic dimension of sustainability at the expense of the social and environmental dimension.

While these reflections are based in hypothetical reasoning, they should nonetheless be considered in the context of the shift towards the commercialization and privatization of nature, which by some is labelled as a neo-liberalization of nature, defined as a process whereby non-human phenomenon are increasingly subject to market-based systems of management and development (Castree, 2008; Job et al., 2017). According to Puhakka and Saarinen (2013), processes like these are mirrored in the current trends of policy and planning in all Nordic countries, as the touristic attractiveness of natural areas is increasingly valued for offering potential income to local peripheral communities struggling with economic restructuring. Considering how fisheries, agriculture, forestry and manufacturing industries are in decline, these changes can be of great advantage to local and regional economies. The national park label has been shown to increase the attractiveness of protected areas (Wall Reinius and Fredman, 2007), and coordinating conservation and the utilization of nature is accordingly seen as advantageous for both conservation and local and regional development goals (Job et al., 2017; Saarinen, 2016). Because protected areas progressively justify their existence by the economic gains local communities and

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<sup>29</sup> <http://docplayer.dk/11006445-2016-23-koncessionsaftale-center-for-park-og-vej-frederikshavn-kommune-knivholtvej-15-9900-frederikshavn.html>

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.gudenaakomiteen.dk/media/1038/toerring-kanoudlejning-og-kanofart\\_langturskoncessioner\\_2013.pdf](http://www.gudenaakomiteen.dk/media/1038/toerring-kanoudlejning-og-kanofart_langturskoncessioner_2013.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> NRK, February 8, 2018

regions get from satisfying visitors' demands, nature conservation is about to become more instrumental and market-oriented (Puhakka and Saarinen, 2013).

To the extent that the socioeconomic aims of managing nature areas gain terrain, Puhakka and Saarinen (2013) foresaw a possible development towards competition between national parks in Finland over attracting visitors. As a logical outcome of policies emphasizing lower government interventions, the decreasing role of the state in resourcing, and market-oriented and business-friendly approaches in planning, the authors maintain that this type of competition would not only represent a break with earlier conservation thinking. If national parks tourism more and more become an asset for local and regional development, it might also result in a growing number of parks and increased demands on governmental budgets (Puhakka and Saarinen, 2013). In line with this, Puhakka and Saarinen (2013) envisage that a larger scale of visitation to a growing number of nature attractions and protected areas will make public funding insufficient, and subsequently strengthen the support for economic instruments such as concessions and licence permits.

One possible effect from the development mentioned by Puhakka and Saarinen (2013) is that tourism businesses will become financial collaborators for national park managers, and that these businesses will accordingly take parks in use for their operations on a much larger scale, e.g., through concessions or licences, but at the expense of visitors who arrive individually with different expectations, goals and motives. A further consequence would hence be, as has been discussed by Sæþórðóttir (2013) in view of current trends on Iceland, changing the limits for what is acceptable/unacceptable. This raises questions of how protected nature areas will be seen by the public, and what people will expect when entering parks (Puhakka and Saarinen, 2013).

## 5.5 Soft visitor management approaches in Nordic contexts

Discussing how information, marketing strategies, interpretation, guiding and so on can represent viable management strategies in Nordic contexts, it should be noted that the public rights of access represent an implicit foundation for environmental education. Sandell and Öhman (2010) emphasize that the easy access to nature landscapes the public rights of access provide citizens with contributes to peoples' identification with nature landscapes, and function accordingly as a basis for underpinning sustainable development. In the Nordic contexts, these processes are to a large extent place-based, and it remains to be explored further whether sustainability concerns can be generalized from concrete, place-based experiences to more abstract settings experienced by visitors (Sandell and Öhman, 2010). This question is further related to the fact that the public rights of access to a large degree presuppose peoples' engagement with nature landscapes, though with an implicit and embodied knowledge of norms and rules (Sandell 2006a, 2006b). Due to both demographic changes that influence the composition of recreationist and the growth of nature-based tourism in general, an increasing proportion of visitors lack adequate knowledge of how to relate

to nature landscapes in the way the public rights of access presuppose. While this makes the public rights of access appear to be a hindrance to achieving sustainable management of new tourist markets on the one hand, it does on the other hand emphasize the significance of including information, interpretation, codes of conduct and knowledge transmission as a management strategy. While Chinese tourists engage with nature areas in ways that in some sense might differ sharply from the ways the public rights of access presuppose due to cultural differences, this makes soft management techniques even more important. However, it was emphasized in Chapter 4 that the research literature on this subject is quite consistent in the view that the effects very much depend on how information and codes are presented and must be targeted at specific groups.

