Governance innovation cases in coastal tourism

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1. Introduction

InnoCoast

This publication is a collection of case studies dealing with governance innovations in tourism. The case studies were undertaken as part of the research project InnoCoast. InnoCoast is a cross-institutional project with five Danish universities and knowledge associates. A range of industry partners and authorities were also involved.

Although in good progress with growth in the number of bednights over the past years, tourism in Denmark’s coastal areas faces a number of challenges connected to seasonal fluctuations, service quality levels, and product variety. Tourism experiences are closely associated with natural and cultural resources. Unlike competing European destinations, local tourist businesses in coastal Denmark have been unable to capitalize extensively on the available potentials. In order to successfully address both existing and new demands, innovative activities are needed at all levels and within all sectors.

The aim of InnoCoast is to provide knowledge that will increase the innovation insight and competencies of local stakeholders and thereby raise the innovation capability and capacity at the firm and community levels. To this end, the project adopts a comprehensive approach to innovation. The approach focuses on how tourist experiences are co-created in the interplay between tourists, providers, NGOs, and governing bodies. Hence, the central line of inquiry throughout the research project deals with the innovation prospects inherent in the practice of co-creation undertaken across actor groups, sectors. InnoCoast includes empirically-based research into the structures, practices, and effects of networking, as well as into the synergies and collaboration among coastal areas and wider international capacities.

InnoCoast is subdivided in five work packages, each of which reflects a different strategic focus of research: food, cultural attractions, outdoor tourism, shared economy, and governance. This report addresses the issues under the theme of governance innovations.

What are governance innovations?

The purpose of this report is to examine and exemplify governance innovations in coastal tourism. It delivers illustrative case studies of the phenomenon. The report’s ambition is not to be comprehensive in any respect, but rather to widen the general understanding for the building stones of governance and the dilemmas of governing in coastal tourism.

Governance can be comprehended using one of two different approaches: the state angle and the civil society angle. Jessop (2002) determines that the state is capitalism’s necessary “other”. Social relations that produce and sustain the economic viability and business formats require extra-economic rules and institutions to function. Without an amount of such rules and institutions, the single business or individual cannot perform. While the rules and regulations could be considered barriers, nuisance, or economic burdens, the combined effect on societies and business communities would be more beneficial than having no rules and institutions.
In his article “The Janus face of governance”, Swyngedouw (2005; p. 1994) claims that governance and governants are much more than the state: “Governance is a method/mechanism for dealing with a broad range of problems/conflicts in which actors regularly arrive at mutually satisfactory and binding decisions by negotiating with each other and co-operating in the implementation of these decisions.”

Governance innovations can then be understood as new government arrangements that rearticulate the state-civil society relationship, repositioning the meaning of citizenship (Swyngedouw, 2005). Accordingly, examinations through the case studies recognize the perpetual instability of governance. The idea is that governance is continuously modernized. Systematizing the knowledge about the directions for such renewals may benefit the practical exponents of governance, including public authorities, business organizations, destination management bodies, and NGOs.

The selection of case studies and methodology

Governance studies in tourism are widespread (Bramwell & Lane, 2012), but innovation in the field of governance is a topic only modestly occurring in tourism research. Knowledge about the term, the theory, and the practice of governance innovation is scarce. For that reason, the following case studies are highly explorative. Not all examples are Danish, but all include information of relevance for development challenges in the Danish coastal zones.

Following the objectives of the InnoCoast project, it was critical to identify cases with some variation in type, topic, stakeholder groups, and location. In order to address the state-civil society dichotomy, it was also crucial to search for examples where governance and regulation were in the hands of government bodies, as well as for cases that called for positioning and changed the other partners’ roles.

Colleagues from the InnoCoast project have been helpful in the identification of good examples and making contact with relevant stakeholders. Other cases emerged from literature reviews and Internet searches. Documentation from the cases was acquired from projects, stakeholders, and secondary sources, as well as through personal and telephone interviews. The interviews focused on the background, the processes, the stakeholders involved, and the observed impacts for coastal tourism and for the stakeholders of the governance change. The case studies attempted to pinpoint the nature and character of the innovations, including why and how the changed governance structures and methods could be said to be new.

Further reading and viewing


InnoCoast project website: http://www.cgs.aau.dk/forskning/projekter/innocoast
2. Voluntary agreements with private landowners

Continuously, tourists claim for innovative products and services. As traditional touristic areas are crowding, visitor experiences in nature areas and rural districts become more tempting than ever, necessitating the development of a range of infrastructures, delivery services, supporting facilities, etc. It is of importance to allow tourists adequate access, interpretation, entertainment, and relaxation opportunities while visiting. However, as landscapes, flora, and fauna are the main attractions, it is also critical not to compromise the quality of the natural environment. Ensuring a balance demands new types of innovations.

Thus, innovation in tourism also regards a range of governance mechanisms. Such innovations include changes in content and methods of rulemaking, rule-setting, and rule implementation. They are innovations in the way that actors make something happen and the way that they change incentives. Governance innovations can embody new approaches by which institutions will be built and modified, and they can include new arrangements that rearticulate the state-civil relationship, thereby repositioning the meaning of citizenship (Swyngedoduw, 2005).

Odderbæk Vandløbslaug (The Otter River Waterway Cooperation) in Denmark can be considered a governance innovation. Its activities and emerging mode of operation have had and will potentially in the future encompass positive implications for both the crucial environmental nature protection and the resilience among citizens and farmers in the local area. In addition, the totality of the operation may, as explained below, enhance the prospects for tourists who pay a visit.
The Odderbæk is a small river system in rural Denmark that is connected to a larger system of rivers and lakes. The lake area and forests in the vicinity are popular for tourism, but most of the Odderbæk is located in agricultural landscapes where tourism is not developed.

Environmental challenges

The Otter River Waterway Cooperation was established after a council meeting in the municipality in 1999, where the alarming results of investigations of water quality, the flora and fauna diversity and sediment movements were presented. The river was clean, but also dead. The environmental monitoring authorities identified the need for action, but emphasized also that landowners were vital as principal actors. The authorities lacked prohibitory rules or other regulations that could be efficient in a case like this.

One of the members of the municipality council was Niels Clemmensen, a local farmer owning property on the riverside. Niels contacted 10 neighbors owning land at the river border and, in a working group, they started a process of collecting information about farming practices and nature quality. The group identified a geographical space of action that exceeded the 10 landowners’ property. In fact, it made sense to include the whole river system of Odderbæk for nature improvements. Thus, a holistic approach was essential for the actors. The local authorities agreed to pay for small but strategically important interventions, such as removing barriers and drainage items in the river that had been established over the years by farmers. The conditions proposed by the local authority were that the locals should create a formalized waterway cooperation on a voluntary basis and with open membership. The cooperation should have enough muscle to take over the obligations in terms of the improvement of the nature qualities of the Odderbæk. The authorities advised the locals in the legal processes, the setting up of statutes, and the election of a board. In a governance context, it is critical to understand that a formalized association could be the legitimate counterpart for government agencies that ensures a systematic strategy. Formalization took place, membership increased over the year, and the cooperation grew to 106 members in 2017. Statutes and guidelines were issued that describe precisely the obligations and privileges of landowners along the riverside.

The first thing for the cooperation to do was establish riverside maintenance obligations for the relevant landowners, and to ensure that these were approved by the municipality council, which was the formal waterway authority. At that time (2000), this was an entirely new type of agreement. It decentralized power, influence, and initiative to the Otter River Waterway Cooperation. The governance model is considered a very special case, as the private cooperative association achieves a legal power to work with the waterway.

The agreement became a clear motivator for landowners along the river to start the removal of barriers and thus to create small new biotopes. Biologists and nature enthusiasts walked along the river together with the members of the cooperative, who have been greatly inspired by the continuous flow of new information and knowledge made available to them. Actors created new ideas by walking around, and suggestions were integrated into a more comprehensive nature protection plan for the whole area. Copenhagen University’s landscape biologists assisted in this process, and students helped to enhance the nature planning to the farm holding level. Of all the farmers owning land alongside the river, 49 agreed to participate actively in this part of the development.
Community engagement

Nature areas in the vicinity of the Odderbæk used to be fairly inaccessible to the public, but the local villagers soon started to express a clearer wish to gain access. Successfully, the Otter River Waterway Collaboration applied for external funding to establish tracks and trails. The planning of the trails was undertaken as a bottom-up process. The landowning farmers suggested the places for tracks, again mainly during walks in the area. It was extremely essential that the exact placement of the tracks was not imposed on the farmers, but rather occurred as a matter of hands-on negotiation in the fields. Some farmers were nervous that visitors would frighten the grassing animals or cause damage. However, as the first farmer got his trails established, others saw that the pride of area was increasing, and good stories could frame the initiative well. The whole system of 40 kilometers of trails was finalized in 2007, with all landowners on board. There are agreements with every riverside landowner to provide access and ensure that the areas are grassed in order to maintain the original landscape value. To make this happen, the collaboration had a spinoff in the format of a grassing guild that practically managed cattle so it could move somewhat freely in the area across properties.

The otter from which the river has its name has been extinct from the area for many years, but it has been seen again. Contributing to more bio-diversity is part of the voluntary agreements, and the landowners have become more aware of the details in landscape management that are assistive to nature improvements without compromising the area’s agricultural production opportunities.

Where is tourism in the Odderbæk restructuring processes? The area is not by any means a mass tourism destination. However, the invitation of the locals has gradually increased the interest for others to visit as well. Locals bring guests to come along for walks. Those parts of the trail that links up to a summer-cottage area are the most used. The Otter River Waterway Cooperation puts a
quite substantial energy into interpretative signage, pamphlets, and a website. The trails are also
promoted on a national website called Sporet, which describes many rural trails in Denmark. Ap-
proximately 15,000 people visit the Odderbæk area every year. The trails are used by organizers of
pilgrim walks and a number of outdoor organizations. Every year on Trail Day, the Otter River Wa-
terway Cooperation and voluntary associations from the community create an experience with
forms of entertainment and involving, such as music and singing during walks.

