

EU funding in the tourism sector

Sweden 2011-2020

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Preface

In August 2021, this study was granted funding from a project run by Jämtland Härjedalen Turism (JHT). The study is a subproject within the larger EU structural fund project “*Besöksnäringens roll för regional utveckling 2.0*”. In this project Jämtland Härjedalen Turism, in collaboration with the tourism research environment ETOUR at Mid Sweden University, produce knowledge focusing on tourism and hospitality related projects funded from 2011 to 2020 in Jämtland Härjedalen region as well as the whole Sweden. This report contains data collected from *Projektbanken*, covering two different sources of funding, one being the national funding in Sweden and the second being European funding allocated to the projects in Sweden in this period. The results and the conclusions from the project are intended to function both as an input for the academic research and the revision for the regional development strategies in the tourism and hospitality industry. ETOUR Research Centre would like to thank Jämtland Härjedalen Turism and the funders; EU structural funds and the Region of Jämtland Härjedalen. Big thanks also go to the assistants who helped to categorise all the 17 044 projects: Jonas Herjeby, Stephan Vasyutin and Artemis Goudeli.

Authors, Östersund, June 2022

Summary

Public funding has been a catalyst in regional development during the last decades, not the least in the many tourism-oriented projects all over Sweden. This report compiles data from the Swedish Agency for Economics and Regional Growth (in the report also referred to as *Tillväxtverket*) project bank, mapping out EU- and national funding. The study is a part of the *project Besöksnäringens roll för regional utveckling 2.0*, ran by the regional tourism organisation Jämtland Härjedalen Turism (JHT), in collaboration with the tourism research centre ETOUR at Mid Sweden University. The findings are built on both academic and non-academic information from publications, databases and interviews. The study is limited to the period of 2011 - 2020.

The report presents the nature of tourism industry as an economic driver and skill supply industry and explain the rules and strategies regarding the European Union (EU) project funding. Furthermore, the role of the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth is presented in relation to EU project funding.

The table below summarizes the public funding of projects in Sweden during the period of 2011-2020. As Table i shows, tourism-related projects in Sweden comprise approximately 15% of all projects, but 11,5% in funding volume. This indicates that tourism projects have had a lower budget compared to an average project budget.

Table i. Tourism-related projects in Sweden 2011-2020.

	Total number of projects	Number of tourism related projects	Total funding (SEK billion)	Tourism-related project funding (SEK billion)
EU funds	8 488	1 440 (17%)	25,4	2,9 (11,3%)
National funds	8 556	1 174 (13,7%)	10,2	1,2 (11,9%)
Total	17 044	2 614 (15,3%)	35,6	4,1 (11,5%)

The region of Jämtland Härjedalen stands out as the most tourism-intense region in Sweden when it comes to tourism-related projects; every fourth project refers to tourism. The table below shows the public funding of projects in Jämtland 2011-2020. The share of tourism-related projects comprises approximately one-fourth

of the total. Here, the difference between EU funds and regional funds is especially noteworthy with more than every second Swedish krona going to a tourism project.

Table ii. Tourism-related projects in Jämtland Härjedalen 2011-2020.

	Total number of projects	Number of tourism related projects	Total funding (SEK billion)	Tourism-related project funding (SEK billion)
EU funds	732	124 (16,9%)	3,2	521 m (16%)
National funds	383	144 (37,6%)	508 (Million)	264 m (51,8%)
Total	1 115	268 (24%)	3,7	784 m (21,1%)

The results of the analysis showed that altogether the projects claim to have contributed to such positive impacts as regional growth, development, jobs, investments, identity, local pride, networks and public health.

However, interviews with tourism stakeholders in Jämtland Härjedalen points out several challenges in the funding system, including time pressure, unclear roles, complex administration, late payments and limited long-term impacts.

Finally, there are some recommendations that can be made to improve and strengthen the system. A general recommendation would be to strengthen the funding system by clarifying roles, better coordination, and stronger strategic prerequisites.

Svensk sammanfattning

Offentlig finansiering har varit en pådrivande kraft för regional utveckling under senare år. Många av projekten har haft turistiska förtecken och särskilt frekventa är dessa projekt i Jämtland Härjedalen.

Denna rapport återger en studie som ingår i ett projekt under ledning av Jämtland Härjedalen Turism (JHT) i samarbete med turismforskningscentret ETOUR vid Mittuniversitetet. Projektet (*Besöksnäringens roll för regional utveckling 2.0*) är en utlöpare till ett projekt som startade redan 2019 (*Besöksnäringens roll för regional utveckling*).

Föreliggande sidor fokuserar på offentligt finansierade projekt under tio år (2011–2020). Fokus ligger på projekt i Jämtland Härjedalen, men det görs även nationella jämförelser. Rapporten sammanställer data som finns tillgängliga via Tillväxtverkets projektbank med projekt finansierade såväl genom EU:s fonder som nationell finansiering inom Sverige. När vi tittar på siffrorna ska vi ha i åtanke att samma projekt, genom medfinansiering, samtidigt kan ha finansiering via EU-medel och nationella medel.

I denna rapport ingår datamaterial som samlats in via i) intervjuer under 2019 med besöksnäringens företrädare i Jämtland Härjedalen, ii) intervjuer under 2021 med aktörer inom det offentliga finansieringssystemet, och iii) projektdata från Tillväxtverkets databaser (Projektbanken). Utöver presentation av data och analys ges här också en kort överblick över de europeiska och svenska systemen för offentlig finansiering.

Projektbanken rymmer projekt som beviljats medel via Tillväxtverket. De flesta turismprojekt som beviljats medel återfinns i Projektbanken. Det ska nämnas att det också förekommer projekt med finansiering från andra källor såsom Havs- och fiskerifonden, Socialfonden, Jordbruksfonden för landsbygdsutveckling, Interreg och Lokalt ledd utveckling (Leader).

Tabellen nedan sammanfattar offentlig finansiering till projekt i Sverige 2011–2020. Vilket framgår av tabellen har turismrelaterade projekt utgjort omkring 15% av alla offentligt finansierade projekt under den studerade tidsperioden. Dock svarar

dessa projekt bara för 11,5% av den totala volymen medel, vilket indikerar att svenska turismprojekt har haft en mindre budget än de genomsnittliga projekten.

Tabell iii. Turismrelaterade projekt i Sverige 2011–2020.

	Antal projekt	Turismprojekt	Finansiering (MSEK)	Finansiering, turismprojekt (MSEK)
EU-finansiering	8 488	1 440 (17%)	25,4	2,9 (11,3%)
Natinoell finansiering	8 556	1 174 (13,7%)	10,2	1,2 (11,9%)
Totalt	17 044	2 614 (15,3%)	35,6	4,1 (11,5%)

Utöver en nationell sammanställning görs i rapporten en djupdykning i regionen Jämtland Härjedalen som visade sig vara den mest turismintensiva regionen i landet sett till andelen finansierade turismprojekt. Tabellen nedan sammanfattar offentlig finansiering till projekt i Jämtland Härjedalen 2011–2020.

Tabell iv. Turismrelaterade projekt i Jämtland Härjedalen 2011–2020.

	Antal projekt	Turismprojekt	Finansiering (MSEK)	Finansiering, turismprojekt (MSEK)
EU-finansiering	732	124 (16,9%)	3,2	521 m (16%)
Natinoell finansiering	383	144 (37,6%)	508 (Million)	264 m (51,8%)
Totalt	1 115	268 (24%)	3,7	784 m (21,1%)

Under 2011–2020 var hela var fjärde projekt ett turismprojekt och totalt lades ungefär var fjärde offentliga stödkrona i turismprojekt. Anmärkningsvärt är att från de nationella medlen som utgick till Jämtland Härjedalen avsattes mer än varannan krona till turismrelaterade projekt. De regionala strategier som de senaste åren pekat ut turism och besöksnäring som viktiga insatsområden har med andra ord fått genomslag.

Offentlig finansiering står bakom många turismprojekt det senaste decenniet, och dessa projekt har på olika sätt varit ett viktigt bidrag till utvecklingen av besöksnäringen, inte minst i Jämtland Härjedalen. I rapporten delas turismrelaterade projekt in i ett antal underkategorier och det kan konstateras att

destinationsutveckling, natur/kultur och evenemang har dominerat under den undersökta tidsperioden.

Tabell v. Projektinnehåll i turismprojekt i Jämtland Härjedalen 2011–2020.

	EU-projekt	Nationella projekt	Totalt	Andel i %
Destinationsutveckling	40	14	54	19%
Natur och kultur	40	9	49	17%
Evenemang	11	36	47	16%
Innovation och entreprenörskap	15	28	43	15%
Infrastruktur och transport	7	27	34	12%
Samverkan	9	9	18	6%
Digitalisering	6	3	9	3%
Kompetensförsörjning	2	3	5	2%
Marknadsföring	0	3	3	1%
Övrigt	17	12	29	10%
Totalt	147	144	291	100%

Projekten kan konstateras innehålla satsningar för att främja arbetstillfällena och tillväxt. Inte minst inom små och medelstora företag. Vidare kan konstateras att flera större investeringar och satsningar i infrastruktur blivit möjliga tack vare projektmedel. Avslutningsvis påtalar de personer som intervjuats projekteffekter och värden bortom det synliga och mätbara, såsom stärkt lokal identitet, attraktivare livsmiljöer och förbättrad folkhälsa.

Intervjuer med kommuner, destinationer och andra turismföreträdare visar dock också på brister i systemet. Flera pekar på *kort framförhållning*, både mellan utlysning och deadline för ansökan, och mellan beslut och eventuell projektstart. Flera pekar också på *bristande stöd* under ansökningsprocessen och *otydliga mandat* inom stödsystemet. Uppbyggnaden med *medfinansiering*, gör att en sökande måste ha pengar för att få pengar, och vi kan se en *undanträngningseffekt* bland mindre aktörer då kraven på medfinansiering och ansökningskrivande, budgetarbete och

återrapportering för vissa mindre aktörer kan kännas övermäktig. Avslutningsvis är det en stor utmaning att det inte går att motivera medel till *ordinarie verksamhet* och att kunskaper tillkomna under projekt riskerar gå förlorade då projektgrupper många gånger splittras vid *projekt slut*.

Rapporten visar på ett behov av tydligare roller och ansvar i stödsystemet. Avnämarna önskar ett robustare stödsystem med en större samordning genom bevakning av utlysningar, matchningsstöd mellan olika sökande, finansiärer och projektledare, skrivstöd vid ansökningskrivning, budgetstöd samt stöd vid utvärdering, implementering och kunskapsspridning. Ett viktigt led i ett starkare finansieringssystem är inte bara stödsystemet i sig, utan också att sökande företag och organisationer har uppdaterade och förankrade strategier som pekar ut insatsområden och projektbehov.

1. Introduction

Public funding, not the least from the European Union (EU), has been a catalyst for regional development during the last decades. Public funding has also played a crucial role for many tourism-oriented projects, where tourism has been seen as an engine of local and regional development. Tourism development has been linked to generating economic growth, income diversification, creation of jobs and improving infrastructure and services (Giaoutzi & Nijkamp, 2006; Hall, 2006; Page & Connell, 2014; Wall-Reinius & Heldt-Cassel, 2019). Until the COVID-19 pandemic, putting on hold international travel, tourism industry was one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries. Due to its complex nature, tourism industry has capacity to positively influence not only the economic sectors, directly linked to tourism and hospitality, but also have far reaching impacts on the society at large (Page & Connell 2014; Saarinen, 2007). In the European context, tourism has often been considered a good way to stimulate regional development and competitiveness, especially in the northern peripheries, where alternative sources of income are scarce.