A resource-based management approach will try to reduce the negative effects of visitation by spreading, modifying or concentrating traffic and activities in space and time through the enforcement of prohibitions, or reducing the scale of visitation through instruments such as visitor quotas and fees. The same can also be achieved through an activity-based approach by influencing the choice visitors make in using information, knowledge transmission, interpretative techniques and guiding. Soft approaches can even include facilitation with the aim of directing the traffic and zoning of activities. The upgrading of trails, combined with adequate parking facilities and other services, is for instance taken into use to concentrate and channel traffic away from the vulnerable areas of national parks (see e.g. Kaltenborn et al., 2017).

#### 5.5.1 *Norway's National Tourist Trails*

As referred to above, *Norway's National Tourist Trails* (NTT) can be seen as an example of soft management strategies. NNT is a governmental grant scheme with the aim of supporting sustainable tourism at popular nature destinations and attractions. A dramatic increase in national and foreign tourists' use of hiking trails has caused considerable negative environmental effects, while some locations are also marked by congestion. A selection of the most popular trails will receive National Tourist Trail status during 2018. The criteria for this authorization connect to certain standards of signage, labelling and information, as well as measures to improve safety and access in terms of parking facilities.

In other words, the purpose of NTT is not to limit the numbers of tourists, but instead to secure the sustainability of the present level of visitation or even increased visitation in the near future. NNT represents an effort in the channelling of traffic to minimize the negative effects of trampling and of providing waste management facilities to avoid littering. To the extent that the construction of designed infrastructures and services can ensure that popular nature attractions will withstand visitor growth, some sustainability problems remain. Making popular attraction more easily accessible can result in further negative effects on the environmental and social dimensions of sustainability. Firstly, an intensive use of small, demarcated areas may have effects on species composition and soil, with repercussions far beyond the used area. Particularly in vulnerable Alpine and Arctic ecosystems, an even modest use and

impact can result in exposure or a loss of soil because of erosion or compaction (Øian, Andersen, Follestad, Hagen, and Kaltenborn, 2015).

Secondly, both national and foreign visitors to attractive nature sites are for the most part characterized by motives and behaviours that do not require much beyond the infrastructure provided by DNT (trails, labels, signage, accommodations) and municipalities (information and parking facilities) (Dervo, Skår, Köhler, Øian, Vistad, Andersen, and Gundersen, 2014; Ween and Abram, 2012). Some nature attractions have quite recently been transformed from goals for outdoor recreation trips to destinations for tourists, who via social media want to document their visits to attractions with iconic statuses. The reasons for visits, as well as the experiences people seek, have in this manner become more diverse. By making nature attractions both more easily available and known through marketing efforts, NTT may possibly contribute to making this type of transformation process more expansive. In this sense, NTT might imply the risk of causing even more crowding and enlarged pressure on nature environments (e.g. trampling on vegetation). While this in turn might increase the potential of conflicts between groups who engage with the attractions and its surroundings in differing ways, it may also alter how the management of nature environments makes priorities, and in turn also changes what is held to be acceptable with respect to the protection of nature, visitor density and the extent of construction and building for service facilities. As a result, there is a risk that the management of nature attractions will primarily adapt to visitors who are less concerned about sustainability issues.

#### **5.5.2     *Monitoring and adaptive management***

Resource-based management strategies, which typically involve direct regulations of traffic by using prohibitions, fencing, etc., will in most cases contradict the principles of the public rights of access. Even though these kinds of instruments can be employed with reference to, e.g., nature conservation legislation, activity-based management strategies seem to be more applicable in a Nordic context. This requires an adaptive management approach informed by knowledge of visitors' preferences and motivations, as well as their attitudes and opinions when it comes to regulative measures (see e.g. Gundersen, Mehmetoglu, Vistad, and Andersen, 2015).