Working with voluntary agreements is particularly interesting in a Danish context, as many nature
areas of potential importance for tourism are not publicly owned. Negotiation skills are critical
competencies for government officials and other initiators to get the process going. The Odderbæk
is a prime example of how it is possible to unify a range of objectives in voluntary agreements to
include economic, access, and environmental targets. The incentives to participate, and to give and
take from the project, vary significantly. An accurate understanding of the incentives is essential.
Achieving success of this endeavor requires an open dialogue. In Odderbæk, the incentives for
landowners to be part of the development have clearly increased. Membership costs a very modest
annual fee. Most services delivered by the board and others are non-paid voluntary work, and the
municipality offers some help. The strong commitment by a variety of stakeholders makes it pos-
sible for the Otter River Waterway Cooperation to apply for external funding from governmental and
private foundations for specific projects.

A platform for the expansion of tourism

Tourism objectives are typically not the first to be considered in waterway projects, but the Odd-
erbæk shows that tourism is adding up gradually, as locals and visitors let the word go, including
with social media. The press has provided a media presence, and a TV series for children has used
the area as a location. Overall and until now, the Odderbæk area has established only small scale
and unsophisticated tourism facilities, such as the trails, a picnic house, and benches on viewing
places. Nonetheless, it is interesting to observe that the trail and tracks have been re-interpreted for
winter use, thus crucially strengthening the area’s reputation, even if there is not often snow in
Denmark. This is an indication of the way that tourism may, based on the local objectives and small
scale, go hand-in-hand with advanced nature protection measures on a voluntary basis.

It is not certain what the future will bring to the area, but more agritourism and outdoor activities
might be sustainably developed to supplement the existing types of day visits. The mode of opera-
tion and the statutes established make it likely that the Otter River Waterway Collaboration can
accommodate new types of touristic use of the area, so long as the pressure is still quite modest.
However, some issues have to be addressed. For example, a few landowners are not keen on ac-
commodating riders or mountain bikers. The Otter River Waterway Cooperation thinks about ways
to incorporate these groups without corrupting the benefits achieved already.

The implementation and development of the Odderbæk project have made the cooperative a pilot in
an international collaboration called Smart Natura, which works with nature conservation from the
bottom up. Information about the governance methods is more systematically disseminated to other
similar areas in Denmark and in several European countries.
Further reading and viewing


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGb4obtMshc

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAPic49UiBM

www.smartnatura.dk
3. Manifestos as governance principles: New Nordic Cuisine

In the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, gastronomy has undergone a veritable period of revolution. Over the past two decades, the positive reputation of these countries as culinary hotspots has increased dramatically. Gourmet restaurants have emerged particularly in metropolitan areas, but also in smaller places in coastal regions, and the number of Michelin stars awarded to establishments in the Nordic countries rose from next to none to several. The culinary landscape has become far more heterogeneous, and food has become a reason to take vacations in the Nordic countries, which was not previously the case.

There is not one single reason for this development—factors include demand structures, people issues, and food supply changes. However, that is not all. The development was rapidly expanded through the New Nordic Cuisine Manifesto, which was formulated by leading chefs and other food experts, food enthusiasts, and media actors. The manifesto emerged out of a profound frustration with the low and declining food standards in the Nordic countries, a negative development that was an astonishing and grotesque paradox considering the climatically and economically excellent con-
ditions for food provision in the Nordic countries and the long traditions for efficient and knowledge-based agriculture and food industries.

The creation of a food and cuisine manifesto is very similar to what happened in the movie industry. In 1995, Danish filmmakers made the “Dogma.” No longer did they want to imitate the glittering and artificial Hollywood productions—they wanted to go their own way, but with a comprehensive direction. The rules formulated in the DOGMA95 included, for example, that lighting should be natural, that shooting must take place on location, that optical work and filters were forbidden, that the camera must be hand-held, etc. This vow of chastity, as it was called, led to the production of 10 hardcore Dogma films, which occupied the full attention of critics at the international film scene. The Dogma changed the producers’ and audience’s attitudes on the national film scene and, in subsequent years, many award-winning film and TV-series paid tribute to the anarchistic turnaround. Danish and Nordic films have been exported massively to foreign screens, and the tourism in these regions has also benefitted from the image of “Nordic Noir.”

Much like the DOGMA95, the New Nordic Cuisine manifesto can be considered a governance innovation, as it changes the rules and perceptions of Nordic gastronomy tourism and directs the behavior of food producers and consumers in new directions.

The Manifesto

The New Nordic Cuisine manifesto, which somewhat rejects the tenets of French haute cuisine, includes the following stated purposes:

1. To express the purity, freshness, simplicity, and ethics we wish to associate with our region.
2. To reflect the changes of the seasons in the meals we make.
3. To base our cooking on ingredients and produce whose characteristics are particularly in our climates, landscapes, and waters.
4. To combine the demand for good taste with modern knowledge of health and well-being.
5. To promote Nordic products and the variety of Nordic producers—and to spread the word about their underlying cultures.
6. To promote animal welfare and a sound production process in our seas, on our farmlands, and in the wild.
7. To develop new applications for traditional Nordic food products.
8. To combine the best in Nordic cookery and culinary traditions with impulses from abroad.
9. To combine local self-sufficiency with regional sharing of high-quality products.
10. To join forces with consumer representatives, other cooking craftsmen, and agriculture, fishing, food, retail, and wholesales industries, as well as researchers, teachers, politicians, and authorities on this project for the benefit and advantage of everyone in the Nordic countries.

How could such principles, on-the-surface simple, even self-evident, change the culinary scene? The biggest effect may be psychological. The manifesto is comprehensive, but it is not at all binding - enforcement is not cited by dedicated authoritative bodies. The publication and promotion of the manifesto opened up the local peoples’ eyes to the particular Nordic, first to the elites, and later it diffused to the spheres and layers of the average daily life. Just as important, it started a process of opening toward the international food scene. Crucially, the food actors in the whole food chain (from agricultural and food producers to restaurants) became more curious and ambitious. A demand for quality food products emerged across the country; particularly, small-scale producers
were willing to deliver. The large producers in the meat, milk, cereals, fruit, vegetable, and drinks sectors, as well as the large-scale retail stores, were far slower in their reactions.

Feeding the tourists in restaurants is critical for a country’s culinary image, and the portfolio of restaurants and their status may be important. NOMA has been the signature restaurant referred to in international media—it has been gossiped about in every sense. NOMA eagerly took on the New Nordic Food concept and insisted on a steep learning curve in the inventions and reinventions of Nordic ingredients. Its location on the harbor front in Copenhagen consisted of the NOMA restaurant, while the upstairs rooms were used for systematic food innovation activities. The activities benefited the restaurant, as well as the food sector more generally, because many food providers were invited to co-create with the NOMA staff.

NOMA worked with interns, food specialists, and chefs from all over the world who wanted to follow the processes and deliver inspiration. In this sense, the internationalization of Nordic food and the concept expressed in the manifesto gained speed and refinement.

Many of the up and coming restaurants that subscribed to the manifesto cultivated close collaborative alliances with local food producers. The mutual benefit was that the restaurants accessed new and interesting products and ingredients, and that the producers could use the restaurants as “test benches” and marketing platforms for their products. Thereby, tourists and restaurant goers had a wider impact on the innovative milieu in the food sector, which was an impact that is not always fully recognized.
The impacts on tourism

However, most Nordic restaurants have nowhere near the quality and sophistication of restaurants like NOMA. The majority still deliver a modest, even mediocre food choice. In surveys, tourists keep asking for a wider dissemination of the qualities suggested by the manifesto, as well as less pricey outlets. This illustrates that it might in fact take quite a long time for a manifesto to become a veritable social movement, and that rural and coastal food actors are late adopters. As a governance measure and instrument, a manifesto can create a momentum, when integrated with clever narratives. At best, customers will become ambassadors. A manifesto is, however, not a compulsory governance instrument, and its enactment can be delayed by the counteractive endeavors of the mainstream food industry.

The New Nordic Cuisine Manifesto remains a foundation for the Nordic food movement. It is interesting to notice that the implementation is not dependent on touristic demand alone. Its emergence as a social movement comes from other angles, such as in the format of demand from catering in schools, hospitals, etc. Years after the publication of the manifesto, such demand and innovation drivers have become more important.

A manifesto will not achieve anything without active media attention. One of the initiators, Claus Meyer, was a TV chef who published cookbooks, gave many talks to the sector about his ideas, and delivered collaborative assistance with universities to research health and nutrition. The manifesto thereby found a way to common knowledge through many platforms. On the Nordic scene, Eldrimmer in Sweden became a location where food people gathered every year for the purpose of knowledge dissemination and innovation. Eldrimmer is perhaps the closest that the manifesto has come to an institutionalization of the manifesto in time, place, and structure.

Further reading and viewing


www.eldrimmer.com
4. Codes of conduct for outdoor tourism operators

“Take nothing but pictures. Kill nothing but time. Leave nothing but footprints. Make nothing but memories.” - Arctic Adventures

Guidelines as those in the above quote are reminders for tourists who make their way into forests, wildernesses, and mountain areas. Codes of conduct that can guide the sustainability of tourist behavior are well-known around the world, and there are many good examples that address the particular vulnerabilities in the areas that tourists want to experience. UNWTO provides some examples of general codes of conduct.

Tourists may litter, spill waste water, make noise, disturb animals, etc. in spite of a region’s preservation and sustainability objectives. But tourists cannot alone be held responsible. There are other stakeholders in rural, coastal, and protected areas whose business is to make the locations and nature attractions available for tourists. Such tourism enterprises include accommodation facilities, tour guides, shops and kiosks, and event managers. They are part of the tourism value chain, and their compliance with sustainable and ethical practices may be as important - if not more so - than the attitudes and behaviors of individual tourists. Communication with and commitment from tourism operators is critical, as business stakeholders can affect the conduct of tourists on a continual basis. Tourist companies have more “touch points” than governments, and governance through tourist companies can therefore be particularly effective.
Codes of conduct for tourism businesses

As inspired by Eagles et al. (2001), a list of main issues for codes of conducts for tourism operators in protected and environmentally vulnerable areas can contain the following:

- **Prepare travelers.** Ensure that concise information is available before the trip about the particularities of the local areas, the specific protective measures that apply, and the equipment to be brought or avoided.

- **Inform the travelers.** Make available all information about the place, including both the wonders and the environmental vulnerabilities. Pass on materials from the authorities to the tourists, such as maps, guidebooks, codes of conduct, suggested trips, etc. Ensure that information is provided on location and interpreted in the definite spatial and environmental context.