The idea of promoting tourism as a driver for regional development has also been popular in Sweden. Many Swedish regional development plans and strategies point out tourism as a prioritized sector. After the 2010s tourism development has received more noticeable support from the Swedish government. In 2021 Swedish government has developed a national strategy for promoting sustainable tourism and the hospitality industry (Sweden's Government Office, 2021; SOU, 2017: 95). With this strategy, the government aims, from a political perspective, to create long-term conditions for a sustainable, growing hospitality industry that generates positive socio-economic impacts for the whole country. The strategy points out policy directions and defines goals to be achieved by 2030. Such concepts as place development, collaboration and local participation are given a lot of attention in the strategy.

Among all the Swedish regions Jämtland Härjedalen stands out as a region where tourism investments and projects have been more intense than anywhere else in the country (Pettersson & Jonsson, 2022). Jämtland Härjedalen has the lowest population density in Sweden but is one of the country's most business-dense regions if measured in companies per capita. The region is also a popular tourism destination all year around. In recent years, the growth in numbers and size of destination management organizations (DMOs) has been crucial for tourism and

place development. Many projects and investments have received public funding, often bringing together the issues of community services, destination development, tourism and place development.

Thanks to good data storage and availability through open databases, we can have an extensive overview of how public funding has been used to support development. Surprisingly, very few studies have been done in this field, considering the large amount of money in the support system, and the role that all these projects may have played for the regions.

This report is an attempt to investigate tourism and regional development by presenting an overview of public funding of tourism related projects in Sweden over the period of 2011-2020. Project data originates from the publicly available database Projektbanken, hosted by Tillväxtverket (see Figure 1). In addition, expert interviews with regional tourism stakeholders to get local insights regarding public funding in tourism.



Figure 1. Data sources used in the study.

This report aims to provide a better understanding of public funding of growth and development in Sweden, focusing on the tourism sector. The report aims to increase knowledge at stakeholder level regarding value creation from the tourism industry in sustainable regional development. To better highlight public funding of tourism projects, a case study is presented, analysing Jämtland Härjedalen – one of the most tourism-intensive regions in Sweden.

2. EU funding

Over half of the EU funding is channelled into the five European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF): European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), which are managed jointly by the European Commission and the EU countries. The purpose of all these funds is to invest the job creation, sustainable and healthy economy, and environment in Europe.

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are the main tools for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU member states. The ESIF mainly focus on research and innovation, digital technologies, supporting the low-carbon economy, sustainable management of natural resources, and small businesses (European Commission, 2016).

In Sweden, all EU support is intended to help achieve the objectives of Europe 2020, which is the EU's common strategy for growth and jobs. This strategy has three overall priorities that are central to the growth and development of Europe by 2020 (Europeiska Union, 2020). These priorities are smart growth (developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation), sustainable growth, and inclusive growth (growth for all). Tillväxtverket, the Swedish ESF Council and the Swedish Board of Agriculture are the authorities responsible for ESIF in Sweden. Swedish government has instructed them to intensify their cooperation in cross-fund issues, mainly to make the process of applying for EU funds easier for project owners.

2.1. European Cohesion Policy in Sweden, 2007-2013

The European cohesion policy has been the main instrument for achieving the Europe 2020 objectives. Its efforts are to improve the competitive position of EU as a whole, and particularly its less developed regions. Funds for the cohesive policy are distributed from the three structural funds — the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Funds (ESF), and the Cohesion Fund. Investing in thousands of projects all over EU region, the funds aim at promoting economic and social cohesion by reducing disparities between EU member states and regions (European Union Cohesion Policy, n.d.).

With a budget of 347 billion Euros for 2007-2013, cohesion policy acts as a single largest source of financial support at the EU level, to investing in growth and jobs,

and enable all regions to compete effectively in the internal market. However, in Sweden, for 2007-2013 in total Cohesion Policy funding, EUR 2 billion was allocated, while EUR 1,6 billion was under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective, and EUR 265 million under the European Territorial Cooperation Objective (see Table 1). Sweden has had eight regional programs funded by the ERDF and one national countrywide program funded by the ESF (European Union Cohesion Policy, n.d.).

Table 1. European investment in Sweden 2007-2013 (figures have been rounded up). European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF). Source: European Union Cohesion Policy, (n.d.).

Objective	Fund	EU	National Public	Total
Regional Competitiveness and Employment	ERDF	0.9	1.1	2
	ESF	0.7	0.7	1.4
Total Regional Competitiveness and Employment		1.6		
Total European Territorial Cooperation*	ERDF	0.3	-	0.3
TOTAL		1.9	1.8	3.7

The targets for these EU funding have been to benefit the regional and local economy through improving transport and communication networks, creating employment, helping business start-ups, increasing skills and training, cleaning up the environment and restoring tourism amenities (European Union Cohesion policy, n.d.). Moreover, structural funds have supported the tourism development in all regions and invested in natural and cultural heritage attractions.

In this EU program various priorities were assigned to research and development (R&D) and innovation, developing and improving information and telecommunication technologies (ICT) infrastructure, promoting entrepreneurship and SMEs support, improving employability, education, and skills, transport infrastructure and accessibility and protecting the environment and sustainable growth (European Union Cohesion policy, n.d.).

2.2. European Structural and Investment Fund 2014-2020

Funds for the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) 2014-2020 are distributed through four ESIF funds in Sweden that are: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

Each of these funds has its own specific orientation. The ERDF aims to enhance the competitiveness of the regions and develop the economy; the ESF aims to reinforce and build on national labour market policy; the EAFRD aims to provide support and payments to develop rural areas; and the EMFF provides support for the development of aquaculture and sustainable fishing. All the funds are also to comprise the horizontal principles such as gender equality, accessibility for people with disabilities, sustainable development, equality, and non-discrimination (Europeiska Union, 2020). The EU program of 2014-2020 specifies ten thematic objectives that the funds work for, whereby some of the objectives apply to only one of the funds, and some are covered by several funds. Table 2 indicates the connection between the funds and the ten thematic objectives in the EU structural and investment fund, 2014-2020.

Table 2. How EU structural and investment fund works toward the thematic objectives, 2014-2020. Source: European Union (n.d.).

European Regional Development Fund	European Social Fund	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund	Thematic Objective
●		●		Research, technological development and innovation
●		●		ICT (including broadband)
●		●	●	Competitiveness of SMEs
●		●		Transition to a low-carbon economy
		●		Climate change adaptation
		●	●	Protect the environment and promote the sustainable utilisation of resources
●				Sustainable transport
	●	●	●	Sustainable employment and labour mobility
	●	●		Social inclusion
	●	●		Education and lifelong learning

In EU program 2014-2020, Sweden agreed with European Commission on certain priorities, and participated in 27 EU programs with SEK 67 billion. While the four ESIF were distributed among a number of programs, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) financed 23 of these programs, and the three other funds financed one program each. This SEK 67 billion was supported by EU and co-financed to invest into smart and sustainable growth for everyone in Sweden; however, this did not include the Interreg program's budget (European Union, n.d.), a program that aims for supporting projects uniting cities and regions in different EU-countries.

3. Public funding in Sweden

Through a few pilot projects in the early 1980s, project funding has become an important policy in the EU. Through the multiple annual programs and projects which were funded, the European Commission aims to implement its policy agenda and goals throughout the EU territory and even beyond; therefore, we witness the fostered 'projectification' in the EU public policy during the past two or three decades (Büttner & Leopold, 2016; Freeman, 2019; Büttner, 2019 & Hodgson et al., 2019). In Sweden also, there has been an increasing use of projects and similar temporary modes of problem solving in the public sector.

Sweden has a long tradition of being a welfare state, with local authorities both having a responsibility for the provision of public services and being the ones delivering the services (Wehlander & Madell, 2012; Berg & Edquist, 2017). There has been an extensive reliance on project-based approaches in various parts of the public sector in order to deliver routine services, to reform or modify the services, in the form of pilot projects, programs, task forces, or other similar organizational arrangements. This has been a gradual shift into a non-permanent structure in public organizations, and it is considered as one of the most important administrative changes (Sjöblom, 2009). Project-based arrangements such as publicly funded projects aim to offer attractive and relatively cheap ways to roll out new ways of working, and to encourage bottom-up innovation within organizations, to generate a mode of entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship (Hodgson et al., 2019).

Public funding, which is the focus of this study, consists of the EU funds and the national funding. In Sweden, there are different ways to organize EU funds, but one re-occurring aspect is the prevalence of regional organizations and public authorities. For instance, the Social Fund, the Regional Development Fund, and the Leader – all function primarily on the regional level (Fred & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2019). However, the EU commission is working with the authorities of the European countries and regions to ensure that the funding is invested properly; for instance, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, i.e., *Tillväxtverket*, is one of them (Tillväxtverket, 2017).

All EU funds are managed by the EU countries through the 'Partnership Agreements'. Each country prepares an agreement in collaboration with the European Commission and sets out how the funds are to be used during the EU funding program. Partnership Agreements lead to a series of investment programs, which connect the funding to different regions and projects of the country in order

to implement the funds as efficiently as possible (European Commission, n.d.,c). The partnership agreement also describes how a member state is to use the thematic objectives at national and regional level (Tillväxtverket, 2021). Municipalities steer between interrelated categories of agent of projectification (including EU-associated decision-making agencies, bottom-up organizations and networks initiated by the municipalities themselves, and a range of consultancy firms) in the process of EU project funding, starting from project ideas to project application, and finally project evaluation (Fred & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2019).

Benefiting from project fundings, Sweden prioritised it in the national policies and public funding strategies. Public funding can act as a catalyst for cooperation among actors in the tourism industry regardless whether these actors represent the private or public sectors or belong to destination management organizations (DMOs) at regional, national, or international level. Public funding is used to strengthen growth and development all over Sweden, and regions are expected to focus on areas where they have a potential to strengthen their regional competitiveness (Pettersson & Jonsson, 2022). Tourism has become a popular development avenue for regions with limited other development alternatives. This has become especially visible in the northern peripheral regions. There are several challenges when it comes to sustainable tourism development, but the expected benefits might explain why tourism is often highlighted in projects supported by public funding.

3.1. The role of Tillväxtverket

Based on the EU regulations in 2013 (Europeiska unionens officiella tidning, 2013) new institutions lay down common provisions for a number of EU funds. Furthermore, in this regulation, it is stated that member states are to form partnerships to implement the funds. The partnership organizations differ in different countries and funds, but the common fact is that they entail “the incident of new forms of regional organizations acting as mediators between the EU and municipalities” (Fred & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2019, p. 195).

