Summary

The Norwegian Air Travel Survey 2017

TØI Report 1646/2018
Authors: Harald Thune-Larsen, Eivind Farstad
Oslo 2018 63 pages Norwegian language

This report presents results from the 2017 Norwegian Air Travel Survey for Avinor's airports.

Information from 147,000 passengers has been analyzed. Results show that domestic leisure traffic increased by 8 percent while business traffic was reduced by 2 percent from 2015 to 2017. 56 percent of domestic traffic is now leisure traffic. The amount of foreigners on domestic routes increased by 53 percent and the share of foreigners increased from 9 percent in 2015 to 13 percent in 2017.

International scheduled traffic at Avinors airports increased from 17,9 million journeys in 2015 to 19,8 million in 2017. Most of the growth, 73 per cent, comes from passengers resident outside Norway travelling through Oslo Airport. Oslo Airport also increased its share of hub traffic between regional airports and international destinations from 51 percent in 2015 to 58 percent in 2017.
From 2015 to 2017, Norwegians' traffic on holiday and leisure trips with scheduled flights abroad increased by 561,000 passengers (eight percent) at Avinor airports.

The growth in public transport share at the major airports stagnated in 2017. The exception is Stavanger, where the proportion increased from 18 per cent in 2015 to 21 per cent in 2021.

About the survey

In the Norwegian Air Travel Survey 2017 (RVU 2017), 147,000 passengers responded to questions about their travel. The survey covers 99 percent of domestic air travel and nearly all air travel between Norway and international destinations, with the exception of traffic to/from Sandefjord Airport Torp.

Domestic air traffic

In 2017, Norwegians made an average of 2.3 domestic air journeys. This is slightly less than the level of 2.4 in 2013 and 2015. The most significant reduction happened in the north, were the average fell from 4.9 to 4.4 in the county of Nordland and from 6.6 to 5.4 in Troms.

SAS is still the largest airline on the domestic network, but its market share has fallen from 47 percent in 2015 to 45 percent in 2017. Norwegian has 38 percent of the market and Widerøe 17 percent.

Altogether, domestic air travel grew by 1.7 percent per year from 2015 to 2017, which is higher than the growth rate in the previous two years, but significantly lower than the 3.2 percent annual growth in the 12-year period 2003-2015.

Travel for private purposes comprises 56 percent of domestic air travel in Norway in 2017. The leisure share increased from 54 percent in 2015. The business share fell from 46 percent in 2015 to 44 percent in 2017. In the period 2015-2017 business travel fell by 2 percent and leisure travel increased 8 percent.

Since 2015, the number of business travellers has fallen by 100 000 journeys. Trips related to oil exploration was down by 200,000, and other business traffic increased by 100 000. The share of the traffic related to oil and gas exploration fell from 10 percent in 2015 to 7 percent in 2017.

Foreigners' share of domestic traffic has increased. From 2015 to 2017, the number of foreigners increased by 53 percent, from 1.3 to 2 million journeys. The biggest «foreign» domestic route was Oslo – Tromsø with 350,000 international passengers (30 percent) and an increase of almost 200,000 from 2015. Oslo-Svalbard (53 %) and Oslo-Kirkenes (32 %) had the highest share of international passengers.

Air traffic between Norway and international destinations

International scheduled air traffic in Norway increased from 22.6 million journeys in 2015 to 23.3 million journeys in 2017, divided by 21.4 million journeys on scheduled flights and 2.0 million on charter flights. For the last 10 years, the number of journeys has increased by 5.5 per cent per year. Since 2015, growth has been 1.9 per cent per year. The charter market increased in volume to 2013, reaching 2.7 million passengers. Since then, the number of charter passengers has dropped to 1,95 million.

International scheduled traffic on Avinors airports increased from 9 million in 2005 to 17,9 million in 2015 og further to 19,8 million in 2017. A part of Avinors traffic growth from 2015 to 2017 is linked to the closure of Rygge airport with its 1,6 million annual international passengers in October 2016.

The number of private trips with scheduled flights to and from abroad has increased from 4.6 million journeys in 2005 to 14.2 million journeys in 2017. Over the past two years, leisure travel has increased by 1.8 million journeys, which was the same increase as from 2013 to 2015. The growth in work-related travel is more moderate. The number of work-related journeys has increased from 3.3 million in 2005 to 5.6 million in 2017. Over the past two years, the number of work-related journeys increased by just under 0.3 million. London, Copenhagen and Stockholm are still the biggest international destinations for scheduled traffic.