- **Minimize the negative visitor impacts.** Prevent the degradation of the environment and choose locations and routes for tourism activities in a way that affects the environment least. Beware of seasonal issues. Ensure that any emissions from and impacts of the touristic activities are handled in a responsible way. Avoid destinations that are under-managed or over-visited.

- **Contribute to conservation.** Adopt building styles and materials to traditions and local resources. Contribute to NGOs and other stakeholders who work with conservation in the field. Convince guests to contribute to this protection with money, in kind, or by becoming “ambassadors.”

- **Install leadership.** Train staff to communicate with and manage tourists in sensitive natural and cultural settings. Insist on the conservation principles and values in the business visions, strategies, and actions, and communicate them to staff on a continual basis.

- **Cultivate partnerships.** Work with local people and community groups. Affect other tourism actors and authorities to proactively raise the ambitions of sustainable practice. Choose only suppliers and business partners who comply with recognized standards.

Who can issue such standards and codes of conduct that apply to tourism organizations and businesses? Most codes of conduct are implemented by governments, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), or associations of tourism actors. They are usually voluntary for tourism business organizations. However, if marketed well to tourists and expanded to a large number of tourism service providers, it is likely that the adaption and utilization of such standards will increase with a cumulative effect, where it seems better to converge than not. Such systems depend on a concise control system and follow-up to ensure that benefits are consolidated and free-riding is limited. When carefully conceived, managed, and developed, codes of conduct can be dynamic governance innovations.

Vakinn, inaugurated in 2010, is an Icelandic certification and environmental quality and certification system that is very comprehensive (Eide & Borch, 2014). The system was developed and is
managed by Visit Iceland, and it was implemented by the Icelandic Travel Industry Association in cooperation with the Innovation Center Iceland and the Icelandic Tourism Association. All categories of tourism enterprises can be certified. Already, 101 companies are certified and 76 are under evaluation. The Vakinn system has a strong emphasis on environment and safety, and these criteria are particularly important for outdoor tourism providers. Codes of conduct are embedded in the criteria for certification.

Kayaking is one of many possible outdoor activities in Iceland
Photo: Dorthe Eide

Outdoor company Arctic Adventures

Arctic Adventures is an Icelandic outdoor tourism organizer participating in Vakinn. The company organizes trips into the remote areas and highlands of Iceland. It offers trekking, hiking, boating, rafting, climbing, riding, diving, etc., and invites tourists to see and experience spectacular nature phenomena such as the Northern Lights, whales, volcanoes, glaciers, etc. The company works mainly with guided trips, and it engages a whole range of other stakeholders.

In accordance with the Vakinn certification, all guides and group leaders have been through a training system. Required safety training includes the “Wilderness First Responder,” which is a Vakinn-recognized course offered by the Icelandic Association for Search and Rescue. Guides are also required to have relevant courses in navigation, mountaineering, avalanches, and crevasse rescue.

The company is extremely aware of the codes of conduct in nature. All guides are instructed in and trained to ensure that the company and the tourists never forget to “leave no trace.” This specific code of conduct contains the following sub-issues, which are announced on the website:

- Remove all waste and refuse from Arctic Adventures’ tour areas of operation; “we carry out what we carry in.” Additionally, staff must also dispose of any waste found in the area, even when that waste is not connected to the operation of their tour.
• Properly dispose of all waste, including the recycling of all recyclable materials. This applies to areas in the field of operation, not just the facilities of Arctic Adventures.

• Inform clients of the “leave no trace policy” and explain how it applies to them.

• Discourage the taking of natural “souvenirs”: take only photographs.

• Ensure that all participants minimize their environmental impact by keeping to marked paths and trails whenever possible.

• Ensure that no contaminants enter the water sources or systems.

• Ensure that campsites and resting areas are left in a condition that is at least as good as the condition in which they were found.

Eide and Borch (2014) assessed the Vakinn initiative. A distinct positive effect for the certified companies was that customers became more confident before the trip, and that the quality of the tour increased. Another effect was that it became easier for the tour guide companies to communicate and do business with other environmentally conscious customers and partners. There are also disadvantages connected to rigid codes of conduct, particularly in terms of time and money to be invested. It is an extra burden to train people and supervise them more carefully than was the case prior to the certification.

Tourist interest in what Iceland can offer is overwhelming. Over the course of the last 30 years, the annual growth in international tourist arrivals to Iceland has averaged approximately 9%, and has increased to 22% annually in the last five years (Sæþórsdóttir & Ólafsdóttir, 2017). The Icelandic parliament is increasingly focuses the need to plan and regulate nature areas in order to ensure accessibility, and also to protect the qualities that tourists want to see. This case illustrates the regulatory endeavor of the business enterprises that adopt codes of conduct for themselves. Sæþórsdóttir and Ólafsdóttir (2017) conclude that such initiatives may not stand alone, but should be supplemented by comprehensive and coordinated land-use planning in order to create efficiency for all tourism actors and continued attractiveness in Icelandic tourism from both the environmental and economic points of view.

Further reading and viewing


https://adventures.is/
www.Vakinn.is
http://ethics.unwto.org/content/global-code-ethics-tourism
The marsh landscapes in the Wadden Sea area have an agricultural building heritage

Photo: Klaegager.dk

5. Building heritage regulations in support of tourism development

Heritage is a key resource for rural and coastal tourism. Analyses in the Danish coastal regions demonstrate that tourists appreciate the authentic small towns, the atmosphere of the narrow streets and cozy town squares, and the picturesque harbors. The surroundings frame shopping, strolling, dining, and sight-seeing opportunities. However, the surveys also conclude that, according to the tourists, Danish coastal towns and other built environments miss some of the aesthetic and historical qualities that they could have had with more attention and care. The tourists remark on the frequent neglect of the buildings; furthermore, the lack of facilities that could attract the tourists decreases their inclination to prolong their stay.

These observations of tourists are supported by the negative impact of the outmigration from Danish rural and coastal areas. There are many empty buildings, and it is difficult to raise funds for the necessary renovations. Furthermore, there is a lack of knowledge about building heritage and limited entrepreneurial capacity to put old buildings into new use.

Ballum is a village located on the fringe of the Wadden Sea on the Danish West Coast, in the Wadden Sea National Park and the vicinity of the UNESCO World Heritage site. The village consists of three small agglomerations of houses and farm buildings. The majority of the houses were built between 1800 and 1930. The oldest farm buildings are of a type commonly known in the Danish
and German Wadden region, and are made of red brick with thatched roofs. Over the past decades, the development in Ballum has been extremely modest, and the population has declined. The lack of expansion has benefited the place in the sense that most of the buildings remain and have maintained their historic features. However, the negative impacts have been hurdles for necessary repairs and historically sensitive improvements.

In 2009, Tønder Municipality, convinced of the significant heritage values in the village, introduced a comprehensive planning process. Prior to the establishment of this process, the local museums and building experts documented the heritage values of the village and contributed to the historical and cultural knowledge of importance for a correct restoration. They were supported by many locals who found historical photographs and added narratives from their ancestors’ time. A pride emerged around the building culture in the area, and this pride increased as a consequence of the systematic examinations and external attention.

“Lokalplan” as a means of regulation

The planning format, a “lokalplan,” is a well-known and much used instrument in Danish planning regulation. The plan was negotiated through a number of meetings with locals in order to ensure their commitment for the content of the plan. A preservation lokalplan contains several sections. A mapping of the building types, features, and histories is a foundation for the planning, and so is included in the plan and guidelines.

The plan does not demand that owners change their buildings immediately. However, at the time of any changes, re-buildings, or renovations, the owners are obliged to comply with the guidelines in the plan. Overall, the compulsory measures and orders include the following:

- The architecture of the façades must be maintained and restored with the building materials and elements that belong to the historical traditions and the type of that particular building. No widening of the windows or doors is allowed. If former stables and barns are to be used for other purposes than farming, larger windows can be added, but they must comply with the forms and details historically found in the building and the village.

- All walls should consist of red bricks of the type originally used in the local area, and the techniques and materials used to form the joints are specified according to historical traditions.

- Painting and whitewashing types and colors are made precise as well, adapting also to the traditional styles and the homogeneity of the village.

- Roofs are to be thatched, unless in zones with risk of fire, where specific other roof covers can be allowed following application to the municipality.

- All details of the doors and windows are outlined in order to comply with the traditions in the area.

The lokalplan provides further details and advice on each of these points, and the plan provides illustrative pictures and architectural designs to be used by the craftspeople who produce new building elements and renovate the old.
Photos from the Lokalplan’s advisory section about the design of historic building details

The lokalplan also addresses the terrain and landscapes around the buildings. The traditional vegetation species to be used in gardens are mentioned. As fencing and paving noticeably determine the overall image of the Wadden Sea village, the plan prescribes the materials to be used for and the designs and locations of fencing, hedges, pavements, etc. The outdoor orders also include rules for signboards and flags.

A lokalplan is legally binding for property owners, and the municipality keenly oversees all prospective changes initiated by the owners. If regulations are rigid, as they are in Ballum, it may create opposition toward the preservation endeavor, particularly because not all owners are likely to have appreciated the initiative in the first place, and active farmers least of all. However, an external driver came along in the form of the Maersk Foundation. The foundation recognized the preservation values of the village and promised support for renovations, provided that the lokalplan included fairly restrictive preservation clauses. The Maersk Foundation’s commitment and the lokalplan have been radical game changers in the village. First of all, building renovations could take place at a far more rapid pace and with more competent historical expertise on board than before. Second, the involvement of a major foundation made Ballum and its heritage widely known, as the media started to become interested in the project.

The prices of houses sold in Ballum are now higher than in other villages in the vicinity. This is a supplementary incentive for the property owners to comply with the planning.

The future of tourism

Ballum is not a big place, and touristic resources are very scarce. One of the farming families decided to move along the tourism track. They own one of the best preserved and biggest farm houses, which is called Klægager. Over the years, they have renovated the building with great care, and the
renovations works have become a touristic attraction in their own respect. The owners discovered that visitors like to know about historical details, and they love to watch the craftspeople at work. Klægager provides space for conferences and parties, and it provides a limited number of rooms for bed and breakfast. Very much consistent with strategy of the village, the interior of the original farmhouse is not much altered, and visitors feel like they are paying a visit to a dear old aunt in the countryside.