In Sweden, an example of such a mediator is Tillväxtverket which focuses on invested projects promoting regional growth and employment (Tillväxtverket, 2022). Tillväxtverket provides support to businesses and enables the various businesses and regions to meet the challenges of future. Its vision is to grow more

companies in Sweden. To achieve this, Tillväxtverket offers knowledge, networks, and financing with its broad and multifaceted operation. Moreover, its main principal task is to ensure that EU funds are invested in projects that promote regional growth and employment (Tillväxtverket, 2022).

National co-financing is also a requirement in the applicable projects and an important principle for the implementation of EU programs (Utgiftsområde 19, 2021). Figure 2 displays the process of project application through Tillväxtverket.

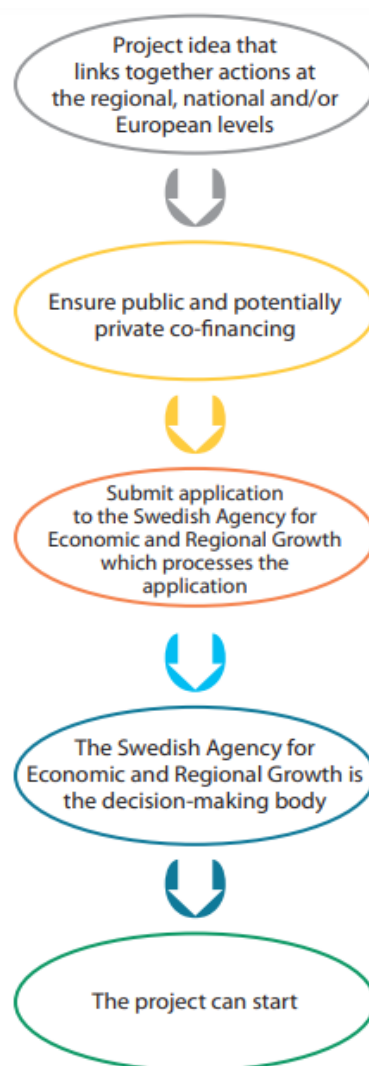


Figure 2. Process for a project application. Source: Tillväxtverket: National Regional Fund Program, (n.d).

3.2. Co-financing of the projects in Sweden

In order for a project to be granted funding, a certain proportion of co-financing is required. Co-financing can differ, such as national public co-financing, private cash co-financing, public grants other than money, or private grants other than money. However, it is essential that the co-financing amounts are included in the financing budget correspond to the amounts and type of co-financing stated in the co-financing certificate that is included in the project application (GIA Sweden AB, 2016; Büttner & Leopold, 2016; Tillväxtverket, 2019).

The EU's share of funding is always at least 30% in each supported project and the remaining share is co-financed by other actors. Co-financer cannot normally be a supplier of the project because co-financer has a knowledge of the project that gives an advantage over competing suppliers in a procurement (Tillväxtverket, 2019).

Public co-financing can be allocated by a public organization, a body governed by public law at national, regional, or local level or cash while cash or grant /contribution other than money can be financed by the private sectors. A funding grant means an added value to the project from any other actor than the beneficiary, which can be as goods, services (e.g., working hours), land or real estate, or construction work. Grants may not exceed 50% of the total national co-financing meaning that at least half of the co-financing must consist of cash (Tillväxtverket, 2019).

4. Funding of tourism development

The importance of tourism as an economic activity is widely recognized. Tourism is a complex economic activity with points of contact in many different business sectors, such as transportation, hotels, restaurants, and services (Page & Connell 2014; Fletcher, Fayall, Gilberg & Wanhill 2018; Holloway & Humphreys, 2020; Jonsson & Pettersson, 2020). Tourism, therefore, has a major impact on a wide variety of other economic sectors, and is an integral part of society and the economy through human mobility; locally, nationally, and internationally (Saarinen 2007; Page & Connell 2014; Jonsson & Pettersson, 2020).

Tourism is often considered as a catalyst of regional development, having potential to generate economic growth through income diversification, jobs creation, stimulating entrepreneurship, improving infrastructure etc. (Wall & Mathieson 2006; Page & Connell 2014; Jonsson & Pettersson, 2020). It is not surprising therefore, that tourism is a rather popular theme in regional development projects, both in developing and developed countries (Jenkins, 1982; Moscardo, 2005; Giaoutzi & Nijkamp, 2006; Kauppila, Saarinen & Leinonen, 2009). Tourism has also been visible in projects, receiving public funding in Sweden, as is discussed in this report.

4.1. Importance of EU investment in tourism sector

Due to the diversity of tourism sector, which is comprised of different industries and services, it plays an important role in generating growth and jobs and contributes to the EU's economy and EU-wide GDP as well as tourism-related developments (Halkier, 2010; Draft thematic guidance fiche for desk officers, 2014). Since Europe is the most visited region in the world (European Court of Auditors, 2020), EU funding on tourism sector has also been active, supported under a number of investment priorities based on EU described programs between 2007 up to now (Draft thematic guidance fiche for desk officers, 2014).

While economic impacts from tourism sector varies considerably among member states (see Figure 3), in 2018, the direct contribution of the tourism sector to the EU economy is estimated about 3,9% EU GDP, and 5,1% of the total labour force, i.e., around 12 million jobs. Taking into account the spill-over effects of tourism into the wider economy, those figures increase significantly to around 10% of the EU GDP and close to 12% of total employment (European Court of Auditors, 2020).

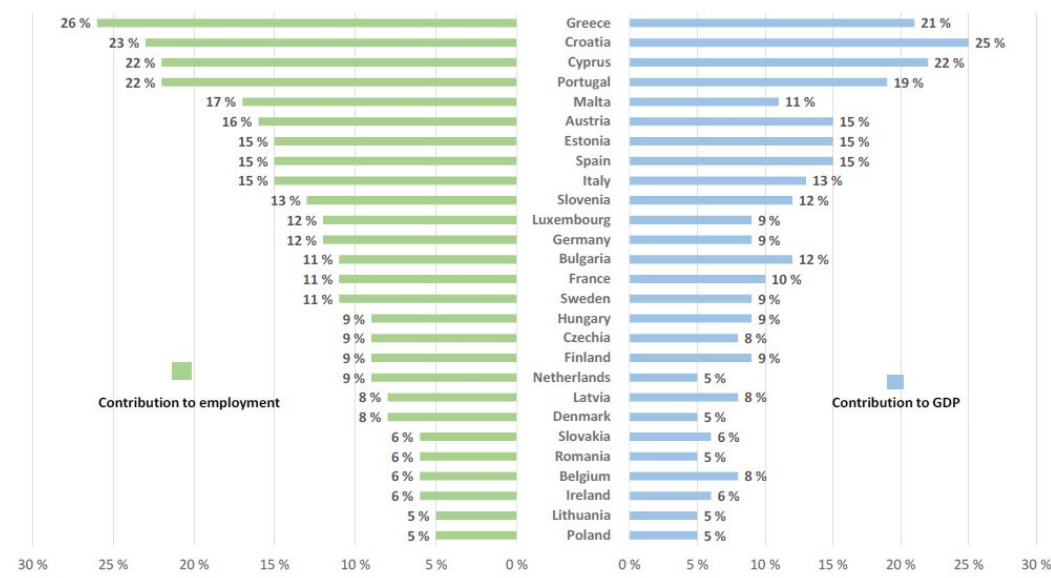


Figure 3. Direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism per Member State, 2018. Source: European Court of Auditors, 2020, p. 4.

Establishment of common market within the EU has aimed to promote economic growth and business development in its member states, in order to increase their competitiveness in the world market. With this goal in mind, EU Structural and Cohesion funds are allocated to the projects, developing conditions for regional entrepreneurship, specialization, industrial clusters, and innovation systems to increase growth and employment (Bohlin, Brandt & Elbe, 2016). The EU appraises tourism as a potential sector to contribute to such a development and allocated substantial financial resources to tourism development projects (Halkier, 2010). From the EU fund, structural funds have become a key resource in the tourism industry when combined with national regional policies (Östhol & Svensson, 2002).

The 2007-2013 Cohesion Policy recognized Europe as the world's leading tourist destination, aimed not only at mobilising tourism for regional development and job creation but also focusing on sustainable tourism for preservation and enhancement of Europe's cultural and natural heritage. Between 2007 and 2013, more than EUR 6 billion EU support directly targeted tourism under Cohesion policy, which represents 1,8% of the total EU budget. From this amount, EUR 3,8 billion was allocated to the tourist services improvements, EUR 1,4 billion to the

protection and development of natural heritage, and EUR 1,1 billion to the promotion of natural assets. Additionally, support for the tourism-related infrastructure and services was provided under other headings such as innovation, SMEs enterprises, human capital, and information technology (European Commission, n.d.,b)

Between 2007 and 2013, 1,5% of the total was the share of Sweden with 23 602 773 Euros, of which 0,5% were allocated to promotion of natural assets, 0,4% to protection and development of natural heritage, and 0,5% to tourist services improvement (European Commission, n.d.,b).

The new 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy does not include tourism as an explicit Thematic Objective (TO) in the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) regulations as it constitutes a means or a sector rather than an objective. However, if contributing to the thematic objectives and investment priorities in a targeted way, and if fully embedded in wider development and growth strategies, investment in tourism can be supported (Draft thematic guidance fiche for desk officers, 2014). Despite this point, tourism still has had a prominent role in the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) investment of 2014-2020 with EUR 8 billion granted budget, as well as other related investments into the conservation, protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage fields. Actions done within ERDF TOs aim at promoting growth of SMEs and IT innovation support, leading to strengthening their sustainability and competitiveness and simultaneously modernization and diversification of the regional tourism system (European Commission, n.d.,a; IRS, Csil, Ciset, BOP Consulting; European Commission, 2015). The European Commission confirmed the investment in tourism between 2014-2020 by publishing a 'thematic guidance' which recommends that investments in tourism are aligned with one or more of the TOs and investment priorities (European Commission, n.d.,a; IRS, Csil, Ciset, BOP Consulting; European Commission, 2015).

To summarize, most of the EU's financial support for tourism comes from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF). altogether, EUR 6,4 billion was allocated to tourism between 2007 and 2013, and EUR 4 billion budget was allocated to 2014-2020. Based on a preliminary analysis in 2020, the ERDF and the CF have co-funded almost 10 000 tourism projects

(European Court of Auditors, 2020), covering a wide range of activities in various EU member states, which is conducted separately in two program periods of 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 shown in Figure 4.