Outdoor recreation and opportunities have for a long time mostly been taken for granted in the Nordic countries. It is only quite recently that public authorities have fully realized the need for a more adaptive management approach. Due to both increased visitation and more diversity among visitors, monitoring has become an important instrument for the manipulation of tourism traffic systems, both in terms of time and space in order to improve recreational opportunities, in reducing the risk of conflicts between different user groups (Pröbstl, Wirth, Elands, and Bell, 2010; Ankre, Fredman, and Lindhagen, 2016) and minimizing the negative impacts on ecological systems (Kaltenborn et al., 2017; Gundersen et al., 2015).

### 5.5.3 *Eco-tourism in the Nordic countries*

While governments, conservation agencies, NGOs and local communities often fail to effectuate the basic principles of ecotourism, the broad principles of ecotourism tend to fit well with Nordic outdoor recreation traditions and established nature-based tourism practices (Gössling and Hultman, 2006). According to Fredman et al. (2006), nature-based tourism in the Nordic countries can to a considerable extent be seen as non-institutionalized and non-certified ecotourism. While the motives of ecotourism operators in the Nordic countries might be idealistic, many stakeholders accordingly also tend to think of the ecotourism concept and labels as superfluous, as they believe most tourism already takes place in nature and in environmentally friendly ways (Viken, 2006). Margaryan and Stensland (2017) found that lifestyles and ideological attitudes, as well as company size, income level and gender influence whether tourism businesses in Norway and Sweden adopt eco-certification schemes or not. These authors also conclude that the paradox of emissions that follow from visitors' travels to an eco-certified destination have a demotivating effect on eco-certification.

## 5.6 Policy and planning in Nordic contexts

Relying on activity-based approaches and soft management techniques, adaptive management approaches require broad, knowledge-based planning strategies, involving several types of stakeholders, including the views and opinions of visitors. Planning is hence an increasingly complex process. First, tourism is becoming more diverse in term of the types or categories of tourists, demands and products. Whereas new activities and products have been added to what has conventionally been defined as nature-based tourism, diverse types of nature-related tourism have also emerged, such as well-being, food tourism, farm tourism, etc. As has been discussed in the preceding chapters, these changes are reflected in a more varied and changing composition of visitors in terms of goals, motives and expectations as well as in how more types of stakeholders become involved in tourism. An important part of the planning processes is accordingly to reconcile different interests and objectives, such as the one between economic development and conservation. In addition, planning is also about integrating various sectors, as the tourism industry is interrelated with the transport industry, the building industry, etc. Secondly, planning in a long-term perspective is difficult due to fast and unforeseen changes in the global system tourism is a part of. For instance, while visits to national parks progressively take place through organized and commercialized visits, a recent trend, in part caused by social media and the opportunities the Internet provide, is that travellers are individually organizing their own visits.

## 5.7 Legal and administrative regulation of visitation

While the public rights of access in the Nordic countries restrict opportunities for implementing economic instruments, planning and nature diversity acts as well as penal codes, represent opportunities for regulating tourism visitation. Earlier in this report, it has been referred to as how Norwegian municipalities are given the opportunity to grant businesses or NGOs permissions to charge entrance fees to nature attraction under certain conditions. The same local authorities are also allowed to restrict types of activities at certain sites or in delimited nature areas. Guided tours in national parks in Iceland have recently been subject to licencing terms, as protection provisions in Icelandic legislation allow for this. While there might be some difference between the Nordic countries, the planning acts give municipalities access to a set of access control measures. On regional and national levels, environmental or nature diversity acts provide public authorities with instruments for limiting visitation by, e.g., establishing no-access zones and prohibiting car traffic and parking in certain areas. Even so, it appears that these opportunities are rarely taken into use. Implemented as a response to touristic use, these kinds of restriction might affect established recreational practices, and will therefore be perceived by many as a violation of the principle of the right to roam. As has been discussed above, outdoor recreation practices, even among local inhabitants, have expanded considerably and become much more diversified than the legislation on the unimpeded public access originally provided for. It should accordingly be considered more closely as to what ways these planning and environmental acts could be used more extensively to prevent a non-sustainable development of tourism in the Nordic countries.

