

Just visiting?

Methods for integrating visitor management in planning work

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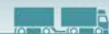
The purpose of the INNOMET project has been to assist partners with the establishment and development of a visitor management methodology by 1) creating practically relevant knowledge and user-friendly tools that municipalities need to make various decisions in work with explicit themes that affect visitors and the local population; and 2) assessing the practical applicability of research results in planning work. The project has been primarily concerned with developing methods that municipal and regional administrative authorities can use to shed light on aspects that are important for visitor management in planning. Much of the report is therefore about the presentation of methods to be able to carry out the analyses. Specifically, we present methods for managing recreational traffic in nature, assessing service performance, and estimating tourism-related value creation, as well as recommendations on how to monitor environmental, social and cultural values over time. In the presentation of the methods, we describe the strengths and weaknesses of each method, as well as opportunities and challenges for using the methods in planning. The aim is to make visible what is required to apply these methods and what one can expect by using them.

Furthermore, the report explains why and how it is important to integrate visitor management in different planning processes. The latter is further specified in the [guidelines](#) created within the project, which we also briefly present in this report. INNOMET's holistic approach to visitors and community development together with the link to the planning system means that one has come a step closer to join these aspects. The report and the guidelines summarize knowledge, methods, resources, and advice that local and regional administrative authorities can apply to plan a land use and local community development that consider both permanent residents and visitors and where both economic, social and environmental aspects have been assessed.

Methods and tools for managing recreational traffic in nature areas

The recreational traffic analysis utilizes the potential of new and large data material (Strava) to describe the traffic volume and spatial-temporal extent in a new and innovative way. The analysis shows that the effects that cabin constructions have on nature areas are about much more than the cabin itself and the land they are built upon.

The human footprint extends far into the recreational areas, which may have vulnerable animal and plant life or a local use that is affected by the increased traffic. In the traffic



analysis, we identified several large areas with traffic from the cabins that overlap with the wild reindeer's land use, in the south-east, in the vulnerable migration passage at Flatvollen, and in areas north-west. The analysis shows potential areas of conflict between wild reindeer and recreational traffic. However, it says nothing about the effects this has on the wild reindeer living there. Wild reindeer in Norefjell-Reinsjøfjell are among the "tameest" in Norway and have a greater ability to adapt to traffic than other types of reindeer.

Furthermore, analysis of the recreational traffic identified large areas with little traffic. Identifying areas with differentiated use is important to be able to assess measures to manage traffic. The traffic analysis also included a scenario analysis which points to the fact that cabin construction could generate new traffic into what are currently quiet and vulnerable areas. This also provides useful knowledge for revising old plans and reassessing future land development.

Methods for assessing service performance

We have illustrated that it is possible to produce key figures to assess current service performance and estimate future service needs based on relatively easily accessible data and simple analyses.

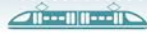
Use of these key figures shows that visitors generally contribute to a better level of service than what could be expected only on the basis of permanent residents. This applies to most services, although there are some exceptions. At the same time, the analysis points out that cabins in the Norefjell-Reinsjøfjell region do not create the effects on level of employment that one might expect. Yet, this apparent potential for developing further services must be interpreted under awareness of the geographical location of both cabins, residential areas and services and assessed from a regional perspective, since municipalities satisfy service needs beyond their administrative boundaries. The latter also means that costs and incomes related to an expansion of the service offer can occur outside the municipalities with needs for such services. The accessibility analysis shows that accessibility to services that cover essential needs varies across municipalities and population segments. Among other things, we see that a significant proportion of the cabin population lives far from emergency services.

Application of these methods can be useful for municipal and regional administrative authorities to uncover untapped potential in service provision based on services offered across municipal boundaries, to establish priority areas in plans for future development and to assess whether and (if so) where it is most appropriate to develop cabins, housing, and services.

Methods for estimating tourism-related value creation

Our attempts to develop a method to assess economic value creation related to tourism confirm what we already knew: that weaknesses and deficiencies in both demand-side and supply-side data affect the level of precision in estimations. Within these limitations, we have tried to raise awareness of what are the most central indicators and of what is a necessary minimum knowledge base, as well as of the importance of local knowledge.

The level of precision in the calculation of economic figures such as production value, value creation and employment can be significantly increased with the production/provision of good local data on the demand side. This applies particularly in municipalities with a large proportion of holiday homes, where retail and various services linked to cabin ownership and cabin use play an important role in the local economy. Retail trade data from Statistics Norway is a good source for calculating added turnover, also from day visitors and passers-by. However, a lack of knowledge about local and regional trade patterns makes it difficult to calculate the real tourism-related retail share within each municipality.



An optimal local data supply to strengthen the management-related knowledge base will involve establishing time series for economic data on tourism. Time series are also needed to monitor attitudes among permanent residents and visitors about socio-cultural aspects. We have shown that with surveys as a background, one can collect data on attitude indicators that can be followed up over time. Our recommendation is to advantage of the benefits of coordinating data needs. For most of the municipalities in the Norefjell-Reinsjøfjell region, it is therefore appropriate to couple data needs for informing visitor management with the data required for periodic updating of Innovation Norway's indicators for certification as a sustainable destination.

Integration of visitor management in planning work

We consider it positive that visitor management has evolved from being only used as an approach for visitor strategies in conservation areas to being applied to local community development more generally. The link between visitor management and planning gives a new dimension to how to work locally with local community development. By integrating the visitor perspective into planning, municipalities can gain greater predictability of what may happen, giving them improved opportunities to handle and manage development before problems arise.

When working to integrate visitor management in planning, it is particularly important to gain an overview of actors and map values to discuss visitor management locally. Another important learning point is that visits and visitor management should be incorporated at different planning processes in order to comprehensively approach visitor management. The planning strategy provides a distinct opportunity since in this process it is discussed in which plans visitor management should be included, and in what way visitor management should be investigated and discussed. Throughout the project, we have also been acquainted with the important role that regional authorities might take by providing a holistic perspective through both regional plans, working groups and planning forums.

In developing INNOMET [guidelines](#), we build on initiatives and schemes that have been developed to approach visitation in a local context from an administrative point of view, as well as methods produced and tested within the INNOMET project that are presented in this report. The guidelines will hopefully help to increase awareness of visitor management and to illustrate how visitor management can be integrated into the planning system for a more holistic and predictable coordination of tourism and site development.