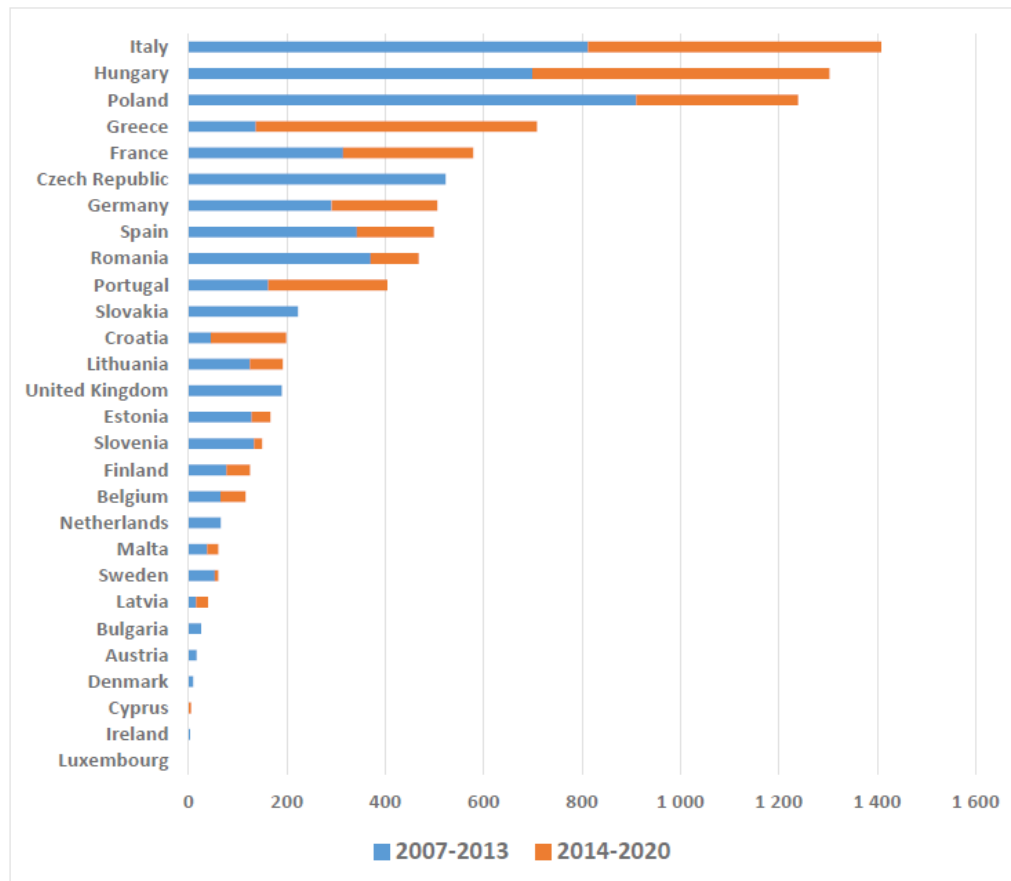


Figure 4. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF) allocations in tourism industry per Member State (EUR Million). Source: European Court of Auditors, 2020, p. 7.

There is also a guideline on EU funding for tourism highlighting the wide range of funding programs financed by the new budget, Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027, and Next Generation EU which show the importance of tourism and investment on that among EU various objectives and themes.

4.2. National tourism policies and funding

Even though importance of tourism in Europe is widely recognized, it must be stressed that this sector has a very uneven geography, which is extremely important not only from an economic and socio-cultural perspective, but also in

terms of policy implications. The current national tourism organizational structure in Sweden was determined by an Act of Parliament in 2005 where the objective of the Swedish Government's tourism policy is for Sweden to be a very attractive destination and to have a tourism industry that is competitive in the long term, contributes to sustainable growth and increased employment in all parts of the country (Tillväxtverket, 2015, p.10). To keep long-term competitiveness in tourism industry in Sweden, strengthened international competitiveness is required to create a long-term sustainable growth. Tourism industry success also depends on greater collaboration between the industry, representatives of tourism, social planners, and other administrations.

Two organizations, Tillväxtverket and VisitSweden AB, are responsible for developing tourism at the national level and marketing Sweden as a tourist destination internationally. While Visit Sweden markets Sweden as a tourism destination internationally, Tillväxtverket is responsible for developing tourism at the national level. Tillväxtverket as a government agency is responsible for the official tourism statistics and information gathering on the development and economic effects of tourism. The agency is also responsible for promoting tourism initiatives and entrepreneurship, through national coordination and knowledge development as well as through the European Regional Fund and governmental funding. VisitSweden AB is a joint public-private partnership company, owned by the government and the Swedish tourism industry. This industry is represented by Svenska Turism AB, which is comprised of 170 companies and organizations from the tourism sector. VisitSweden is responsible for international branding and promotion of Sweden as a destination and has offices in several countries (see Figure 5) (Nordic Council of Ministries, 2019; OECD, 2020).

Moreover, the board for promoting Sweden abroad (Nämnden för Sverigefrämjande i utlandet) is a national advisory board to the government, placed under the Foreign Office. The board consists of member of the different ministries and agencies who are involved in promoting Sweden. There are also tourism bodies at regional and national levels, consisting of 21 regional counties and 290 municipalities which are managed by regions and local communities respectively, however there are no formal links between the different administrative levels. The regional organization usually has an overall responsibility for tourism marketing and/or tourism product development in the

region. The main formal responsibility at the local level is to maintain tourist information services (Member states' annual tourism reporting template, 2018).

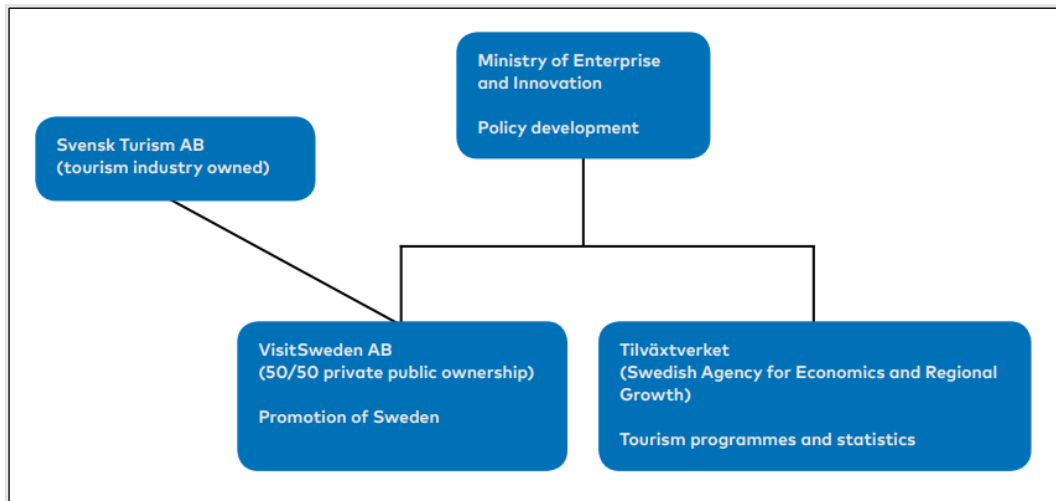


Figure 5. Sweden's organizational chart of tourism bodies. Source: Nordic Council of Ministries (2019).

The industry, through Svensk Turism AB, launched a strategy for the Swedish hospitality industry in 2010. The main objectives were to increase destination development and to double the industry's overall revenue 2010-2020, approximately from SEK 250 billion to SEK 500 billion (EU member states' annual tourism reporting template, 2018). Moreover, while the Swedish policy is to be the first fossil-free state by 2045, the major challenges for Swedish tourism are connectivity and transportation, small enterprise profitability, destination and product development, seasonality, and sustainability.

Due to Sweden's geography and location, combined with small population and sparsely populated areas, transportation is crucial and at the same time challenging. These circumstances also highlight the importance of high-speed internet access and rural tourism development. Sustainability and how to integrate its principles at all levels has remained a major challenge from the perspectives of both public and private sectors. The policy priority is to develop a long-term strategy to run until 2030, which promotes sustainable tourism development and provides a platform to implement actions that meet both national and global challenges. Along with promoting sustainability, the government has been proactive in reducing the regulatory burden for tourism businesses which due to

their small size often find it difficult to interpret or meet regulations. However, in some cases, processes and demands can differ among Sweden's 290 municipalities (OECD, 2020).

4.3. Importance of tourism in Jämtland Härjedalen

Jämtland Härjedalen is Sweden's third largest region by area with a population of around 132 000 inhabitants. The large area, but only a few percent of Sweden's population, makes the region sparsely populated. However, it is one of the country's most business-dense regions measured in companies per inhabitant. In recent centuries, the region has been a popular area for recreation and health-promoting activities both during summer and winter (Nilsson, 2003). Today, trade, wood industry, food production and not least, tourism dominate the regional economy. Tourism plays a significant role for the region's labour market, economy, growth and attractiveness. Sweden's most popular ski destination Åre is also located here, and mountainous landscape of the region remains attractive for tourism all year round (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Hiking, along with skiing, have been attractive activities in the region for several years. Photo: Sandra Lee Pettersson.

The hospitality industry had sales of around SEK 6 billion in 2019, i.e., before the pandemic, which corresponded to four percent of the total tourism turnover in

Sweden. Sales fall back to just over one million day-tourists and 11,5 million guest nights, of which 3,2 million in commercial accommodation (Jämtland Härjedalen Tourism, 2020). The development of the industry is based on a long tradition of small-scale entrepreneurship together with public stakeholders and large investments. In recent years, the growth of destination management companies (DMOs) has been crucial for tourism development. Many projects and investments have had public funding, where the boundaries between destination, tourism, place and community development have in several cases been blurred.

With the region's long history of visitors, hospitality and infrastructure have been shaped and developed side by side with the growth of tourism. Visitors come to the region via both land and air. In addition to airports (see Figure 7), the region is reached via the Inlandsbanan railway (north-south) and Mittbanan railway (east-west) as well as the two European highways E14 (east-west) and E45 (north-south).

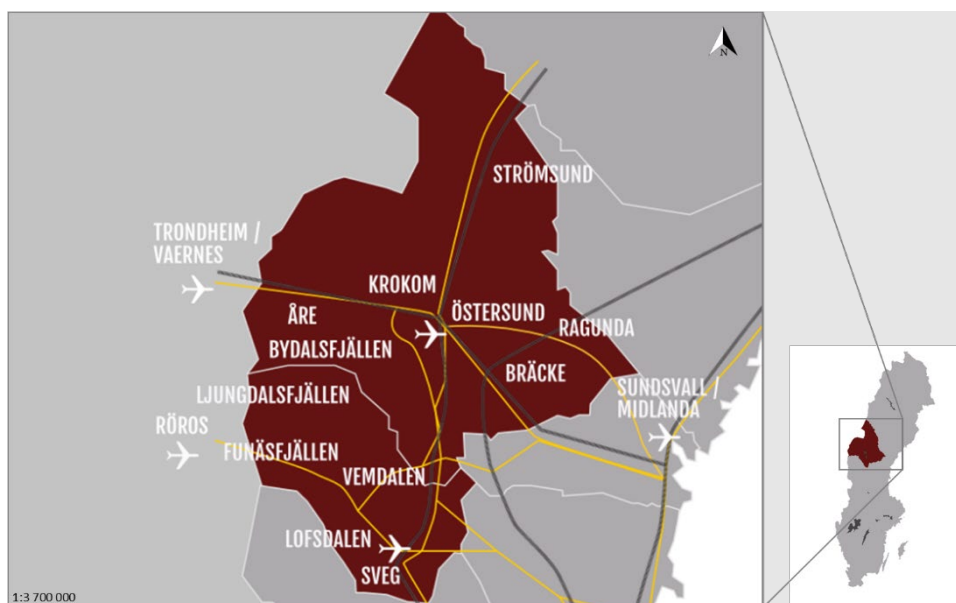


Figure 7. Map of Jämtland Härjedalen. Source: Processing of originals from Jämtland Härjedalen Tourism.