Among the inhabitants the pride of the total area has increased, and there is a genuine acknowledgment of the importance of taking care of the building heritage. More of the locals are now offering accommodation services and guided tours in the Wadden Sea area. Markets are organized every year, and kayak enthusiasts have worked intensively with a kayak mekka concept that is yet to be implemented.

The Wadden Sea National Park was one of Denmark’s first national parks. The main attractions are its unique landscape, the geological processes, the flora, and the bird migrations. Ballum is located exactly where, in the spring and the autumn seasons, the impressive dances of millions of migrating birds can be observed. Ballum is one of the small-scale hubs for touristic developments, and the population and municipality are keen to ensure that the area’s architectural and historical image is not ruined by any massive touristic building installments. The lokalplan helps to control development in the area. The plan can be considered an investment guarantee for the locals and for the Mearsk and Realdania Foundations.

Successful achievement in heritage preservation depends on collaboration with external historical and architectural experts, and that has become clear in Ballum. The population in the village is somewhat stabilizing, which is a very reassuring feature to the inhabitants.

Further reading and viewing


www.klaegager.dk
6. Governing the tourism soundscape

In tourism, there has always been a distinct focus on visual experiences. The splendid views of great nature phenomena, the sublime architectural manifestations from the antique and modern eras, and the man-made designs of hotels, restaurants, theme parks, museums, shops, and other interiors constitute the touristic environment and experience. However, the tourism experience is also connected to sound, such as the roar of the waves at the sea, the animal grunts in the zoo, the cheering and squeals of the audience at sporting events and carnivals, the footsteps and chatting of people in the streets, the market stall keepers announcing their goods, taxis coming and going, etc. Experience designs increasingly combine aspects that appeal to all the senses - viewing, hearing, tasting, feeling - so as purposely to enhance the experience and create viable and consistent business cases.

Soundscape is in many ways more critical for the touristic experience than visuals, as tourists often cannot escape from sounds that they find unpleasant. Many airports have introduced a practice of not announcing departures in lounges in order to safeguard travelers from noises that are not strictly necessary. “Silent forests” offer visitors the opportunity to concentrate on experiencing selected sounds from the wind and the birds. Luxury restaurants usually operate with very discrete or no music in the background and limit the waiters’ rattling of cutlery and porcelain to a minimum, while other types of restaurants and bars tend to welcome noise, finding it a remedy to attract customers and stimulate business.

Touristic soundscapes as a totality are not always managed in a concise and strategic way. Resorts and other tour areas are characterized by loose boundaries between public and private spaces and between the outdoors and indoors. The public space, such as streets, parks, beaches, and promenades, constitute the touristic landscape. The crowd and its activities, together with the sounds these produce, are objects of gazing and listening. However, public spaces under limited or non-
observable control may also attract noisy behavior, such as the use of amplified music or the exhibition of happy shouting. This tends to increase in areas where alcohol is part of the key service. The use of motorized tools such as motor-bikes in loop-circulation and water-scooters along beaches also contributes to the soundscape and thereby defines the identity of the area.

Dilemmas and conflicts in the regulation of soundscapes

Governing and managing noise in areas that accommodate tourism is a controversial topic. For some tourism enterprises, noisy environments inside and outside the premises mean good business and profits. For other categories of tourism business, excessive noise does not comply with the possibility to accommodate for the right type of customers. When residents inhabit the same areas as tourists, disputes arise as well, as residential users typically want more peaceful environments.

Over the years, many touristic places seem to have become louder as an effect of wider dispersed amplifying technology, more mobile and outdoor service provision of food and entertainment, and the development of behavioral norms, both among tourism enterprises and among customers. Holiday patterns and leisure hours are spreading 24/7, with no “natural” intervals of quietness.

For these reasons, governing tourist soundscapes is an unavoidable issue for local administrations. Ensuring good touristic experiences depends on long-term and transparent approaches.

Since 1990 in the UK, noise from entertainment facilities has been a matter embedded in environmental regulations. Accordingly, noise from tourism enterprises is included in the environmental protection act. Touristic activities, and pubs in particular, are regarded as potentially harmful to the environment, with noise being the most discussed type of emission. For noise to amount to a statutory nuisance, it must be “prejudicial to health or a nuisance.” A contributing factor to the higher focus on noise from entertainment is that the UK brewery business is extremely competitive, and its customers are often attracted by various offers and entertainment add-ons. Furthermore, pub-goers often drink outside the facility in the street or in courtyards and pub gardens.

Bars and pubs need licensing in the UK. If neighbors do not find that enterprises are run properly, they can object to the renewal of the license. Decisions are made by the local magistrate courts. The police are responsible for the regulation of the licensed businesses, for example, overseeing that closing hours and noise limits are at the permitted levels.

In UK law, pub guests’ noisy behavior is the responsibility of the owners of the premises, not the guests. Accordingly, the owners usually have good reason to ensure that the noise is kept within the allowed or acceptable limits. Pubs are requested to have noise control procedures and are advised to denominate members of staff with the authority to approach customers to behave in manners consistent with the regulations. Authorities have the obligation to investigate complaints. Not complying with the regulations after a notice may cause fines or closures of the premises. The authorities may, as part of the obtaining and renewal of a license, ensure that the premises have sufficient noise control plans and procedures. It is considered important that all staff members understand the importance of knowing and keeping to the regulations at all times.
Regulations may balance the needs of tourists and residents
Photo: Anne-Mette Hjalager

UK local authorities can also designate “noise abatement zones”. This is also a measure from the pollution act. A noise abatement zone is a district where the authority wants to lower the noise pollution from any source, including touristic facilities. Abatement zones can be used when noise pollution has gone too much out of hand, and when the noise has led to a general and unacceptable decline and degradation. Together with other measures (such as, for example, building renovations and planned conversions), noise abatement actions are attempts to rejuvenate the area, including districts that serve and are popular among tourists. Noise abatement programs may include subsidies and loans to assist enterprises’ investments in lower noise levels and compensations for residents. Abatement programs are found in connection with airport developments, but not to any significant extent in zones with mixed use for touristic and residential purposes. Good examples are generally lacking.

Porter and Shaw (2013) point to the fact that urban regeneration is ambiguous, and authorities show some reluctance when it comes to enforcing requirements on noisy behavior. There are not very specific and quantitative standards for acceptable noise, and community administrations and courts often defend the qualitative and subjective assessment of noise as a necessary mechanism allowing for the flexible and adaptable means of responding to specific neighborhood requirements (Ross, 2014). Governance innovations such as licensing regimes are still needed. The UK experience with possibilities to prosecute easily identifiable subjects - pub owners rather than elements in the crowd of tourists - is an example of a deliberate policy choice and mitigation measure.
**Self-governance noise control plans and procedures**
The interruption of business caused by closure for noise may lead to losses in both economic terms and reputation. UK authorities and trade organizations propose that patrons work consistently to control noise, including taking into account the following measures, here provided by the South Gloucestershire Council:

**Amplified music and entertainment**
Many premises—even modern ones—were not designed to accommodate problems caused by amplified music. Very often, the problem is caused by low frequency bass notes, as these carry through structures more easily than higher frequency sounds. However, it can be complex and expensive to remedy structure-borne noise.

- Try to judge noise levels at the boundary of neighbouring houses, rather than within your venue.
- Bear in mind that the more often you hold noisy events and the later they finish, the more likely they are to cause complaints.
- Contact an acoustic engineer, acoustic consultant, or noise and vibration consultant who can install a sound insulation scheme.
- Install an acoustic lobby and ensure doors are closed at all times.
- Avoid holding entertainment in rooms with windows or doors facing out onto residential areas.
- Keep windows closed at all times. Doors should be close-fitting and constructed from dense materials. Keep them closed as much as possible.
- Fit mechanical ventilation systems so that you do not need to open doors and windows. Fit all ventilation systems with acoustic baffles.
- Designate somebody to control the noise levels for the evening. Never leave the control of the entertainment sound to the entertainers.
- Consider giving neighbours the name and telephone number of the person responsible for controlling the noise. They can alert that person if there are any problems, so you can hopefully resolve the matter.
- Install a sound limit or cut-out device, with the maximum sound level approved by us.
- The audience will often open fire doors for ventilation. Obviously, you must not lock them. You can connect them to a sound-limiting or cut-out device. Ask a noise consultant for more advice.
- Never have music played in a conservatory if your premises are in a residential area. They offer very little resistance to noise.

**Patrons**
- The designated premises supervisor must take all reasonable steps to ensure nobody causes noise nuisance while on the premises or while leaving.
- Put up notices asking for patrons to avoid causing too much noise, especially when leaving.
- Employ trained door stewards to restrict entry at certain times and control noisy patrons. This may be a requirement of your license.
- Tell taxi firms they should not sound their horns when collecting customers.
- For some types of events, consider selling tickets that include the cost of private coach transport.

**Deliveries**
- When loading or unloading, use working methods that minimize noise.
- Make sure deliveries are not made late at night or early in the morning. If your site is next to residential or business premises, you should not have deliveries outside the hours of 7.30am to 6pm on weekdays, and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. There should be no noisy activities on Sundays or bank holidays.

**Beer gardens and children’s play areas**
- Do not play music in these areas.
- Keep doors leading onto these areas closed.
- Managers have a responsibility to control customers’ behaviours to make sure they do not cause noise nuisance.
- Restrict access to these areas, particularly at night.
- Place play equipment and plants, such as air blowers for bouncy castles, away from boundaries with neighbouring homes.

**Cleaning and bottling out**
- Place refuse storage areas away from neighbouring homes.
• Conduct cleaning and bottling out during normal working hours—not early in the morning or late at night.
• Provide a smooth pathway between the venue and the refuse area.

**Plant and equipment**

Chiller units, extract ventilation systems, and air conditioning can all cause complaints. You may have to get planning permission or building regulations approval before fitting some equipment.

• Install, operate, and maintain equipment according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
• Where possible, place equipment and exhaust outlets away from homes, or screen them.
• Always get specialist advice when planning to install such equipment. If necessary, use acoustic silencers, screens, and enclosures.


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At the international level, the World Health Organization (WHO) Noise Guidelines constitute the leading document dealing with noise control. These guidelines suggest three key noise control principles:

(a) The precautionary principle. In all cases, noise should be reduced to the lowest level achievable in a particular situation. Where there is a reasonable possibility that public health will be damaged, action should be taken to protect public health without awaiting full scientific proof.
(b) The polluter pays principle. The full costs associated with noise pollution (including monitoring, management, lowering levels and supervision) should be met by those responsible for the source of noise.
(c) The prevention principle. Action should be taken where possible to reduce noise at the source. Land-use planning should be guided by an environmental health impact assessment that considers noise as well as other pollutants.