## 5.8 Horizontal and vertical integration in planning process: the case of second homes in Norway

The warning against the possible disadvantages of certain economic instruments, which has been discussed above, should also be seen in relation to planning and governmental policies. According to much of the relevant research literature reviewed in Chapter 4, planning processes and governmental policies often take on tourism as a means to develop local communities and regions taken for granted, operating within too short timeframes and prioritizing actions that promote economic growth (see e.g. Ruhanen, 2008). This can be illustrated by the grand scale of second-home development in Norway, which raises several sustainability concerns (Aall, 2014). Second homes in rural areas are increasingly seized on a resource that can be utilized for economic development in local communities. Norway's recent dramatic increase in the numbers of second homes include the development of second-home villages, as well as the transformation of mountain hotels into apartments. Due to an increased standard of the second home and improved accessibility, in combination with the development of infrastructures for popular outdoor recreation activities (such as

networks of groomed cross-country tracks), second homes are also used much more frequently compared to a couple of decades ago.

In some municipalities the number of second homes exceeds the number of inhabitants, and property tax from second homes can represent a significant contribution to municipalities' budgets. While local trade and crafts industries experience a certain increase in revenues, development stakeholders have a financial interest in the construction and sales of second homes.

The landscape changes caused by second homes in mountain areas may result in both social and environmental sustainability problems. In turn, this might negatively affect the tourism industry to the extent that the landscape becomes less attractive for at least certain types of visitors. Easily accessible and facilitated second-home villages imply that the recreational use of certain mountain areas has been geographically concentrated, both with respect to the numbers of recreationists, and in terms of activities performed throughout the season.

The growth in second homes has to some degree taken place at the expense of the hotel business. The tourist industry in mountain destinations has consequently become more and more limited to activity tourism, and mostly on weekends. Concerns have accordingly been raised about how these tourism destinations can be revitalized. In part, due to steady urbanization, population growth, a changing age structure and an altered household composition, there is an increasing demand for softer and more facilitated nature-based tourism activities in general, which implies a growing interest in more varied and specialized nature-based tourism activities, such as snow-kiting, glacier hiking, river rafting, kayaking, mountain biking, randonné skiing and the like (see e.g. Wall Reinius, 2009; Dervo et al., 2014). While some see second-home owners as potential customers for these kinds of specialized and differentiated tourism products, there is reason to expect these types of tourism operations to hardly be viable without catering to visiting tourists, in addition to second-home users.

The complexity of issues raised by second-home development represents a challenge for local political and administrative authorities in terms of the planning and management of the development process in relation to other kinds of tourisms (Farstad and Rye, 2013), and in relation to the environmental dimensions of sustainability, such as the ecological effects of land use change and an increased consumption of energy (transport and heating) (Aall, 2014; Aall, Klepp, Enge set, Skuland, and Støa, 2011).

Based on their analysis of four different cases of planning processes at the municipality level, Aall et al. (2015) conclude that even though both the horizontal and vertical integration of sustainable tourism could be identified, the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainability were rarely properly integrated into a holistic perspective. In addition, a tendency of giving priority to economic sustainability was observed. In one of the cases, which concerned the relatively extensive development of second homes, the environmental aspects of sustainable tourism were replaced by the primary economic interests associated with local value creation, despite environmental concerns being identified in the planning process (Aall et al., 2015). The authors further comment that municipal land-use plans rarely consider matters that are inadequately specified in the national legislation. With respect to biodiversity, the environmental



impact assessment is consequently given priority, while energy use and GHG emissions from the use of- and transport to and from second homes tends to happen because this is to be left out (Aall et al., 2015). Furthermore, the national strategy of sustainable tourism does not explicitly consider how economic, social and environmental issues should be balanced or reconciled (Aall, 2014; Aall et al., 2015). In local planning processes, there is accordingly a tendency of emphasizing environmental goals only to the extent that these do not conflict with economic goals, with tourism development projects such as second-home development rarely becoming a major concern for other-than-tourism policies. While collaboration between public and private stakeholders is frequently emphasized as vital to achieving sustainable tourism goals, the implication of the conclusions of Aall et al. (2015) is that these types of processes will often be insufficient at long as sustainable tourism concerns are not properly integrated between sectors at the national level.



## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

Unparalleled growth in the numbers of visitors to certain attractions and destinations in the Nordic countries has resulted in environmental damage, costly rescue operations and overload on common goods, such as public infrastructure. Increasing differentiation, specialization and the individualization of tourism practices, influenced in part by the information flow in social media, make development trends less predictable and tourism more difficult to manage through planning strategies and various regulating instruments.

