



The Regional Studies
Association Research
Network on Tourism and
Regional Development



Innovation Processes and Destination Development in Tourist Resorts

Östersund, Sweden, 30 March - 1 April 2011

Organised by Bo Svensson
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Call for Papers

Tourism continues to be a central part of regional development strategies in many locations around Europe. In addition, the sector has received increased attention in areas without a prior strong tradition in tourism, and in places where it has not earlier been recognised as a force in regional development. As the competition between localities continues to grow, the emergent awareness of tourism's economic growth potential leads to heightened demand for more comprehensive approaches to the sector's development.

In relatively recent years, innovation and innovation processes have received attention in the tourism industry and among its stakeholders, as part of the growing attention the wider service sector has been paying to these issues. Observers say that destinations need to be innovative in order to renew themselves and remain attractive for increasingly experienced, specialised and demanding travellers. Innovation is identified as a challenge for tourist destinations, at least among policy makers and research funders. But how well are destinations able to embrace the innovation theme? Additionally, is there a role for research in tourism innovation processes?

The aim of the RSA research network is to examine tourism diversity from the perspective of regional development in order to identify current challenges and opportunities in a systematic manner. This would provide the basis for a better informed integration of tourism in regional development strategies and move us beyond political short-termism and buzzword fascination. The Östersund meeting is the first of three planned gatherings (including the ones in Antalya, Turkey, Autumn 2011, and Leeds, UK, Autumn 2012). The Tourism and Regional Development research network is now established as a meeting place for people with an interest in issues relating to tourism from a regional development perspective.





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The Östersund workshop will take place in one of the major winter holiday destinations of Northern Europe, including a number of ski resorts (Åre, Vemdalen, Funäsdalen, etc.). These resorts are now increasingly turning their attention towards developing as year-round destinations with international ambitions following continuing investments in accommodation and infrastructure for ski lifts, mountain biking, hiking, event development and more. At the national level in Sweden a new strategy is emerging, placing local and regional destination development at the centre of attention. The destination development puzzle keeps occupying the centre of attention, and perhaps increasingly so, raising discussions about DMOs, demand for internationalisation and beliefs that any destination needs to be innovative to stay, or become, competitive.

Against this background, the Östersund workshop welcomes papers on topics including:

- innovation and destination development processes
- visitor involvement in destination development
- destination governance (i.e. public-private partnerships, policy networks, DMOs, clusters and innovation systems)
- research and tourism innovation processes
- popular culture travel and event tourism
- nature-based destinations, innovation and sustainability
- new technology and destination branding
- the tourism labour force and innovation (e.g. recruitment, human resource management, etc.)
- the position of tourism in overall strategies and plans for regional development

However, the meeting will also welcome papers on other aspects of tourism and regional development.

Abstracts should be submitted to

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no later than 15 January, 2011

The event is open to researchers and practitioners, young and old, with an interest in tourism and regional development. It is organised by ETOUR (European Tourism Research Institute) at the Mid-Sweden University. The event will take place at Campus Östersund (building G), beginning with the opening plenary late afternoon Wednesday 30 March, and end at noon Friday 1 April. The event will combine keynote presentations, workshops and other interactive ways of working.

Attendants will be charged a fee of 70 euros to cover refreshments (coffee, lunch) during the event, but students can attend for free. The RSA has kindly provided limited bursaries to support travel of students or other delegates with limited financial means of their own in order to encourage as wide a participation in the working group as possible.

Based on the workshops of the research network the intention is to produce one or more publications, in the form of special issues of peer reviewed journals or edited books.

The research network is financially supported by the Regional Studies Association and organised by:

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