From: Berglund et al. (1999)

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**Further reading and viewing**


7. Staging mobility for tourists: Bike Island 2020

Bicycling is a favorite outdoor activity among tourists visiting Danish coastal areas. VisitDenmark estimates that 18% of tourists in Denmark use a bicycle for one or more trips during their holiday (Vejdirektoratet, 2016). 25% of tourists who use a bicycle during their holiday are so dedicated to bicycling that they can be called “bike tourists,” which means that bicycles are their main means of transportation. Their preference is to make roundtrips through regions and landscapes. The rest of the bicycling tourist population takes smaller trips and loops within their destination areas in order to enjoy sceneries and reach attractions.

The profile of the bicycling tourist is not homogeneous. Generally, bicycling tourists are more active in all manners and more attentive to local traditions and features than tourists who do not bicycle. Their focus on environmental matters is more pronounced. Nearly half of all bicycling tourists are traveling with children, but otherwise they come from all age groups. Gradually, in Denmark, markets are developing for specialized forms of bicycling, including mountain biking and bicycling events.

Over the years in Denmark, many destinations have started to pay more attention to the economic potentials in bicycle tourism, and this focus is increasing. Tourism providers as well as the tourists themselves recognize the comprehensive and synergetic health, environmental, experience, and entertainment trends that support a further emphasis on bicycling as a tourism product.

There are many actors who affect bicycling and facilities for bicycling. These actors contribute to the “staging” of the biking mobility of the tourists, including the physical, social, technical, and cultural circumstances in the mobility on bicycles (Jensen, 2013). This governance innovation case describes a new organizational body called Bike Island 2020. It is in operation on Funen, Langeland, and Ærø, and it attempts to tap into and creatively supplement the already established institutional landscape to promote and support bicycle tourism. The case addresses the issue of institutional and governance rigidities and boundaries, and the possibilities for tourism actors to challenge the
visions and modes of operations of such institutions. Hence, bicycle tourism development may promote governance innovations. The DMO and its partners emphasize development of the infra-
structure.

Important actors related to bicycle tourism are found in four distinctive groups:

- Infrastructure owners and operators, including municipalities, government bodies, landown-
ers, and operators of public transportation.
- Service providers, including those providing access to attractions, accommodation, catering, and bicycle renting services.
- Marketing operators, including DMOs, travel agencies, media, and event makers.
- Producers of equipment and gear for bicycling.

There are overlaps and fields of collaboration between these groups, but there are also some pro-
found boundaries that have been established over many years. However, the question is who takes
the lead and who can affect and participate in the negotiations about bicycle mobility, and how.
Bike Island 2020 aspires to raise the voice for itself and promote cross-sectoral collaboration.

Bike Island 2020

Bike Island is a project initiated by the Destination Fyn Network, a DMO with the responsibility of
developing and promoting market driven tourism on the island of Funen and its surrounding islands.
The tourism industry is particularly involved in the network, and not the least in Bike Island 2020.
The ambition of Bike Island 2020 is to ensure a much stronger coherence among bicycling tourism
actors. Furthermore, its aim is to raise the quality and variability of the relevant products and ser-
vices in order to reach existing and new markets with a consistent and coordinated branding.

Bike Island 2020 relies on the good reputation of Funen and the smaller islands as holiday destina-
tions, and on previous endeavors to create facilities of importance for bicycling. Funen is a favora-
ble bicycling destination because of its many attractions, its beautiful natural and cultural ambience,
and its many hubs with facilities within convenient distances of the mainland and along the coasts.
Funen and the surrounding islands are already, to some extent, included in the national bicycle
routes that have been planned and gradually expanded over some decades throughout Denmark and
into neighboring countries.

Based on studies and evidence from the tourism partners, Bike Island 2020 identified the following
specific activities that in future might increase and improve the attractiveness of bicycle tourism: 1) Sign-
boarding a signature route, 2) creating a logistics service concept, 3) developing competence, 4) opening a hotel for bikers, 5) developing an iconic bike model for the destination, 6) gaining quality certification, 7) identifying the Funen and its islands’ bicycle identity, 8) developing tour packages, 9) promoting the cycling opportunities among tour agencies and tour operators, 10) improving websites and digital media, 11) implementing follow-up market analysis, and 12) marketing internationally.

Bike Island 2020 works with the bicycle producer Kildemoes, which is involved in a bicycle leasing
project. An iconic “Funen bicycle” will be developed to increase the importance both the destina-
tion and the product.
Infrastructure: Who is in charge?

Touristic development depends heavily on all aspects and qualities of the environment and amenities. A great deal of the attractiveness of destinations depends on this. The environment and amenities are public goods, or commodities or services that are provided without payment and profit. Bicycle tracks are such public goods in Denmark that (most of) the kilometers of bike path are available for free as part of the public road infrastructure. The bicycle routes can be used by citizens as well as by tourists. Normally in rural and coastal areas, there are no particular co-use problems in terms of traffic congestion, path overuse, or degradation as an effect of the use on a daily basis. An issue often discussed about publicly available goods and services is the free-rider problem: when enterprises take a particular and maybe excessive advantage over the public good without paying for it. Tourism is often mentioned as being a sector that, legally or on the edge of what is considered fair, hoards and utilizes space and requires and expects investments and maintenance services to be performed by public authorities.

The dilemma of public goods is somewhat in operation also when it comes to bicycle infrastructure. In Denmark, the planning, establishment, and maintenance of bicycle routes and infrastructures are integrated in the general laws about road infrastructure. The main responsible actors are the municipalities. The Ministry of Transportation functions mainly as a provider of governance frameworks and coordinates services across local areas. The ministry also contributes to the funding of some forms of infrastructure, including major facilities for bicycling.
Tourists and citizens share the bicycle routes, and on an equal basis they can enjoy the facilities and advantages. But in the bicycle planning undertaken by the municipalities, tourists’ needs are usually not the main focus. A principal objective in the bicycle plans is to make sure that tracks and trails conveniently connect the typical destinations of the users. These are usually residential areas, schools, shopping districts, larger workplaces, sports areas, and hubs for public transport. Thus, the idea is to discourage the use of cars and to reduce pressure on road infrastructure, parking areas, etc. A secondary, but closely interlinked objective is to ensure safety and convenience so that the choice of a bike as a means of transportation becomes an easy one. Third, the planning of infrastructure is also aimed at the promotion of healthy activities, not the least for children. Last but not least, the bicycle policies are integrated elements in environmental policies. The municipalities on Funen and its islands largely reflect these objectives in their bicycling policies. In addition, municipalities work with recreational bicycle tracks, mainly in the establishing and maintaining of attractive routes in scenic environments and connecting towns and cities with forests, beaches, and other facilities.

The municipalities recognize that the possibility to travel fast on the bicycle track is of importance for citizens, and often new or improved routes are planned with this convenience in mind. That may give the impression that the use will be slightly in contrast with recreational and touristic bicycling, where amenity values are highly appreciated and small detours are accepted. In addition, tourist attractions and facilities (camping sites, summerhouse areas, amusement parks, etc.) are not always specifically included in the comprehensive bicycle routes.

In the countryside, separate biking tracks are found particularly between towns and cities and accommodate the fastest and safest possible traffic. Recommended country bicycle routes are often just small roads, but safety can still be an issue, even when car traffic is modest. Some rural recreational and touristic routes are mud roads on private land, over which municipalities do not have a planning liability. Many of these roads and tracks are, however, included in the biking maps issued by the touristic partners.

Thus, tourism is scarcely included in the bicycle plans by municipalities on Funen and its islands, although some municipalities pay more attention than others. Citizens often come up with suggestions for expanded bicycle tracks, and these are mainly articulated with safety and convenience requests. However for financial reasons, municipalities always need to prioritize the investments in infrastructure. It is quite clear that the needs of the citizens stand higher than the needs of tourists.

National and regional routes pass through more municipalities, and the municipalities are still responsible for the planning, establishment, and maintenance, but in concordance with the Ministry of Transportation. A persistent collaboration with the municipalities and the tourism actors is needed to achieve a continual expansion. Regional and national routes may also be of value for citizens’ recreational or commuting mobility, but tourism is particularly in focus for these categories of routes. The national and regional routes are expanding gradually, with links created across the municipality borders wherever possible, but in times of financial constraint, this task may receive less attention in the municipalities.

Innovative approaches to the planning of bicycle infrastructure

The municipalities have formulated bicycle plans. However, as mentioned above, tourism is included only moderately or not at all in these plans. That does not mean that the touristic use of bicycle tracks does not and cannot take place. Bike Island 2020 is a project that will increase the attention
in the municipalities about their planning obligations and opportunities. Innovative planning at the municipal level includes, for example, the following:

- Identifying and recognizing touristic locations of particular relevance for bicycling.
- Co-using and interconnecting tracks for tourists and citizens wherever possible and working with facilities’ and amenity values for both user groups simultaneously.
- Involving citizens in sports and leisure associations and bicycle networks in order to co-creatively spot the best routes for recreational use.
- Rethinking and creating cross-sector alliances with health institutions, sports, and environment at local and national levels.
- Collaborating with land owners (private and public) on selected locations and working with them for the further development of a sustainable use of mud roads for recreational and tourism purposes.
- Ensuring relevant sign boarding and collaborating with tourism and leisure organizations about pamphlets, websites, apps, etc.
- Staging the bicycle values in the narratives about the local area—making bicycling a “lived local value” that transfers efficiently into tourism.

Svendborg Cittaslow

The municipality of Svendborg had a good initial experience with these endeavors, and particularly with the last point. Svendborg was nominated as Cittaslow in 2008. Following the principles of thoughtful development, the municipality launched a proposal for developing its bicycle infrastructure for citizens as well as for tourists. From a tourism point of view, the link to the Cittaslow is essential. The “slow” movement and the certification of a municipality as a Cittaslow not only determine the progress toward living qualities for the population. The commitment to Cittaslow also creates a visionary link between Svendborg and a number of other towns in Denmark and abroad. Such links include a large number of people and potential tourists who subscribe to the slow ideology. This is an alternative but efficient way to communicate what is particular about the local area and the mental picture about quality of life.