Tourism plays a crucial role in many places in Jämtland Härjedalen, but there is a big difference between the level of tourism in the region's different destinations and municipalities. Many companies in and around the established tourist destinations have a clear and direct connection to tourism, such as lift owners,

hotels and restaurants. Other industries such as construction, daily trade and other services are also highly dependent on tourism.

The Northern periphery, which includes Jämtland Härjedalen region, is grappling with several structural and demographic challenges such as population decline, long distances, small labour markets and limited dissemination of knowledge. However, these areas also show a potential for high productivity growth through a wide range of nature-related resources that can play a major role in regional development, not least through tourism. In the context of developing sparsely populated regions, an important political question becomes how these assets can be refined through strategic choices; knowledge and innovation, infrastructure and business climate (OECD, 2017).

A new regional development strategy (RUS) for Jämtland Härjedalen was accepted in February 2021. Similar to previous regional development strategies, it points out attractive places and experiences as important areas to continue to develop. In the ongoing work on a strategy for smart specialization (S3), one out of four designated areas of strength is “experiences”, and it is in turn broken down into four sub-areas: events, nature tourism, products in sports and outdoor life and gastronomic and cultural experiences. It is clear that Jämtland Härjedalen continues to consider tourism and experiences as central also for the years to come. In that intention projects and public funding are crucial.

5. Methodology

Based on the study's objectives and goals, both quantitative and qualitative methods are applied in this research. The quantitative method provides the analysis for the empirical research and presents the results via various charts, diagrams, and tables. Furthermore, the qualitative method, done through a series of in-depth interviews, supports the complementary information to answer the raised questions, elaborate more and conduct the deep analysis of the data. The mixed method which can also be called the 'third methodological movement' is an intuitive way of doing research that is constantly being displayed throughout our everyday lives" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017, p. 1). It supports the idea of 'multiple ways of seeing and hearing' (Greene, 2007).

Both methods can be mixed based on research aims (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989; Greene, Benjamin & Goodyear, 2001). In social science, for instance, it is to describe an approach where researcher seeks to answer one or more questions from different perspectives (Fakis, Hilliam, Stoneley & Townend, 2014). This contributes to strengthening the findings from the research and to seek new insights into existing knowledge or phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

5.1. Data collection

The main data which is studied in this research is based on the registered projects in the Tillväxtverket project bank between 2011-2020. The projects are categorized in three sections that are called 'National Projects', 'EU program 2014-2020' and 'EU program 2007-2013' in order.

All projects in the database are registered through an administrative system called NYPS, that is used by all regions in Sweden. NYPS is a computer system for project and support case management which is developed by the Tillväxtverket. 'The NYPS portal (Nypsportalen) is the common entrance to the tools that contain data from NYPS and NYPS 2020. All data in Nypsportalen is updated daily. The NYPS portal contains the NYPS barometer, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) barometer and project banks for EU programs and project funds. The barometers are tools for quick access to the statistics in NYPS and to be able to

follow the daily work in a simple and fast way. The target group to this system is mainly decision-makers, program managers, administrators and those who work with follow-up. The barometers are a complement to NYPS and Diver. Deeper analyses will continue to be made in Diver (Morelid, 2022).

In support of the data collected from Tillväxverket project bank, interviews with seven persons from Tillväxtverket, Jämtland Härjedalen Region, Jämtland County Administrative board and Jämtland Härjedalen Turism are done. Moreover, the complementary information obtained from the interviews was done already in 2019 as a part of the first phase of the project *Besöksnäringens roll för regional utveckling* supported by Jämtland Härjedalen Turism (JHT) Organization. In this case, data collection was done between August and October 2019. All together 26 meetings were held, where the respondents differed in numbers stretching from 2 to at most a dozen (see below, Table 3). Altogether more than 100 persons took part in these interviews.

5.1.1. Tillväxtverket's project bank

The Project Bank contains all projects to which Tillväxtverket has granted support, with national funding or through EU funding. It is a database where you can search for individual projects. The database shows projects funded via the Tillväxtverket.

Most tourism projects that have been granted funding 2011-2020 can be found in Projektbanken. Although, it should be mentioned that there are also a few projects with funding from other sources such as the Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the Social Fund, the Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the Interreg Fund and the Locally Led Development Fund (Leader). A small part of the regional fund has been distributed between the national and regional programs through venture capital investments, nor they are included in the Tillväxtverket's project bank.

In this study, 8 556 National projects and 8 488 EU projects (2011-2020) listed in Tillväxtverket project online bank are studied in order to create a new bank of tourism-related projects based on the Swedish regions in the period of 2011-2020. The data collection process takes about five months between August 2021 and February in two steps. The main author reviewed nine years of recorded National

projects and the whole EU program 2014-2020; three Mid-Sweden University students and trainees helped with the rest of the data; however finally, the total projects are checked and confirmed by the author.

Each project is identified through specific information that are listed as project-ID (Case ID), project title or name, project description (including a short summary of the projects, goals and objectives), managing authority (decision-making organization), granted and paid money to each project, project starting and ending dates, all the involved regions (beneficiary municipality, company or industry), focus area and prioritization (which define the project broader objective/requirements or precise focus on business area). Apart from these attributes, other complementary information such as target programs and theme goals are brought up for the EU program projects. The registered projects are organized based on different values and can be filtered based on these specifications and by search.

Distinguishing the tourism-related projects out of total are processed based on four main criteria including the project name/title, project description, project prioritization and project study area. As far as the decision about inclusion of any project as a tourism-related one has been challenging and needed further search, more search from different sources is done in order to make a confident decision in this regard. Apart from internet search, referring to different regional and/or SEMs and/or company websites, consulting with university lecturers, and project managers at Jämtland Härjedalen Turism (JHT) were the information sources to rely on.

Access to the project bank is both online and through the Microsoft Excel which is sourced from the online database; the project information is updated regularly every day and are saved in the Swedish language. The data collection was done manually, individually, and based on authors' point of view, experience and knowledge derived from the latest update on 31 December 2021. The study data, the new tourism-related project bank so to speak, was documented as the Microsoft Excel, specified based on years and region of Jämtland Härjedalen and the whole Sweden (including Jämtland Härjedalen Region).

5.1.2. Interviews

After the first phase of data collection and the analysis on the collected tourism-based National projects, interviews with seven project and administrative actors were conducted in January 2022. Using in-depth interviews with a selected number of agents representing Region Jämtland Härjedalen, Tillväxtverket, Jämtland County Administration Board (Länsstyrelsen Jämtland) and Jämtland Härjedalen Turism (JHT), the ambition was to get a better understanding of the Tillväxtverket project bank policies and strategies as well as the EU and National public funding system allocated to Sweden projects.

The research also used interviews which were undertaken with tourism stakeholders in the Jämtland Härjedalen Region followed by interviews with a handful of project and funding stakeholders at regional and national level done in the frames of the other project in 2019. The interviews with the tourism stakeholders focused on opportunities and challenges with tourism development and cover all municipalities and destination in the Jämtland Härjedalen region. These interviews were made in 2019, during the first phase of the project *Besöksnäringens roll för regional utveckling* (see Table 3).

Table 3. Summary of respondents and stakeholders.

Tourism stakeholders in Jämtland Härjedalen	Project and funding stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from each of the municipalities in the region (Bräcke, Härjedalen, Krokom, Ragunda, Strömsund, Åre and Östersund) • Representatives from each larger destination in the region (Bydalen, Funäsdalen, Lofsdalen, Storlien, Vemdalen, Vålådalen, Åre and Östersund) • Representatives from larger events, education, transport sector and activity companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jämtland Härjedalen Region • Jämtland Härjedalen Tourism Organization • Jämtland County Administration Board • The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth
Total number of respondents: appr. 100	Total number of respondents: 7

The interview questions were based on the understanding and interpretation of the first analysis of the first data (National Projects), then the second data collection

phase of EU 2011-2020 projects started after interviews. The interviews not only act as a supporting and meaningful contributor to the data analysis and interpretation, but also have opened new doors to some hidden or ambiguous topics that the authors faced in the research.

5.2. Data analysis

The collected data are analysed in two stages. The analysis started mainly by 1 174 tourism-related projects sieved from 8 556 National Projects. In the second step, the analysis done on 1 440 tourism-related projects from two EU programs with total number of 8 488.

As it can be seen in the empirical section (see section 6), a detailed analysis is done on the volume and shares of total and tourism projects as well as the project funding in Sweden and, specifically, Jämtland Härjedalen sourced from both national and EU fundings. To be able to show the shares and volumes, the statistical analysis is performed through descriptive charts and diagrams; furthermore, some complementary information from data is interpreted in text and presented in tables.

6. Empirical findings

Keeping in mind that the data are collected in two segments as National projects and EU (2011-2020) projects, the following data (Table 4) are based on the collected information from 8 556 national projects and 8 488 EU projects between 2011 to 2020, derived from the latest update on 31 December 2021.

The following table (Table 4) presents the summary of data investigated from the total number of 17 044 projects out of National and EU sources.

Table 4. Summary of data collected from both National and EU projects in Tillväxtverket project bank, 2011-2020. Funds are in billion SEK.

National and EU	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	SUM
Total projects	1 102	1 039	959	1 004	903	1 941	2 362	2 565	2 825	2 344	17 044
Tourism projects	157	139	98	187	125	228	425	516	374	365	2 614
Granted funds (billion SEK)	2,9	1,4	0,85	1,2	3,8	6,9	4,1	6,1	4,5	3,7	35
Tourism granted funds (billion SEK)	0,54	0,25	0,14	0,17	0,52	0,35	0,49	0,70	0,44	0,48	4,0
JH projects	62	59	48	88	99	154	155	140	182	128	1 115
JH tourism projects	25	18	24	30	28	28	32	24	38	21	268
JH granted fund (SEK)	0,22	0,11	0,95	0,17	0,68	1,0	0,34	0,31	0,46	0,26	3,7
JH Tourism granted fund (SEK)	0,86	0,24	0,65	0,65	0,24	0,66	0,40	0,75	0,79	0,44	0,78

6.1. Public funded projects in Sweden 2011-2020

Studying 17 044 projects registered as Sweden total projects in one decade, the study aims to identify the volume of tourism projects from each division. From the

total number of all projects (17 044), 2 614 projects are granted tourism support between 2011-2020. From this number, there are various shares in each region in every year. Note that the same project can have funding from both the national and the EU funds at the same time. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that all the following analysis is done based on the granted funds, i.e., not paid funds.

As total share in the entire country, Figure 8 shows that about 13,7% of the total national projects are supported in tourism sector, and 17% of the total EU projects have been tourism-related in Sweden in this period.