The sustainable development of tourism requires policies and planning processes that take environmental, social and economic dimensions into consideration in a long-term perspective. When applied in tourism policies and management strategies, sustainability often manifests itself as a complex concept by generating several paradoxes and dilemmas. For instance, as the touristic attractiveness of nature areas increases in importance for rural communities and regions struggling with economic restructuring, the pressure towards managing nature areas according to economic and social aims tends to increase. To preserve the resources tourism depends on, policies and planning processes must consequently balance the aims of economic growth with concerns for the sustainable development of tourism.

A second example concerns the development of infrastructures, which is the most common and immediate answer to crowding problems caused by a rapid increase in the numbers of visitors. Improved transport solutions, facilitation of hiking trails and extended onsite services can contribute to both greater visitor satisfaction and reduction in congestion effects. The strategy also implies that attractions become more available to a greater variety of visitors. The development of infrastructures may thus lead to further crowding and congestion effects on communities and the natural environment. The experience of nature attractions as the basic product of the tourism industry in the Nordic countries may consequently be undermined by actions which were originally intended to support it.

International research literature demonstrates a general tendency of making decisions that primarily serve to maintain the economic viability of tourism enterprises on a short-term basis at the expense of social and environmental considerations. In a long-term perspective, this imbalance can make the economic dimension of tourism development less sustainable, as this to a considerable extent depends on taking the social and environmental aspects tourism into account. For this reason, sustainable tourism development will in many instances be the opposite of growth in the numbers of visitors and constantly increasing revenue streams.

Confronted with these types of dilemmas and paradoxes, new management interventions are required to accommodate tourists' diverse needs and expectations, to prevent probable conflicts and to ensure minimal damage to natural surroundings.

Responding to the dramatic increase in visitation to certain vulnerable nature areas and sites, the regulation of the volume of visitors by taking economic instruments into use has been proposed. However, the applicability of economic instruments seems to be somewhat limited in the Nordic countries. The reasons for this are many. While there are administrative and practical challenges associated with the implementation of some economic instruments, the legal and political issues of the public rights of access are just as important. Firstly, the public rights of access restrict opportunities for implementing instruments such as entrance fees. Some grey zones, or at least contested spaces, nevertheless seem to exist, especially when it comes to private lands. Implementing entrance fees are not only a question of collecting fees at a gate, but even about creating gates, which in many cases will imply that nature areas must be fenced. In addition to practical problems, this would represent a legal challenge, as it violates the public rights of access. These rights are also embedded in political and ideological discourses and are integrated as significant aspects in national policies of public health and well-being. Even in the case of legislative adjustments, the implementation of entrance fees is therefore likely to be highly controversial. For the tourism industry this represents both a paradox and a dilemma. While the public rights of access restrict the applicability of instruments for achieving sustainable tourism, tourism in the Nordic countries depends to a considerable degree on rights.

The perceived legitimacy of instruments such as entrance fees is likely to be affected by whether they are primarily introduced for controlling visitation volumes, or whether fees serve as a financial source for management of the site, which could be seen as a politically controversial step towards privatization of management. The acute sustainability problems associated with dramatic increase in visits to nature attractions concern relatively few attractions. In some instances, these occupy limited geographical areas. In such cases, the implementation of fencing and entrance fees could possibly take place without much controversy, given that security matters or severe environmental concerns justify it.

A closely related potential solution could possibly be found in giving iconic nature attractions a status similar to museums or heritage sites. These institutions are frequently funded by a combination of concessions (e.g. food service), entrance fees and public grants. Concessions have already been taken into use, though to a limited degree, in the management of nature areas in Iceland and Denmark. In contrast to entrance fees, concessions do not conflict with the public rights of access in a direct sense. What would prevent an appropriate implementation in the first instance is related to practical matters and the cost of administration. Moreover, the applicability will depend on what the purpose is. While concessions and licences can represent a substantial contribution to management budgets, such arrangements can also function as instruments for controlling the scale of visitation. There are nevertheless some possible pitfalls associated with these kinds of arrangements. In part depending on how management authorities will administer concessions and licence permits, there is a risk

that composition of visitors will be altered, which in turn may have consequences for the ways in which nature attractions are managed in terms of sustainability goals.