In order to integrate the municipal planning of bicycling and tourism, Svendborg Municipality is expanding the bicycle trails and the facilities related to bicycling. Of special interest for both tourists and citizens is the introduction of a bicycle ferry route. Accessibility will increase dramatically in the municipality and wider, as bicyclers can avoid the unpleasant bridge connection across the belt. In addition, the passengers on the ferry can enjoy better the beautiful surroundings of Svendborg.

In the period of 2011–2015, innovative approaches to bicycling have been stimulated by the Ministry of Transportation through funds given to special projects that can develop infrastructure and change the behavior or perceptions of bicycling. The funding opportunity will be re-invigorated in
2017, when it will be possible to acquire financial support for recreation and touristic bicycling projects. Such funding schemes can be, in the context of tourism, governance innovations.

Further reading and viewing


Who governs the land use and the maintenance of multifunctional urban zones?
Photo: Anne-Mette Hjalager

8. Tourism Business Improvement Districts

Geographically, tourism develops in uneven patterns. Some destinations are thriving, while others are lagging behind. Some areas may have additional tourism potential, but even so, the stimuli to exploit those potentials are insufficient, and investors are reluctant to act. The development cycle of tourist destinations means that, after a period of success and prosperity, a destination may decline again and will need a systematic rejuvenation.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) is a governance concept that was introduced in Canada in the 1960s as a response to dramatic downward spirals within urban centers due to the substantial neglect of buildings and infrastructures, rising crime levels, and loss of attractiveness for residents and businesses. BIDs aim to create funding for rapid and targeted urban improvement and promotion. Over the years, the concept has become well-known in, particularly, North America and later, to some extent, in other parts of the world. More recently, the BID concept has been modified to address the need to revitalize touristic destinations and resorts. BIDs related to tourists are called Tourism Business Improvement Districts (TBIDs).

TBIDs are basically expressions of governance structures and mechanisms. In more general terms, it is worthwhile emphasizing that governance is also subject to innovation, and such innovation includes changes in the contents and methods of rulemaking, rule-setting, and rule implementation. TBIDs are innovations in the way that actors make something happen and the way that they change incentives. Governance innovations can embody new approaches for institutions to be built and
modified, and they can include new arrangements that rearticulate the state-civil relationship, thereby repositioning the meaning of citizenship (Swyngedouw, 2005).

Mammoth Lakes TBID

Mammoth Lakes, California, is a small community with less than 10,000 permanent inhabitants. Mammoth Lakes’ economy is primarily tourism-based, as it is a top ski destination in California. There are numerous rental units in Mammoth Lakes, and the lodging industry generates the majority of the economy of the place. Winter extreme sports are particularly important, but Mammoth Lakes also caters to tourism in the summer, serving people who visit to hike and fish.

Mammoth Lakes adopts the TBID concept. Here, the TBID is implemented through a voluntary association of local businesses that volunteer to levy a “bed tax” upon themselves. In Mammoth, assessments are provided by hotels, restaurants, retail units and skiing service companies. In the case of Mammoth Lakes, the funds are used to raise the destination profile, work for the quality of life in the area, improve transportation infrastructures, and attract strategic events. Evaluations of the Mammoth Lakes TBID determine that the initiative has helped to increase the promotional effects of the destination.

In 2013, the council approved the TBID for a five-year period, following a petition process that was supported by more than 50% of the business owners. The TBID was approved by the Town Council, and the Town Council collects the assessments, but still it is important for the TBID to emphasize that the Town Council in no way gets its hands on the funds and use it for purposes outside the area. Availability of the funding resources for purposes in the specific area is a key argument for the contributions. It is a target that all enterprises contribute, and considerable pressure is put on the enterprises by the TBID management to do so.

“The Mammoth Lakes Tourism Business Improvement District Management District Plan is the governing document behind the development, management, and oversight of the business assessment. The plan contains information on the district’s boundaries, what businesses are included, what rate each segment pays, who collects the funds, who oversees the marketing efforts, and how Mammoth Lakes Tourism anticipates using those funds. The purpose of the TBID is to drive visitation and revenue specifically to those business segments who are involved in raising funds through the TBID assessment.” (http://www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov/index.aspx?nid=551)

The Town Council has identified Mammoth Lakes Tourism, a California non-profit corporation, as the organization that serves as the owner’s association for the Mammoth Lakes Tourism Business Improvement District. The Mammoth Lakes Tourism board of directors represents the various assessed businesses, and the board consists of at least the following representatives:

- 1 director selected by the town council
- 1 director representing Mammoth Mountain Ski Area
- 1 director representing the Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce
- 2 directors representing assessed lodging businesses
- 1 director representing an assessed retail or restaurant business
- 1 director at-large with an interest in tourism
According to the annual reports from Mammoth Lakes TBID, the funding is mainly spent on promotional activities; those enterprises contributing also enjoy a priority in the promotional programs. The TBID thereby attempts to avoid the tendency of free-riding that characterizes many DMOs, and that may undermine the efficiency of the promotional activities.

Across the many TBIDs and from a tourism business point of view, the typical motivations for business stakeholders to put a pressure on governments to allow and accommodate for such constellations are as follows:

- They provide increased and more stable funding for promotional purposes, and they are not dependent on sometimes restricted and decreasing public budgets.
- The objectives and activities are designed, created, and managed by the business community and the business leaders who choose to pay the assessments, not by bureaucrats.
- The funds raised cannot be diverted to governments to pay for other public services.
- The concept eliminates some of the free-riding that occurs among smaller business enterprises, particularly if assessment is compulsory.

Examinations of BIDs and TBIDs tend to show good returns from the investments. However, critics underline also that counterfactual aspects are not always addressed: whether the development would have taken place without the TBID or whether other types of organizations could have managed to the same or better levels.

Outsourcing the management of urban space

While Mammoth Lakes TBID is mainly concerned with promotional activities, other BIDs and TBIDs agree with the local governments to administer far more comprehensive tasks. BIDs have also been implemented in such city centers that were emptied for activities as an effect of suburban sprawl. For example, the Downtown Helena in Montana undertakes tasks in city and destination branding, and the TBID is also in charge of the management of public space, with the aim of promoting historic preservation and context-sensitive design in order to capitalize on the city’s historical assets.

Some BIDs have become genuine property developers, taking on board and profiting from brownfield developments, such as along harbor fronts. A physical decline and dissolution of urban space and beach areas, and the related social and economic problems, facilitate the emergence of BIDs. BIDs are often launched by leading business actors as an absolutely “last chance” to create benefits for citizens and businesses alike.

However, there have been numerous concerns about the basics of Business Improvement Districts and the implementations in specific contexts. First and foremost, critics notice that the democratically elected governments, through the implementation of TBIDs, agree to outsource decision-making to new governing bodies. These bodies mainly consist of business representatives, and mostly the larger and more powerful segments of corporations are involved. In this process, transparency may suffer, and the distance between normal citizens and urban governors is likely to become much longer. Citizens and groups of citizens who do not approve of the development plans result in a re-
duction of possibilities to make their opinions heard through the normal, democratically-elected channels. Even if BIDs claim to benefit whole communities, the external and democratic control of the endeavor is likely to become more difficult when the work is embodied in privatized or semi-privatized formats.

When they operate as in-situ city policymakers and administrators, the BIDs may come up with extremely visible results in terms of better kept outdoor environments, nice street furniture, well-functioning parking areas, and reduced littering in streets, beaches, and parks, etc. The coordinated investments through a BID can raise the aesthetic appearance of the environment when derelict buildings are refurbished. However, critics point to the fact that these benefits often come at a steep price. The places usually become more uniform, as less profitable (original) business owners and entrepreneurs cannot pay higher rents in the improved areas. In terms of tourism, this may compromise the variety of services and vibrancy of the place. At worst, only chain outlets can survive, and artists, small food providers, and less standard entertainment offers are squeezed out. Some of the BIDs work de facto as real estate developers alongside their administrative or promotional tasks. This can lead to even more loss of transparency. In the more extreme situations, BIDs employ their own security and surveillance systems, paralleling the public police departments, and set up their own behavioral rules that may deviate from those created by the society outside the boundaries of the area. Places may be safer, but sometimes through the violation of civil rights.

As a matter of definition, BIDs are to some extent detached from “normal” society. A BID becomes a quasi-public entity and an autonomously operating body. There is a risk that it contributes to territorial segregation socially, economically, and culturally. When “real” local public authorities give
up the entitlement to collect taxes and redistribute funds across geographical space and social purpose, they also limit their own long-term possibilities to prevent spatially bounded social and economic problems.

BIDs are put in place to stimulate private investments and, in many cases, such effects are seen as direct or indirect effects of the focus on the area. There is a belief that the positive effect trickles down, but as a principle embedded in the concept, benefits will be contained mainly within the boundaries. There is a distinct knowledge gap concerning the wider spin-off effects inside and outside the BDIs. Commentators conclude that, unequivocally, BIDs represent neoliberal ideas and are part of an agenda that legitimizes and facilitates the possibilities to make profit.

The partnership formats and the regulatory models of BIDs come in many variants. In the best variants, BIDs can, when transparently implemented and with firm public supervision, lead to the stimulus of a multitude of economic and social activities without risking that democratically elected bodies will lose authority and legitimacy. In the worst cases, of which there are many around the world, BIDs contribute to a commoditization of space that erodes geographical and social cohesion. The best models in terms of encouraging tourism are not easy to determine. Research of BIDs urges public authorities to assess carefully alternatives to the outsourcing and privatization of city management. Based on studies, researchers recommend extreme care and full transparency when establishing governance models for BIDs.

Further reading and viewing


9. Governing tourists’ foraging for mussels and oysters

In tourism there is a continuous claim for innovative products and services. Culinary experiences are highly valued, and are a distinct focus in the branding and promotion of many local areas. Food tells good stories. A new and upcoming trend in tourism and gastronomy is foraging: experiences where tourists collect their own food in nature, perhaps to then prepare and eat the food at or in close vicinity to the place where the food was collected. This suggests a totality of landscapes, weather conditions, and edible materials that constitute an experiential symbiosis. Hunting and angling tourism are well-known examples of foraging tourism, and practices and facilities have been developed to support the foragers. In recent years, the trend has been supplemented by foragers seeking to pick berries, mushrooms, herbs, and wild fruit, and even to harvest insects.