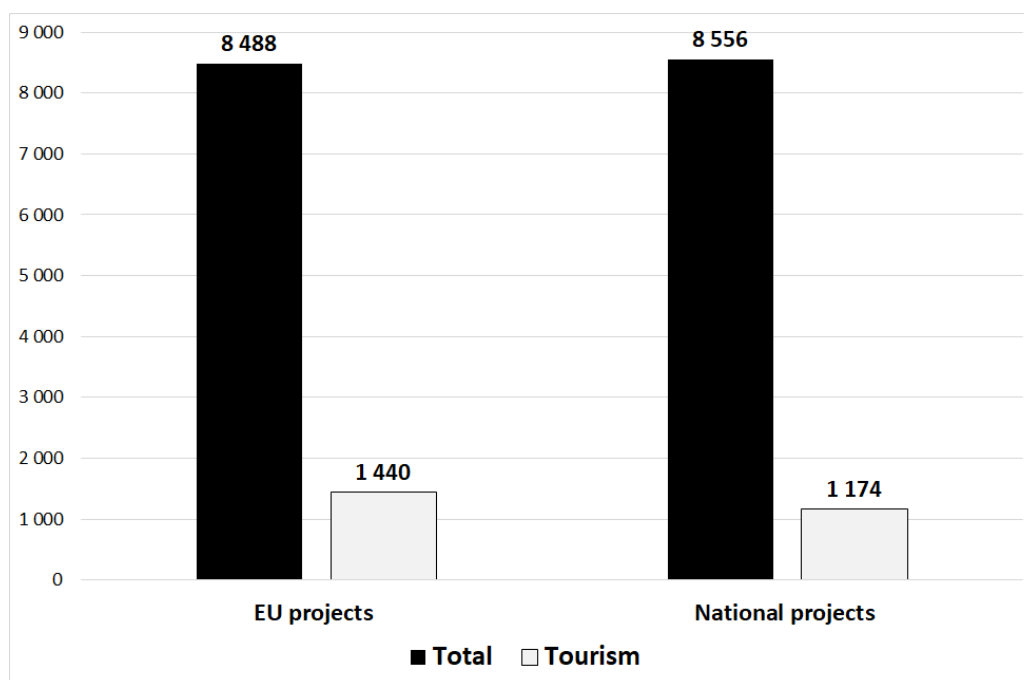


Figure 8. Number of total and tourism projects sorted in national and EU bank (2011-2020).

The share of tourism projects in each year is different. The share of total projects and projects with tourism priorities are affected by different factors such as national policies and priorities as well as EU theme objectives. Figure 9 presents the fluctuating shares of projects in each year obtained from EU total and tourism projects.

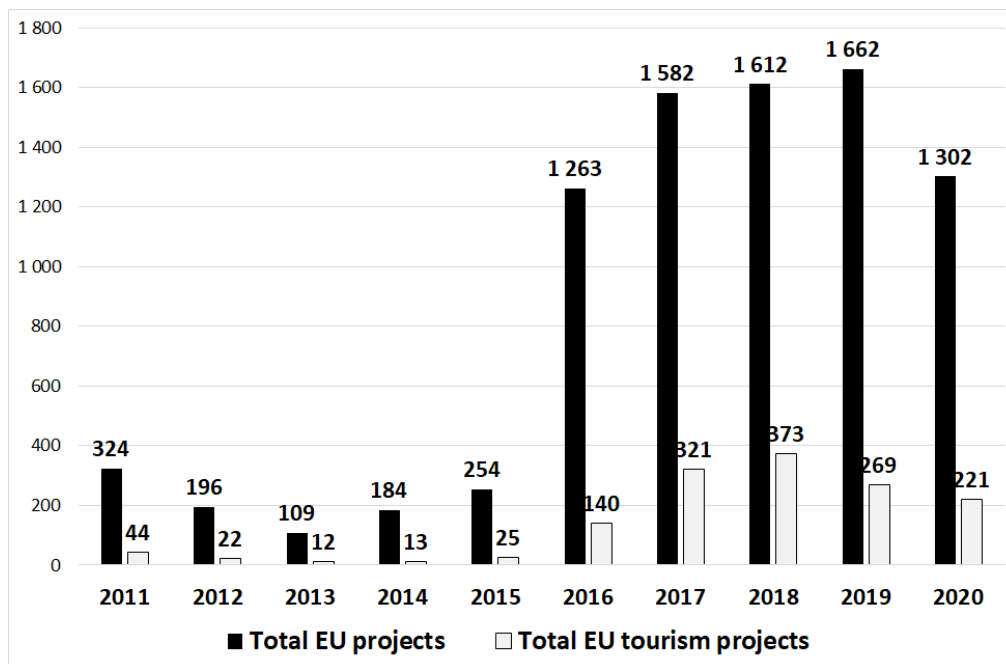


Figure 9. The number of projects in tourism sector out of EU granted projects, 2011-2020.

Apparently 2013 has granted the least number of projects (109); however, the share of tourism in this year is not the lowest amongst all. 2014 owns the lowest share of tourism-related projects from EU programs with just 7,1%. The biggest number of projects belongs to 2019 with 1 662 projects where tourism projects comprise 16,2%, while 2017 has the most granted tourism support among all years (20,3%). It has to be kept in mind that the data is based on the decision year, i.e., projects most often run two to three years after the decision is made.

Figure 10 presents the same point but in the National project bank.

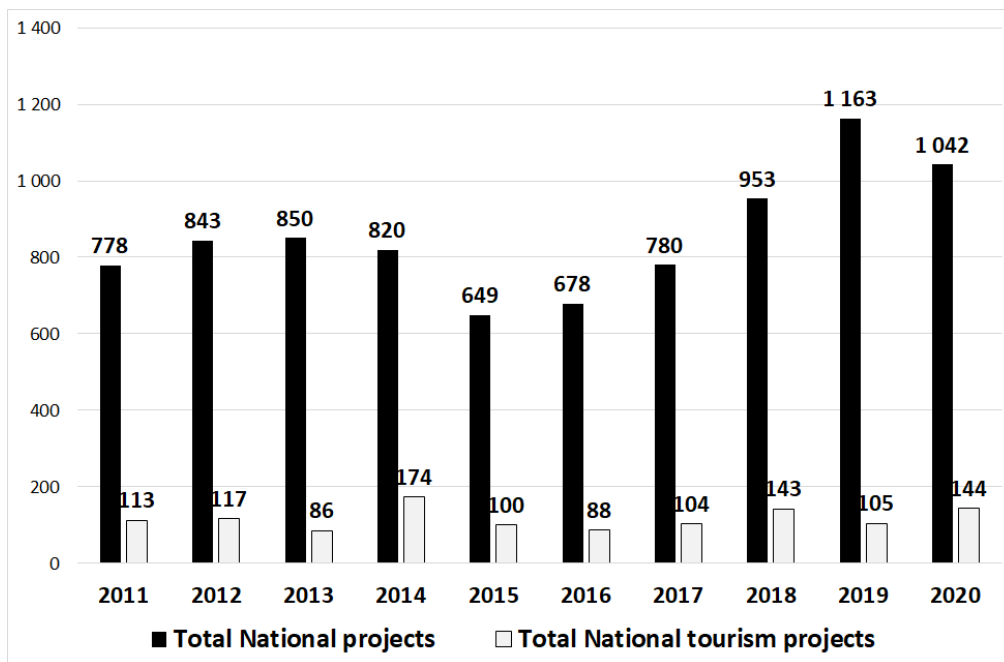


Figure 10. The number of projects in tourism sector out of National granted projects, 2011-2020.

There is certain fluctuation in both total number of projects and the share of tourism-related ones. Projects in tourism sector in 2013 are the lowest in number but not in comparison to the share of total projects (10,1%). While the number of total projects is the highest in 2019 (1 163), the tourism-related project share presents just 9%. While 2014 in EU projects had the lowest number of projects in tourism sector, here in the National project bank, a share of 21,2% is identified, which demonstrates the highest level of involvement throughout this decade.

To summarize, despite variation in both the total number of projects and the share of tourism-themed ones on both EU and National level, overall, the share of tourism sector in EU funded projects is about 3,3% bigger than in National ones. This is summarized briefly in figure 11.

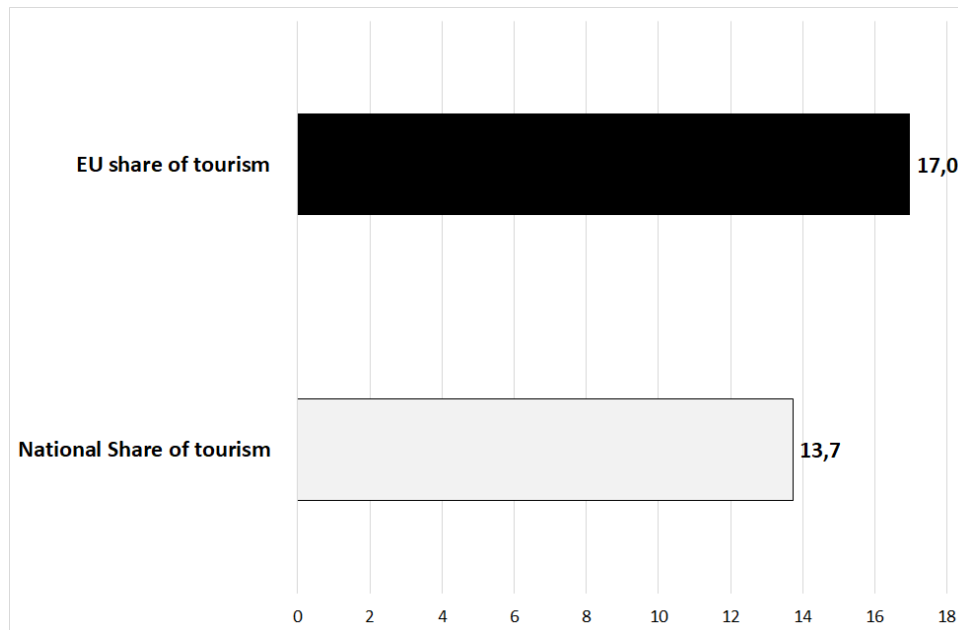


Figure 11. Share of tourism projects from EU and National project funding banks (%), 2011-2020.

6.2. Public funding for tourism projects

Tracking down the National and EU funding in this study, more than SEK 35 billion was granted to projects in Sweden in all different sectors between 2011 to 2020. From this amount, about SEK 4 billion was granted to tourism related projects.

The total EU granted fund is 2,5 times larger than National funds. Or in other words, it can be stated that 71,3% of the funds to total Sweden projects has the EU origin. This pertains also to the share of tourism projects in Sweden meaning that EU funded tourism projects in Sweden is about SEK 2,8 billion which supports 70% of tourism project funding in Sweden between 2011-2020 while the rest of that is funded by National funds in this period.

Figure 12 gives a frame to the EU granted funds in 2011-2020 and the part of projects granted in the tourism sector from the total.