A related question is how tourists and the tourism industry benefit from common goods, which ultimately include the public rights of access, in addition to various kinds of public infrastructures. Since much of the infrastructures in question are financed and managed by municipalities, and in some cases even by NGOs, it raises the question of who should pay for maintenance, and even for the development of the infrastructure the tourism industry capitalizes on. The proposals for tourist taxes, and an increased VAT on accommodations and tour operator services that have been promoted in both Norway and Iceland, lack a sufficient political support. It is argued that these measures would weaken the competitiveness of the tourism industry, and that it is the responsibility of the public authorities to finance and manage common goods. The taxation of tourists and tourism companies to compensate for the overloading on common goods is thus a controversial issue.

A more promising solution can be found in destination management organizations (DMO), which in most cases are based on collaborations between private and public stakeholders. Today, there are some examples of DMOs playing a significant role in the management of attractions and destinations. As stakeholders or as paying members of DMOs, tourism enterprises contribute financially in some cases to the management of more specific features related to attractions, such as parking facilities, signage and the repair of trails.

Adaptive management approaches, based on an inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders in the planning processes, have been implemented in the management of nature areas in the Nordic countries (see e.g. Kaltenborn et. al, 2017; Gundersen et al. 2015; Andersen et al., 2014). Adaptive management must be based on an adequate knowledge obtained through monitoring and research. This is even more important in view of the rapid changes in both the scales of visitation and the composition of visitors with respect to aims, motives and experiences. Moreover, adaptive management requires planning processes to integrate several and often opposing interests and objectives of various stakeholders into common solutions.

With respect to the zoning of activities and the directing of traffic, adaptive management appears as a relatively efficient way of achieving sustainable solutions. This nonetheless seems to require cases in which alternatives exist, such as in national parks with several hiking routes, or in a forest area where e.g. trails of off-road biking can be adjusted according to biological values that need to be protected. When alternatives are few or none, zoning and channelling are less useful strategies. In such instances, adaptive management must rely more on soft management approaches associated with information, knowledge transmission, guiding, etc. Since guides can play a significant role in influencing visitors' behaviour, recruiting guides with good skills in programmes that visitors find attractive can be an efficient instrument.

To the extent that relevant stakeholders are included in collaborative planning processes, visitation can be structured to a certain degree by including accommodation providers, transport companies, parking services, etc. To obtain this, planning processes with a horizontal integration of sectors are an advantage. This is perhaps

even more crucial with respect to the management of destinations covering several places and attractions involving complex landscapes. Fast changes and the diversification of outdoor recreation practices and visitors' preferences make development trends less predictable and tourism more difficult to manage through planning strategies and various regulating instruments. Because of these ambiguities, it becomes even more important for policy designs to consider both how tourism interacts with other sectors and how destinations are situated in networks of interconnected public and private stakeholders, including those who are not directly involved in managing visitations or hosting tourists.

While the implementation of economic instruments is likely to encounter several challenges in a Nordic context, and adaptive management strategies sometimes require complex and protracted processes, there are also some important legal and administrative instruments. Planning and nature diversity acts, as well road traffic acts and penal codes, can in many instances be used for regulating visitation. Considering the new situation, it should be explored more closely in what ways these planning and environmental acts could be used more extensively to prevent a non-sustainable development of tourism in the Nordic countries.

## 6.1 Recommendations

- The administration of user fees at nature attractions can be both impractical and costly. In addition, there are legal and political challenges connected to the public right of access. It should be considered more closely to what extent entrance fees could be implemented by redefining the status of popular iconic nature attractions to be more in line with museums or heritage sites supported by public authorities.
- The opportunities for implementing concessions and licence permits should be balanced against the consideration of maintaining public access to the natural areas to which the concessions or licences apply. Issues to be clarified are thus whether even tours organized by NGOs must be subject to such schemes or not, and to what extent concessionaires will represent a more or less total commercialization of access to an area. Furthermore, questions arise as to whether the management of the areas concerned is to be financed through contributions from concessions and licences, as this may potentially affect the objective of management.
- A stronger commitment is recommended to strengthening the role of destination companies, with the aim of bringing together private and public stakeholders for collaborative management of destinations, for the development of visitor strategies, and for contributions to the funding of required infrastructures.
- Further development of adaptive management strategies that include zoning and channelling of traffic, as well as so-called soft management techniques, such as information and guiding. Related to this, one should also consider how more

extensive use of available legal and administrative instruments can contribute to sustainable development of tourism.