Oysters and mussels are found often in quite substantial amounts on Denmark’s west coast. The resource of mussels and oysters is increasingly becoming a leisure foraging resource exploited by locals as well as tourists. Commercial fishing is an activity that is rigidly controlled and governed by, among others, the EU fisheries’ policies and national implementations. However, the governance structures are generally geared toward commercial fishing rather than toward those foraging as a leisure activity. This case study addresses the governance and the potential need for governance innovation concerning the foraging of oysters. The Wadden Sea is a national park and designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site, and fishing regulation is a matter of importance for the environmental balances.
Overall, governance innovations can be characterized as changes in content and methods of rule-making, rule-setting, and rule implementation. They are innovations in the way that actors make something happen and change incentives. Governance innovations can embody new approaches for institutions to be built and modified, and they can include new arrangements that rearticulate the state-civil relationship, thereby repositioning the meaning of citizenship (Swyngedoduw, 2005).

Invasive species

The oysters on the Danish coast are controversial in the sense that they are an invasive species. The population has been increasing at the expense of other habitats, such as mussels. Collecting oysters may be an environmentally positive activity, as it leaves space for the mussels, which are far more important than oysters for the millions of migrating birds. The shellfish feed the birds. Fishing is an activity that, when undertaken unsustainably, can disturb the ecosystem as a whole.

If the risks of the capricious tides are taken into account and trips are planned accordingly, it is quite simple to forage for oysters and mussels in the Wadden Sea. The water is normally shallow and the oyster beds are accessible from the shore. Foragers bring a bucket, and with some endeavor they can collect themselves a luxurious evening meal. If they do not wish to conquer the elements on their own, local tour guides provide tours to the oyster beds. Some of the guided tours include not only interpretation and assistance in the collection activities, but also champagne and accompanying food items for a party on the beach following the harvest. These oyster safaris are becoming more popular. Oyster festivals have even been inaugurated lately, included as an element in a comprehensive Wadden Sea Festival, at which local restaurants are eager to contribute to the festival’s portfolio of experiences.

For recreational users, there is an open and free access to the oyster resource, and they can collect it for their own consumption. Fishing with tools requires a license, but picking a product with one’s hands does not. In the Wadden Sea, there is (for the time being) no commercial exploitation allowed in the fishery, because of the Natura 2000 status. In this context, tour guiding companies are not considered commercial fishing entities. This is a matter that has been examined by legal experts, and no reasons have been identified to change it.

Food safety

One of the main concerns about foraging oysters and mussels in the Wadden Sea is connected to food safety. The season for collecting oysters is autumn and winter. In the summer period, there exists the risk of toxic phytoplankton in the area. The touristic seasons and oyster seasons are therefore not in sync. Tourists who, during the summer, are not aware of the risks may be in danger of getting sick if they eat the oysters and mussels.

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration is in charge of the continuous supervision of the quality of the oysters and their living conditions. Weekly tests are made in a surveillance program. According to the regulations, only commercial providers of fish are obliged to take samples to be sent for examination by authorized test institutes. The authorities will prohibit fishing and foraging in case of the discovery of toxic phytoplankton. The findings constitute the basis of quality control. However, insights into the sources of contamination are not fully mapped.
The local tour guiding companies underline that collecting and eating occurs at the tourists’ own risk. If the authorities identify quality problems, warnings are issued. Guided tours will normally be cancelled. Unlike the Wadden Sea coastlines in Germany and The Netherlands, where tourism pressure is heavier, there is in Denmark no access control to the foraging areas. The districts for foraging are so large, that at the moment, there are no possibilities to close or control the areas efficiently.

Guided foraging tour to the oyster banks
Photo: RedStar

Warnings about toxic contamination are communicated via the press and through The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration’s Facebook wall, which has 16,000 followers (not all of whom are interested in oysters). The algae situation is discussed a lot in the local area, and is a matter of great concern for the citizens and the media, who want to see the environment be “clean” and “safe.” However, the communication from the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration is only in Danish. The area is a popular touristic destination for visitors from Germany, but they do not necessarily understand the local language. There is no clear knowledge about how efficiently information is disseminated to potential oyster pickers.

Systematic surveillance and information are the main governance instruments. Information is possibly fully sufficient, as long as the number of foragers for oysters and mussels remains fairly low, and as long as they participate in guided tours. The oyster stock is plenty enough, and limiting the expansion of the invasive species through recreational picking is regarded as environmentally beneficial. However, an increase in the popularity of foraging could demand the development of new and wide-ranging communication instruments or the regulation of access. The inclusion, in real-time, of touristic apps is an opportunity that might fit the problem well, but no such app has been developed yet.

Around the world, “early warning” and “safety tips” systems have been introduced to mitigate risks for tourists, for example in earthquake areas or in destinations at risk of flooding. Such apps could
also be informative in the sense that they could lead tourists to well supplied (and safe) resources. Neither the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration nor the tourism DMOs and interpretation bodies have yet attempted to exploit such opportunities.

Efficient, real-time information systems can prolong the possibility for tourists to act freely and without restrictions and supervision in their foraging endeavor. On the other hand, radically increased interest in foraging in nature, and/or decreased aquatic quality, can provoke discussions of such types of access control. However, in a wider perspective, access restrictions are not considered very compatible with Danish tourism policies, which favor open exploration opportunities in nature environments.

Fishing regulations

In terms of regulation, Danish food policies have gradually recognized the importance of local food provision, among others, for the benefit of tourism. In 2016, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture changed the authorization regulations for fish and shellfish to allow fishermen to sell small amounts to local retailers and directly to consumers right off the boat or off the shore. In fact, this was largely a modest legalization of an otherwise widespread illegal practice. A former requirement to sell via safety certified dealers has been removed for such small amounts. The change in regulations might stimulate locals to start businesses with mussels and oysters as products. Due to EU fisheries’ regulations and quota, commercial or semi-commercial fishing licenses are significant entry barriers for new business actors. The costs of the weekly testing for toxins are carried by a single commercial fisherman or collaborative groups of fishermen, a regulation that does not favor small scale fishing operations. There is a growing interest in the Wadden Sea area to develop sustainable fishery and adequate governance structures, including such initiatives that go hand in hand with foraging, culinary services, and interpretation. After a more accurate scientific investigation of the size of the stock in 2017 and 2018, the Ministry is expected to reassess the regulations.

The efforts to allow an expansion of the commercial fishery of oysters are highly controversial, as long as the stock assessments are lacking and as long as the fishing methods are under negotiation. Both guiding companies and nature scientists are concerned about the ecosystems, which take a long time to recover after undergoing mechanized commercial harvesting methods. Accordingly, this case demonstrates that touristic oyster foraging in the Wadden Sea may be a matter that is likely to be a continual issue in regulatory interventions, the directions of such yet to be settled.

Further reading and viewing


www.nationalparkvaadehavet.dk

http://www.vadehavscentret.dk/en/frontpage/
10. Climate adaption strategies

In tourism there is a continuous claim for innovative products and services. In Denmark, the small and medium-sized coastal towns are hotspots of very important tourism resources. They contain a range of services, such as restaurants, shopping facilities, and attractions. Many of them represent a cultural heritage, and there are enjoyable and picturesque city centers, historic houses, churches, harbors, parks, etc. Coastal towns’ harbors are key visual and structural elements in the townscape. However, the economic importance of the harbors has been declining, which calls for new uses of the waterfronts to be suggested and implemented for the benefit of tourism, among others. Simultaneously, climate change is a distinct challenge for the harbor space in coastal towns, and the risks of flooding have risen. If not addressed adequately, climate change is likely to have a long-term damaging effect on tourism in Denmark’s coastal destinations.

In order to maintain the townscapes and the facilities for tourists, citizens, and enterprises, there is increasingly an emphasis on climate mitigation and adaption. In built environments, adaption has to take place in close conceptual and functional coordination with other endeavors. The mitigation and adaption activities may to stimulate technical and functional innovations, which also take into consideration that stakeholders in the townscapes must operate in new ways. Hence, innovation in tourism also regards a range of governance mechanisms. Such innovations include changes in content and methods of rulemaking, rule-setting, and rule implementation, and innovations modify in the way that actors make something happen and the way that they change incentives. Governance innovations can embody new approaches for institutions to be built and modified, and they can include new arrangements that rearticulate the state-civil relationship, thereby repositioning the meaning of citizenship (Swyngedoduw, 2005).

Lemvig is a coastal town in Denmark, beautifully located at the base of the Limfjord. It is in the immediate hinterland of the west coast’s touristic zones, and a popular place to come for shopping. Over the past decades, the use of the harbor for transportation, fishing, and industry has declined.
Now, the fjord largely accommodates recreational sailing and other water-based events. The large central area closest to the city center has traditionally been an open space mainly used for car parking. This area is a particularly risky zone for flooding, however. In the 2010 harbor plan, the municipality recognized that the existing flooding protection was insufficient and needed upgrading.

In 2012, a project was initiated with the purpose of unifying the city’s development and flooding protection for the benefit of tourists, citizens, and business enterprises. The architect provided a design of a 350 meters-long wall that winds its way along the harbor. The wall is supplied with gateways that remain open, but can rapidly and automatically be closed in case of risks of flooding.

The municipality is the owner of the harbor space and the infrastructures. The municipality was the leading actor in the entire transformation process, and it financed the construction work. However, many others took part, not least the members of the Harbor Council, which is an informal advisory entity that organizes the business and leisure users of the harbor. Participatory processes with larger groups of citizens were organized as an essential strategy to mobilize the development of knowledge networks, as well as to legitimize the changes to the harbor. The processes generated and, importantly, communicated knowledge that was relevant, credible, and co-produced by stakeholders. DGI is the national sports association. It undertook, on a co-creative base, feasibility studies of the opportunities of the use of harbor for a variety of sports. A lot of ideas emerged, as well as some that could be attractive for additional numbers of tourists.

Co-creating a climate protection wall

In the specific and detailed design process, the architect invited groups of 12-year-old school children to design the plates in the wall that would cover the locking mechanisms. The designs were produced in ceramics, and the children were enormously proud of their achievements. The benches were produced in a school for socially disadvantaged youth and, also in this case, their commitment was very visible. The hope was to create a genuine attachment and ownership, but also to diminish the risk of vandalism.

