



# Towards Second generation rural tourism?

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# Second generation rural tourism

- **Research project**

- What are the challenges of today's rural tourism?
- 2011-2014
- Norwegian Research Council, County governor and county council in Sør-Trøndelag and Sogn og Fjordane
- Centre of Rural Research (Trondheim), Centre for Tourism Research (Sheffield Hallam University), WNRI (Sogndal).
- Poland, Texas and UK

- **Ph.D-study**

- 2011-2014, Inst. of Geography, NTNU in Trondheim
- Biographies of rural tourism enterprises, Sogn og Fjordane, Norway

# What is rural tourism?

- **Tourism located in rural areas (OECD, 1994, Lane, 1994)**
  - Built upon a rural world of small-scale enterprises, open space, contact with nature, heritage, farms and forest products, traditional communities and practices
  - Usually, but not always small-scale
  - Traditional in character
  - Controlled locally
- **Rural areas**
  - Population density and size of settlements
  - Land use and economy
  - Traditional social structures, community identity and heritage



# Background

- **Modern rural tourism**
  - 1970's-80's beginning
  - Countrysides of all types
  - Not resort based: Villages, farms, real rural life
  - Private car
  - Reaction to mass tourism
  - Majority of individual suppliers
  - Lack of organized networks
  - Little professionalization
  - Beginners luck
  - Weak business strategy
  - Simple products
  - Rural restructuring & diversification



# Rural tourism – in a transition phase

- **Changing environments from the 1990s**
  - Changes in market
  - Stronger competition
  - Need to improve product
  - Ageing infrastructure and operators
  - Tourism and rural development
- **The new tourism foreshadowed (Poon 1993)**
  - Information technology
  - Changing consumer requirements
- **Postmodern tourism foreshadowed (Urry 1988)**



# Challenge 1 – A changing market

- **Rural idyll, heritage, fresh air, healthy values**
- **More experienced and sophisticated**
- **Higher educated and wealthier**
- **Multiple holidays**
- **Ageing but active travellers**
- **Many niche markets**



## Challenge 2 – Growing competition

- **Internationally and domestic**
- **Low cost providers**
- **New forms of tourism**
  - City tourism
  - Heritage tourism
  - Cruise tourism



# Challenge 3 – Improve quality and coordination

- **Product**

- Special and authentic?
- New product development?
- Quality assurance?
- Longer holidays?

- **Coordination**

- Network and partnerships?
- Slow dissemination of changes?
- Governance issues?





# Challenge 4 – Ageing operators and infrastructure

- **Operators**

- Recruitment
- Small-scale enterprises
- Farm tourism issues
- Idealism and low profit

- **Infrastructure**

- Organizational and marketing
- Physical development (signs, buildings, paths, visitors centers)
- Who pays, who plans?



# Challenge 5 – Unfulfilled expectations

- **The role of tourism in rural development**
  - Panacea for rural areas in decline?
  - Both agent and object in rural development
- **Still need for rural tourism:**
  - Economic vitality
  - Justify conservation
  - Retain rural lifestyles
  - Support survival of agriculture & landscape
  - Rural living as an alternative to urban living



# Problem statement and objectives

- **The main research question is: How can rural tourism in Norway become more socially and economically robust and environmentally sustainable?**
  - How could rural tourism firms respond to the challenges?
  - What do the rural tourism firms define as their main challenges?
  - What changes in rural tourism are needed, and what is possible?
  - Would those changes qualify for the title of second generation rural tourism?

# Methods

- **Literature study**
- **Case studies in two norwegian counties**
  - Sør-Trøndelag – farming region, city of Trondheim
  - Sogn og Fjordane – fjords and glacier, long traditions of tourism
- **The classic rural tourism enterprises in Sogn og Fjordane (preliminary)**
  - Tourist hotels
  - Farm tourism
  - Self catering units: cottages and houses
- **Cover the time span from 1970s and until today**

# Practical approaches

- **We need more knowledge of the market**
- **We need to better understand how rural tourism businesses work, think and might work together**
- **We need to ask questions about how they might work locally, regionally and nationally in the internet future**



# Thank you for your attention!

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