- Policies that promote the dispersion of visitors on to a larger number of attractions or destinations should be developed. This can be achieved by using marketing strategies and by developing infrastructures to make more attractions more easily available and more attractive.
- A stronger commitment to policies emphasizing the development of tourism that can be economically sustainable without any further growth in the number of visitors. This requires that a proper sectorial integration on local, regional and national levels is ensured, which will enable policy and planning processes to better take environmental, social and economic dimensions equally into consideration in a long-term perspective.





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# Sammendrag

I den siste tiden har de nordiske landene opplevd en rask økning i tilstrømning av turister. Denne til dels utfordringsfulle veksten, spesielt i besøk til såkalte ikoniske naturattraksjoner, har resultert i trengsel, miljødelegger, kostbare redningsaksjoner og overbelastning på fellesgoder slik som offentlige infrastruktur.

Det mest umiddelbare svaret er som regel utbygging av infrastruktur, så som oppgradering av transportløsninger og andre tjenestetilbud. Slike tiltak representerer ofte kortsiktige løsninger og kan i et lengre tidsperspektiv forsterke eksisterende bærekraftutfordringer så vel som skape nye. Bærekraftig utvikling av reiselivet dreier seg om sammensatte prosesser som krever at politikk og planlegging i et langt tidsperspektiv legger vekt miljøhensyn, samtidig som flere forskjellige økonomiske og sosiale interesser skal ivaretas.

I lys av utfordringer som den ekstraordinære tilstrømningen av turister har ført med seg, har det fra en del hold blitt foreslått at det tas i bruk økonomiske virkemidler for å begrense tilstrømningen og for å delfinansiere utgiftene som økt turisme påfører vertskapssamfunnet. I nordiske landene blir imidlertid bruken av slike virkemidler, som f.eks. inngangspenger til naturattraksjoner, utfordret av både de juridiske og politiske sidene ved den relativt sett oppfattende allemannsretten som finnes i de nordiske landene. Mens inntekter fra f.eks. konsesjoner eller lisenser som gis til turismeoperatører kan representere et bidrag til forvaltningsutgifter, kan slike ordninger også være med på å kontrollere tilstrømningen til populære attraksjoner. Som følge av juridiske og administrative begrensninger på kommersiell virksomhet i naturområder, og særskilt i verneområder, samt allemannsretten, er det usikkert hvor attraktive slike ordninger vil være for turismenæringen i de nordiske landene.

For å dekke noen av utgiftene som den økte tilstrømningen av turister medfører (f.eks. knyttet til belastning av infrastruktur), har det i noen av de nordiske landene også blitt foreslått å øke moms på typiske turismeprodukter til et generelt momsnivå. I dag ser det ut til at slike forslag ikke har tilstrekkelig politisk støtte. En alternativ løsning kan være økonomiske bidrag kanalisert gjennom destinasjonsselskaper som er basert på samarbeid mellom private og offentlige *stakeholders*. Såkalt *adaptive management* basert på involvering av ulike *stakeholders* i planleggingsprosesser har allerede blitt innført i forvaltningen av naturområder i flere steder i Norden. Med tanke på sonering og kanalisering av ferdsel, later *adaptive management* til å være en relativt effektiv måte å oppnå bærekraftige løsninger. Ofte vil en slik forvaltningsstrategi basere seg på virkemidler som har til hensikt å påvirke de besøkende atferdsmønstre, f.eks. ved bruk av guider, informasjon og tilrettelegging, men også i kombinasjon med juridiske og administrative virkemidler. Bruken av planlovgivning, naturvernlovgivning og lovregulering av transport og biltrafikk kan i mange tilfeller anvendes for å regulere tilstrømning av besøkende. Slike instrumenter kan imidlertid i langt større grad tas i

bruk enn det som hittil ha vært tilfelle. Samtidig må en slik strategi basere seg på kunnskap som oppnås gjennom monitorering og forskningsresultater. Dette er enda viktigere i dag, tatt i betraktning den raske veksten i besøkstall og at variasjonen i målsetninger, motiver og behov blant turister blir mer variert. *Adaptive management* forutsetter planleggingsprosesser som tar mange og ikke alltid lett forenligge interesser og målsetninger i betraktning, og som må integreres i felles løsninger for at disse skal oppnå tilslutning blant involverte parter og derigjennom bli effektive. Dette krever derfor ofte omfattende og tidkrevende prosesser.