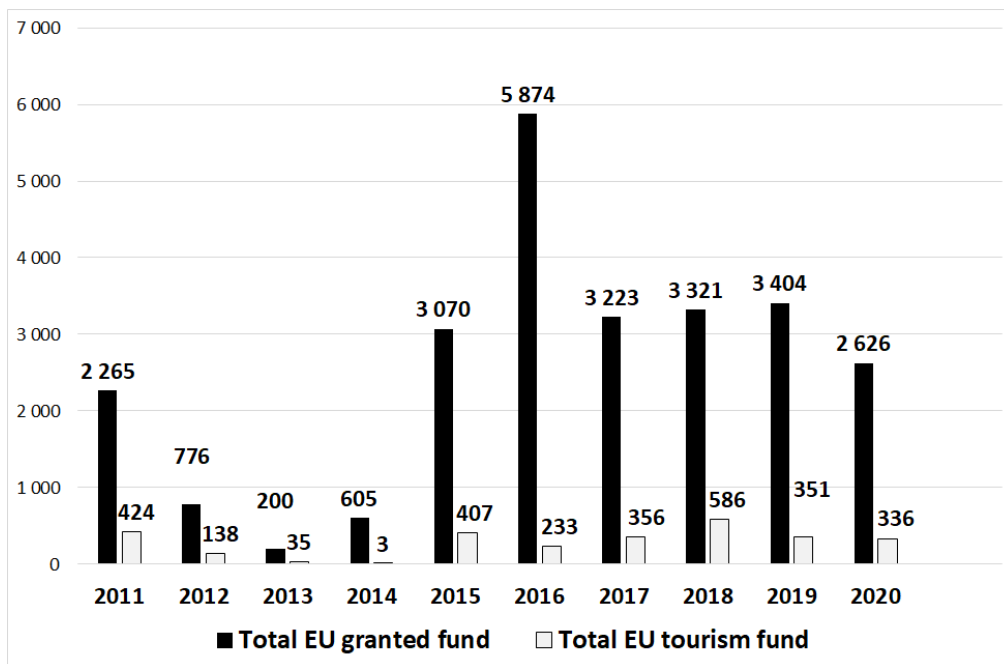


Figure 12. Share of tourism projects from EU funding per year (SEK million), 2011-2020.

Figure 12 shows the share of EU funding in each year from the total projects in Sweden. From the total number of SEK 25 billion, 2016 received the most amount of budget for its projects. It does not necessarily mean that the number of the projects are the most in this year since as could be seen in Figure 9. The number of the projects in this year is 1 263 and is not the highest number. However, both the number of EU projects (see Figure 9) and the EU funding in 2014 were low. Besides that, the share of funds granted to tourism projects by EU origin shows fluctuations especially in the first four years of this period.

To compare the National funding in this period with EU funding, Figure 13 presented the same diagram based on National funding statistics.

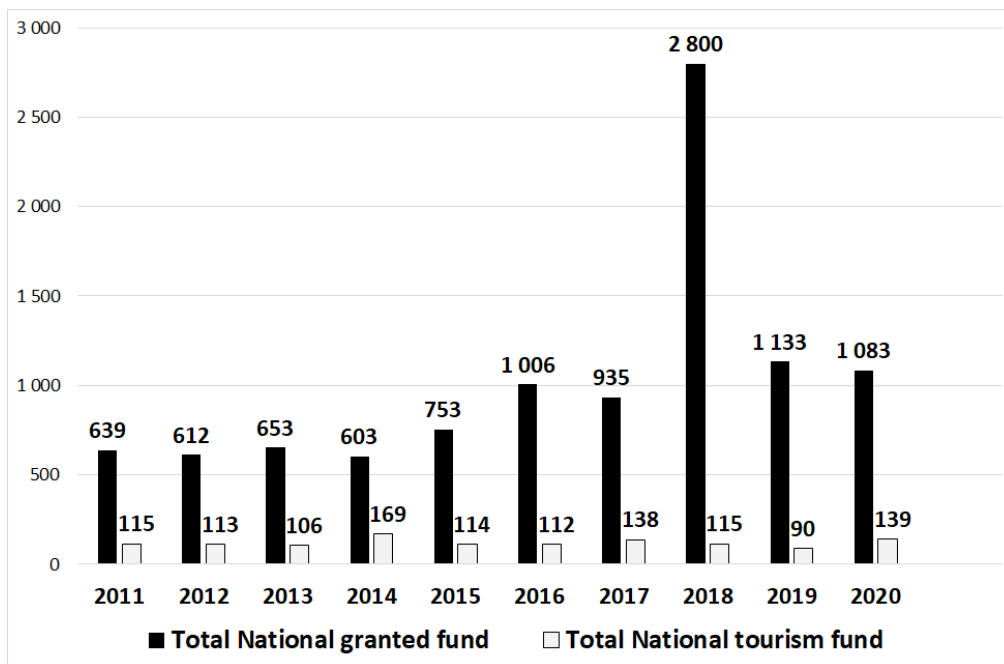


Figure 13. Share of tourism projects from National funding per year (SEK million), 2011-2020.

To summarize the findings of funding budgets, Figure 14 demonstrates the difference between the funding shares allocated to tourism projects by two funding sources. Interestingly, the shares of tourism total funds in this ten-year period from both sources are very close to each other; 11,9% is the share of National fund and 11,3% the share of EU fund.

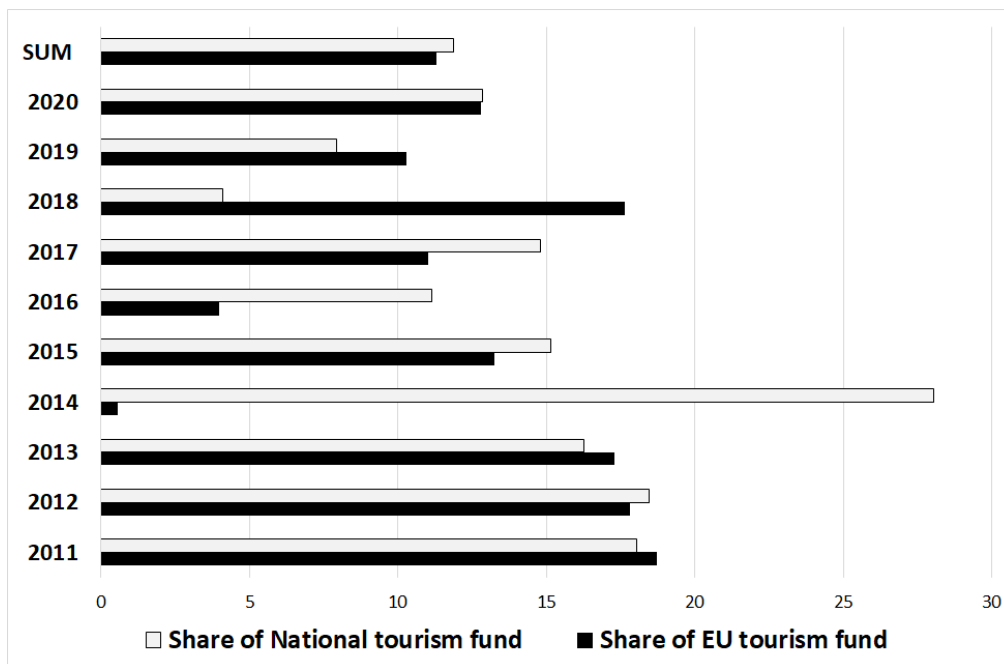


Figure 14. Overview of Sweden tourism shares from National and EU funds (%), 2011-2020.

6.3. The case of Jämtland Härjedalen projects

Tourism in Jämtland Härjedalen region has had an influencing impact on the destination development and promotion, sustainability goals as well as regional development. In a national comparison Jämtland Härjedalen stands out as the Swedish region with the largest share of tourism related projects. Below, the statistics obtained for Jämtland Härjedalen is compared with the whole Sweden. The emphasis is not only on the volume and share of Jämtland Härjedalen projects and the granted funds to this region, but, importantly on the share of tourism sector in projects in this region, by quantity and funding.

6.3.1. Jämtland Härjedalen funded projects, 2011–2020

While the share of Jämtland Härjedalen is included in the total Sweden projects, the data is specified for Jämtland Härjedalen in order to interpret and analyze the tourism funding share of the region.

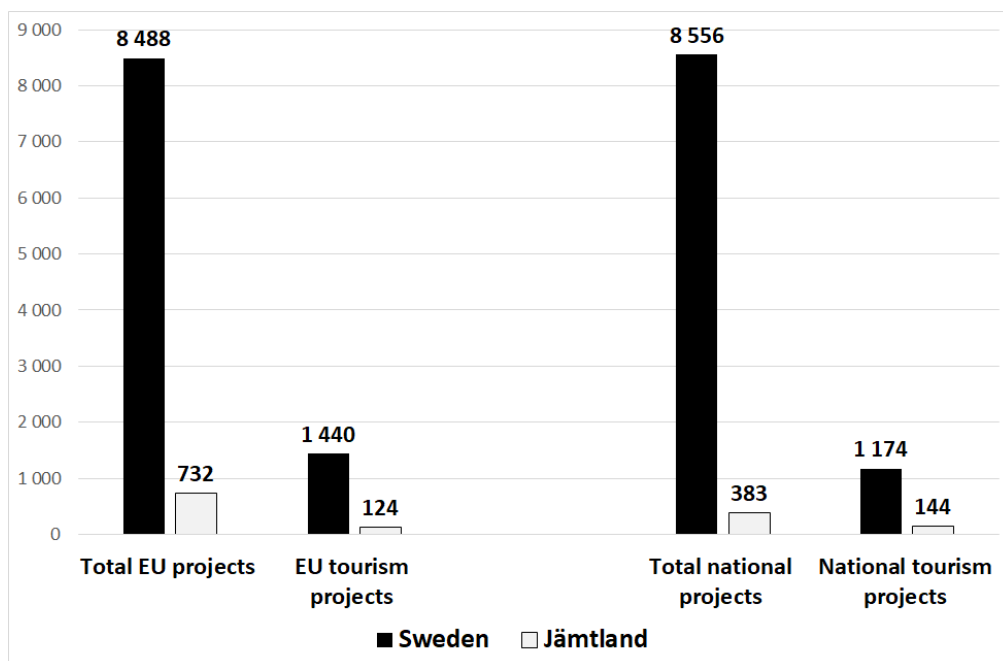


Figure 15. Tourism and non-tourism projects from the total in Jämtland Härjedalen (2011-2020).

Figure 15 defines Jämtland Härjedalen volume and share out of the whole Sweden, split by national and EU fundings. Considering the total projects in all categories, the share of Jämtland Härjedalen region from the EU is 8,6% of total, and this share exactly repeats when it comes to tourism projects, which means that the share of tourism projects in Jämtland Härjedalen is also 8,6% from the total funded tourism projects in Sweden.

However, from the statistics found from national funding projects, 4,5% of the total projects are funded in Jämtland Härjedalen and 12,3% of the total tourism projects are funded in this region.