The wall efficiently shields the harbor space from traffic. Tools for playing have been added in the area, and that has created a place for children’s enjoyment, and for strolling and gazing. The design qualities have benefitted the restaurants and shops in the immediate vicinity.

After the installation, the renovation showed its worth in a wider sense. For example, the harbor space has been used for markets, concerts, and other events. A crab festival was launched in 2017 for the first time. In the branding of the town, the harbor is more crucial than ever. Food activities are one strand of branding, and climate issues another. The wall is, in its own respect, a showpiece, helped by the fact that the design won the prestigious Concrete Award. Delegations of professionals come to Lemvig to learn about climate adaption, and this is an important way to increase touristic awareness.

Ideally, destinations, businesses, and tourism organizations should seek to address mitigation and adaptation simultaneously. In Lemvig, the municipality was the lead actor. On a daily basis, the handling of the use of the space has been outsourced to the tourist association, with the event manager as a primary actor. The event manager is supported collaboratively by two retailer organizations, the tourism association, and the municipality. The manager ensures coordination with other
activities. A fee is collected from commercial users, and this funding is added to the tourism association’s budget. The maintenance is on the hands of the municipality.

In 2016, the municipality obtained support from Realdania, a large foundation established for the purpose of stimulating urban refurbishment and visionary development, to extend the recreational facilities on the other side of the harbor. A large skating area has been added. The town has become eager to speed up renovations in several places, learning from the previous experiences. A small blacksmith enterprise will be moved to another location on the harbor, and the endeavor is to ensure that the business can thrive safely in its new location. However, changes of the building structures and appearances are also about giving visitors on the harbor the possibility to gaze on whatever happens in the enterprise.

New use for harbor facilities

Many ideas for projects were presented during the creative processes with DGI. Floating kayak sleeping-bag shelters was one of the ideas that is yet to be implemented. Installations like this raise further questions about governance and regulation and will, possibly, demand innovations in this respect. The harbor’s water surface and land territory in Lemvig belongs to the municipality, but the sea territory is, nevertheless, co-regulated with the sea, coastal, and shipping authorities. Changing the use from transportation to something like housing or recreational facilities will require a change in the planning for the area. The Danish guidelines for planning issued by the ministry make it possible, under very specific precautions, to use the sea territory for floating installations such as kayak shelters, restaurants, etc. There are building regulations related to floating objects that address issues such as safety, technical supplies, materials, onshore facilities, etc., and the municipality is
responsible for the planning processes of such projects. There is a certain reluctance to work with installations that bridge land and water, as the planning is complicated. Municipalities might want to own the facilities and make them available for recreational use, so as to be able also to shift the use, if either the needs or the climate situation should change in the future. If private enterprises or leisure associations take possession as tenants, they need to sign a contract and pay a quayage fee. The length of the lease has to be determined.

Further reading and viewing


Hasløv & Kjærgaard Architects http://www.hogk.dk/

Lemvig Havn https://www.lemvig.dk/Planer-og-projekter/Lemvig-Havn.aspx

11. Outdoor tourism facilities in forests

Of the total space in Denmark, 14.3% is covered by forests. In a small country such as Denmark, forests are considered to be a scarce resource. As much as possible, forests of all kinds should be protected from transfer to other utilizations, such as agriculture, infrastructure, and urban development. Over the past decades, shifting governments have launched measures to guard the existing forests from overexploitation or changes to other land use purposes. Incentives are also provided to expand the land coverage of forests. Reasons for such measures are several. Environmental objectives are critical, as forests better than arable land can protect fresh water resources. Forests in general and some types of forests in particular are found to contribute to a region’s biodiversity. Recreational and aesthetic benefits for citizens and visitors are increasingly in focus, and the variety of landscapes and trees can accommodate for many types of leisure experiences and relaxation.

The Forest Act

The Forest Act governs the use and development of forests. It is a fairly restrictive act. The transformation of forests to other purposes can, as a general rule, not take place. The owners - public as well as private - are obliged to undertake a considerate and professional forestry practice to ensure both diversity and resilience. These protective measures are critical, as are the needs of the forest business to make a profit out of traditional forest products and productions.

The forestry and timber businesses are the main subjects of regulation in the Forest Act. However, in recent years, recreational activities have become more commonplace as part of the forest business portfolio, and tourism and leisure contribute to the forest business alongside the core activities related to traditional forestry. Recreational hunting is commonplace, but owners of forests also want
to develop leisure business concepts in, for example, biking, riding, climbing, foraging, orienteering, etc.

The growth of recreational business within and in connection to forests has had the effect of increasing domestic and touristic demand. Analyses of tourists’ preferences show that walking and biking are among their favorite activities during holidays (Danmarks Naturfredningsforening, 2016; VisitDenmark, 2016). For Danish citizens, forests are often the target for day trips with friends and family, and forests accommodate for organized activities in special interest groups (Friluftsrådet, 2014).

A forest owner will need to obtain permission from the environmental authorities to establish recreational facilities. Such facilities could include playgrounds, shelters and huts, lookout towers, climbing towers, bird watching towers, picnic and campfire sites, artistic installations, bathing jet-ties, and shooting ranges. The establishment of tracks and trails for mountain biking or skiing also require permission, particularly if they imply future changes in terrain in connection with the construction or use. The assessment of the applications for permission will assess the specific place in detail.

The administration of the act is particularly focused on the fact that new facilities should be modest in size and design, and should allow the major appearance and intrinsic sense of the forest environment to rule. For the same reason, environmental authorities are not likely to permit an agglomeration of facilities, and they will undertake investigations of whether the proposed facilities could feasibly be established in the vicinity of the forest rather than inside the forest.

The obtaining of permission requires not only a good and well-adapted project, but also a significant patience. All aspects of the project can be expected to come under discussion and testing, not the least the design of any physical installations, however small. This has led to some criticism from the owners, but it is most often welcomed by nature organizations.

**Mountain biking as a touristic niche in coastal areas**

Mountain biking is an increasingly popular sport both for individual tours and as a group and sports competitive activity in more organized formats. In Denmark, mountain biking opportunities attract both domestic and international tourists, based on the fact that Danish forests are more openly accessible than those in many other countries. Bikers are allowed to use already established mud-roads and tracks. They are not permitted to go outside tracks or into animal tracks, and they cannot establish their own tracks. However, in many parts of the country, special areas and tracks have been dedicated to mountain bikers, not the least in publicly owned forests. Hence, an attractive infrastructure for mountain bikers is emerging using both tracks and trails, as well as supporting and service facilities such as accommodations, training tracks, renting of bikes, etc. Several regions in Denmark are competing to become mountain bike destinations.

A dilemma with the mountain bikers for the Hvidkilde Estate on the Funen Island is that it is difficult to cover costs and generate an economic income from mountain biking, as the entry to the forest cannot be priced and controlled effectively. Quite some illegal mountain biking takes place, with negative consequences for land erosion and destruction of traditional forestry opportunities. There might also be inconveniences for other users, such as walkers and riders.
Hvidkilde Estate owns 1,500 hectares of forest in a hilly landscape. A non-profit association called the Mountain Bike Track Association was created with the purpose of establishing a 15 kilometer-long track in the forest. The initiative was undertaken in cooperation between the estate, a recreational development organization, municipalities, and the local community. Members of the association are individual bikers.

The association as a governance innovation

The purpose of the Mountain Bike Track Association is to establish and maintain the trail, and to promote a range of mountain biking activities for locals as well as visitors. Anyone who purchases an annual or 3-day pass to the track automatically becomes a member. The trail association is supplemented by a trail guild, whose members are more involved in volunteer work. So-called trail-builders undertake tasks with the expansion of the trails, and trail-bosses assist with monitoring and management. The guild is, in practice, a Facebook group with 500 members, although not all the group members are active in practical tasks.

When Hvidkilde Estate collaborates in this way with a voluntary association, the control, the cash flow, and the responsibility shift hands from the estate to the association. The contract has a duration of ten years. Governance structures are matters of innovation. In greater detail, the processing of the planning and implementation has taken place with the following ingredients.

“Naturturisme,” which is an outdoor development organization owned by the local municipalities, innovated the partnership model and ensured the process. The partnership model implies that the estate rents the forest to the Mountain Bike Track Association. Formally, the Mountain Bike Track Association applies for external funding for the establishment of the track and sponsorships. In this context, it is important to understand that some of the principal funding sources are available for NGOs only, and the private estate cannot apply. The association has the task and role to ensure that the area is properly kept, maintained, and expanded.
The benefit for Hvidkilde Estate is, as indicated, that a maintenance and control problem is shifted to other hands, and that the land rent creates an income of 150,000 DKK annually for a period of 10 years. The advantage for local mountain bikers and a variety of MB clubs is the increased quality of trail and exclusive access. A community capacity building in the local area has emerged as an important side-effect of the association’s responsibility with the management of the trail. In addition, an income is generated for the association through sales of trail passes to locals and tourists.

The touristic element is underway, and expanding. After some discussion in the association, a focus is emerging in terms of welcoming those who purchase 3-day passes, with the hope that people will stay in the region for a longer period of time. During the first year, 500 3-day passes were sold. All incomes to the association are allocated to expansion and maintenance. Funds are also used for social activities for those volunteers who spend much time and effort working for the trail.

This innovation case illustrates that the governance innovation in coastal tourism can prevent and mitigate potential conflict and, at the same time, create value for a number of actors in a collaborative partnership and beyond. Partnership and dialog is becoming more open and concerns are expressed for all to understand (Wilkes-Allemann et al., 2017). This case also demonstrates that partnerships involve actors from different sectors, and recognizes that they have different resources and face different institutional obligations and obstacles. A re-composition in a new institutional setup releases the resources and energies, but it creates also new dependencies.

Controversies emerged initially in the process with the organization “Friluftsrådet,” an organization with a strong plea for open and unrestricted access to nature areas. The Hvidkilde estate owner finds the projects like this will only progress well, if it finds compromises and ways to accommodate for several interests because of a very open atmosphere, a continuous dialog, and a great deal of patience. He finds that further developments are likely to happen in terms of the expansion of outdoor facilities, including touristic activities with mountain biking as an opportunity. A major sports event is planned to take place in the region, and it is important in this connection also, and the local actors will contribute in showing the full range of sports facilities and potentials to many new guests.

Further reading and viewing


http://skovhuggeren.com/#hjem-section

http://www.hvidkilde.dk