Turisme er ofte sett på som bærekraft dersom turismespesifikk planlegging og forvaltning tar hensyn både nåtidige og framtidige økonomiske, sosiale og miljømessige virkninger av turisme. For å oppnå dette er en horisontal integrering av sektorer som ikke spesifikt angår turismesatsing (transport, renovasjonsvesen, kulturminner, miljøvern etc.) nødvendig i utforming av politikk og i planleggingsprosesser.

## Anbefalinger

- Sterkere vektlegging av turismeutvikling som kan være bærekraftig uten å forutsette økt besøksvekst. I stor grad synes det som en sektoriell integrasjon, både på lokalt og nasjonalt nivå i politikktutforming og planlegging er nødvendig for å oppnå at miljømessige konsekvenser tillegges like stor vekt som økonomiske og sosiale virkninger av turismesatsing.
- Når det gjelder bruk av avgifter for adgang til et bestemt område eller til å bedrive bestemte aktiviteter eksisterer det praktiske spørsmål knyttet til avgrensning f.eks. ved inngjerding, samtidig som slike ordninger også må avklares med tanke på både de juridiske og politiske aspektene som knytter seg til alle allemannsretten. Mulighetene for å kreve adgangspenger ved enkelte naturattraksjoner med såkalt ikonisk status kunne utredes gjennom å se nærmere på i hvilken grad disse kan gis en status som tilsvarer den museer med offentlig støtte har.
- Mulighetene for å bruke konsesjoner og lisenser for å regulere besøkstall bør vurderes nærmere, ikke minst når det gjelder geografisk avgrensede naturattraksjoner med høye besøkstall. Dette må imidlertid vurderes opp mot hensynet til allmennhetens generelle adgang til naturområder. Spørsmålet om turer organisert av frivillige organisasjoner også bare kan finne sted gjennom lisensordninger bør i den forbindelse f.eks. avklares. Det reiser det seg i tillegg spørsmål om hvorvidt konsesjons- og lisensordninger vil medføre en mer eller mindre fullstendig kommersialisering av adgang til naturområder. Videre bør det tas i betraktning hvorvidt slike ordninger, i tillegg til den funksjonen de kan ha med tanke på å kontrollere tilstrømning av turister, skal bidra til finansiering av forvaltning av turistattraksjoner. Det siste kan potensielt ha innflytelse på målsetningene med forvaltning av naturområder.

- Destinasjonsselskapenes rolle kan styrkes ytterligere med tanke på å bringe private og offentlige aktører sammen i forvaltning av destinasjoner og i utvikling av besøksstrategier, men også med tanke på økonomiske bidrag i forbindelse med offentlige goder.
- Tiltak som kan virke til at besøksøkningen spres til flere naturattraksjoner enn hva som er tilfellet i dag. Dette kan gjøres gjennom markedsføringstiltak, så vel som gjennom utvikling av infrastruktur for å gjøre flere attraksjoner lettere tilgjengelige.
- Videre utvikling av strategier som bygger på såkalt adaptive management, blant annet gjennom sonering og kanalisering av ferdsel og andre tiltak som ikke innebærer direkte adgangsbegrensninger gjennom stengsler og forbud. Forvaltningstiltak av denne typen kan imidlertid kombineres med økt anvendelse av juridiske og administrative instrumenter for både å hindre eller begrense ferdsel og aktiviteter i bestemte områder.



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### **Tourism, nature and sustainability**

Recently, the Nordic countries have experienced a rapid growth in numbers of visitors. At some popular nature attractions this has resulted in crowding, environmental damage, costly rescue operations and overload on public infrastructure. Implementation of economic policy instruments have hence been suggested to secure a more sustainable development. While the applicability of e.g. entrance fees is restricted by the public rights of access, economic instruments tend to represent short-sighted solutions. Sustainable development requires holistic policies, which take environmental, social and economic aspects into consideration in a long-term perspective. To achieve a more sustainable development of tourism, it is suggested that a limited use of economic instrument should take place in combination with adaptive management strategies and available legal and administrative instruments.



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