The market is increasingly dominated by Norwegian Air Shuttle and SAS, which in 2017 totaled 13.1 million international passengers with scheduled flights, which is one and a half million more than two years before. These two companies now fly two out of three international passengers (67 percent). Developments with the decline for SAS and Norwegian's growth continued in 2017. Norwegian has increased its share from 12 percent market share in 2005 to 39 percent of the market in 2017. During the same period, SAS's market share has gradually declined from almost half of the market in 2005 to below 30 percent in 2017.

The main destination country overseas is still the United States, with 1.2 million passengers in 2017. The United States accounted for the highest growth from 2015 to 2017, counted in number of passengers (181,000). Thailand with 268,000 passengers is still the second largest destination country but had a decline of nine percent and 27,000 fewer passengers than in 2015. Canada continues its growth and has taken over for Dubai / FAE as the third largest destination with over 100,000 passengers in 2017 and six per cent annual growth since 2009.

Intercontinental destinations accounted for 15 per cent of international scheduled traffic to and from Avinor's airports, which is the same share as in 2015. It is still in line with the traffic share twelve years earlier, and the proportion has been quite evenly around 15 per

cent in the period. During the last 10 years from 2007 to 2017, the number of intercontinental passengers increased from 1.7 to 2.9 million, a growth of 75 percent. This corresponds to an annual growth rate of five percent.
North America is still the largest intercontinental destination, and growth has been seven percent per year over the past 10 years. Growth to North America has risen in recent years, from four per cent growth per year to 2013, and to seven per cent in the last four years. Traffic to the Middle East has increased 10 percent per year in the period 2007-2017, and traffic to Africa by three per cent per year. Asia traffic has declined from eight to five percent annual growth. Oceania has grown five percent a year, but traffic to Latin America has fallen by four per cent per year over the last decade.

For the last two years, Oslo has consolidated its position as an important airport for both direct traffic and international transfer. The direct traffic growth at Oslo airport has been among the highest in Norway, and as a hub for international traffic from regional airports, Oslo has also increased its importance. The growth in the number of direct international connections has also been highest for Oslo.

International holiday and leisure traffic - most of the growth comes from passengers living outside Norway

From 2015 to 2017, Norwegians' traffic on holiday and leisure trips with scheduled flights abroad increased by 561,000 passengers (eight percent) at Avinor airports.

Growth in this market has been highest among people between the ages of 30 and 49 in the period 2005-2017, and in the age groups 30-39 and 40-49 years, growth has been greatest in the past eight years.
London is still by far the most popular destination for Norwegians. Alicante has surpassed Copenhagen as the second largest destination, while Malaga has had the greatest relative growth among the main destinations. Some of the typical city destinations, Rome, Paris and Barcelona, on the other hand, have lost traffic from 2015 to 2017.
The proportion of long journeys (over 7 nights) has increased since 2015, while medium-term travel (4-7 overnight stays) have decreased their share in 2017.

From 2015 to 2017, the growth in foreigners' overnight stays in commercial accommodations in Norway was almost twice as high as the growth in overnight stays by Norwegians (12.7 and 6.8 per cent, respectively). It is in line with the fact that most of the growth in foreign air traffic in the last two years is from foreigners' visits in Norway, which is the same trend as two years earlier.
At Avinor airports, most visitors came from the United Kingdom (635,000), the United States (486,000) and Germany (395,000), which were the three largest markets, with 15, 11 and 9 percent market share, respectively. Sweden (295,000), Denmark (242,000) and France (219,000) then follow.
The largest submarket is holiday/leisure travel with more than a week's duration. These trips totaled 28 per cent of the tourist traffic by plane into Norway in 2017, slightly down from 32 per cent in 2015. However, still almost half of the flight passengers to Norway (44 per cent) are away from home more than seven nights.

Access to airports

The survey also shows that the share of train transport in ground access to Oslo airport stayed at 56 percent, but the market share of NSB increased from 21 percent in 2016 to 24 percent in 2017. The market share of Flytoget decreased from 36 to 32 percent.

In Bergen, a new light rail link captured 24 percent of the ground access to Bergen Airport by the 3rd 4 month-period of 2017, mainly by substituting bus, but also by substituting some private transport.