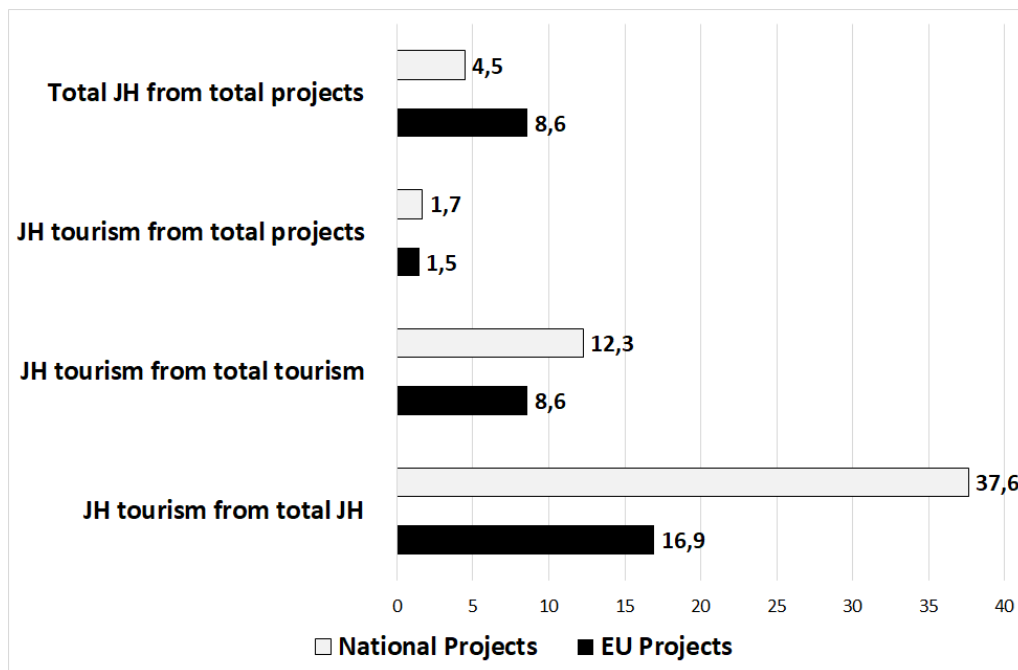


Figure 16. Overview of Jämtland Härjedalen project funding status (%), 2011-2020.

Figure 16 reflects a broad picture of Jämtland Härjedalen status among all the collected data. Starting from the first comparison the total Jämtland Härjedalen projects supported in fields, and categories belong less than 5% projects from the total when funded by national public funds, while this share is a little bit more with 8,6% supported by EU funds. Focusing on the tourism-related projects, the share of tourism-related projects funded and benefited in Jämtland Härjedalen region is close to equal from both funding sources with around 1,5%. While the share of Jämtland Härjedalen tourism sector is 12,3% of total tourism sector in Sweden, 37,6% of Jämtland Härjedalen projects which were funded by national public funding is tourism projects. This same share is a little bit less when funded by EU funding with 8,6% from total Sweden tourism projects and 16,9% from the region's funded projects.

6.3.2 Jämtland Härjedalen funding grants, 2011-2020

Similar to the whole of Sweden, Jämtland Härjedalen funded projects have a fluctuating trend by number and funding amount during the studied years. Figure 17 presents EU funding which allocated to tourism projects in Jämtland Härjedalen in a decade. In these years just 16,2% of EU funding is directed to the tourism sector in the region. The funding volume to the region had an increase in 2015 and

especially 2016; however, it did not have a considerable effect on the share of tourism and hospitality industry. A closer look into the data of 2016 shows that year some big and long-aiming decisions were made. For instance, the stakeholder ALMI (offering loans, venture capital and business development) had a decision covering several years of funding.

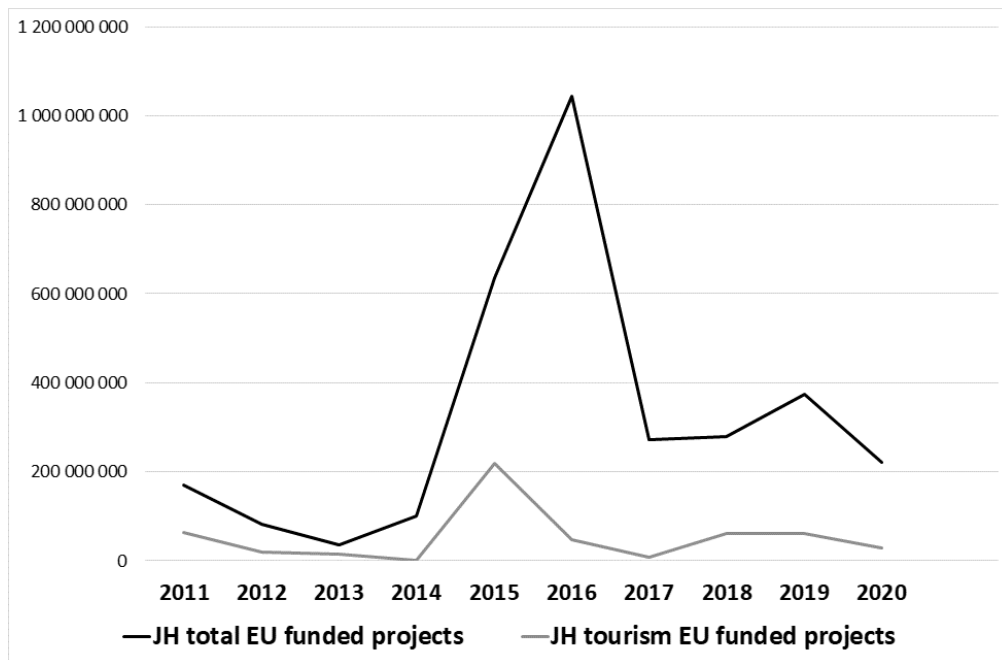


Figure 17. EU funding in Jämtland Härjedalen Region (SEK), 2011-2020.

Juxtaposing Jämtland Härjedalen funded projects in all fields and tourism sector, Figure 18 illustrates the trend of national public funding in ten years.

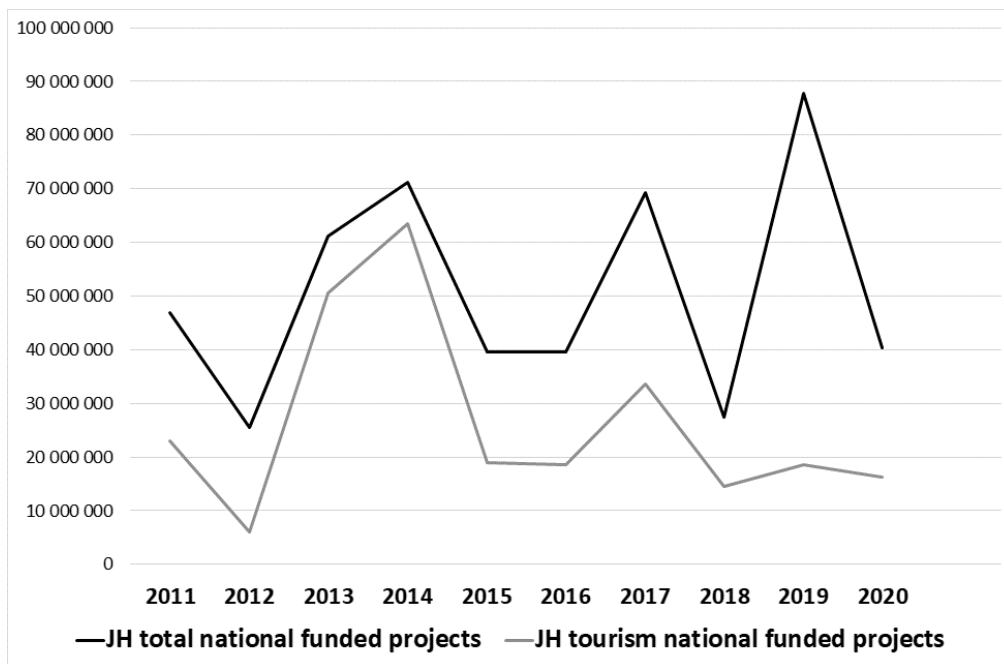


Figure 18. National funding in Jämtland Härjedalen Region (SEK), 2011-2020.

While the total EU funding to Jämtland Härjedalen was SEK 3,2 billion, the national public funding supported this region by SEK 508 million in this study period. As mentioned above, 16,2% of the total EU budget in the region is allocated to projects related to tourism and hospitality industry, but the same share from national funding shows 51,8% which is a bigger portion.

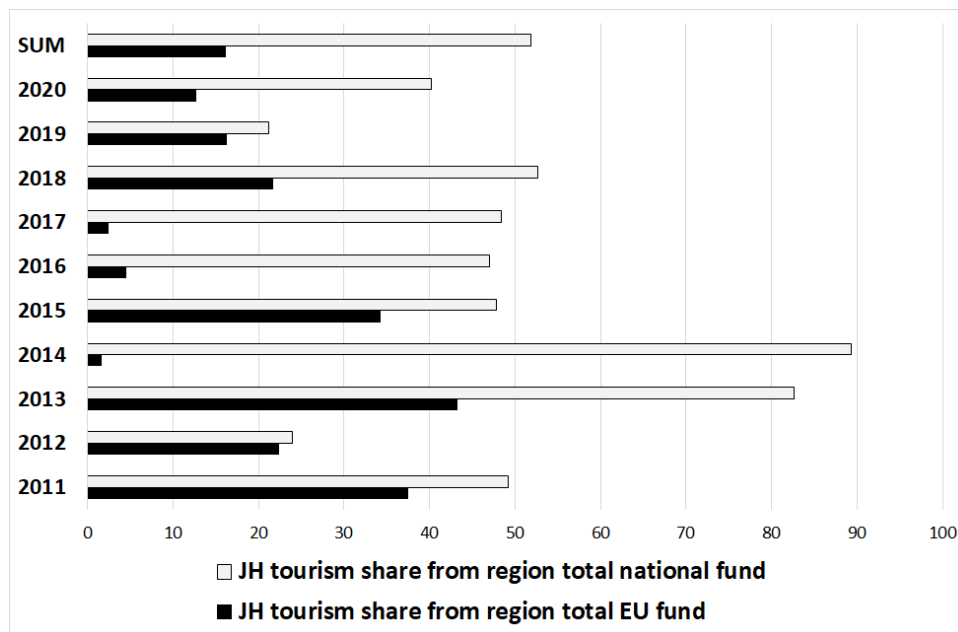


Figure 19. Share of EU and national granted funding to tourism sector in Jämtland Härjedalen (%), 2011-2020.

Figure 19 clearly shows that national funding share in the tourism-related projects in Jämtland Härjedalen had continuously been higher with fluctuating differences in the period of ten years in comparison to the EU funding, while the volume of EU funding to the whole Sweden, including Jämtland Härjedalen was higher in total.

Reviewing 2 614 tourism-related granted projects from both EU and national funding, it can be grasped that the aims and objectives have been affected by the broader regional, national and international policies and strategies. These policies not only affected the volume and numbers of projects but also the budget shares come from both funding sources.

6.3.3. Project objectives for the Sweden and Jämtland Härjedalen tourism projects

The tourism project goals and objectives especially those granted from EU funding were influenced by the EU thematic objectives in the two EU programs as well as national long-term tourism development aims.

Although the analysis of projects' thematic focus is beyond the scope of report, Table 5 presents a brief overview of the tourism-related project markers. The projects were funded in order to address the broad tourism development and sustainability goals as well as involved large number of SMEs and many activities and services to tourists, including accommodation services, gastronomy, transport operators, professional tour-guides, and a majority of cultural and recreational facilities such as theatres, museums, sport related facilities, leisure parks, etc. Moreover, since retail and other service sectors benefit considerably from the additional demand initiated by tourists, these can be included as the project focus of attention. In addition, tourism particularly, as a job creating sector is more significant in remote and peripheral areas, far from economic centres.

Table 5. Project objectives for the Jämtland Härjedalen tourism projects 2011-2020.

	EU-projects	National projects	Total	Total share (%)
Destination development	40	14	54	19%
Nature and culture	40	9	49	17%
Events	11	36	47	16%
Innovation and entrepreneurship	15	28	43	15%
Infrastructure and transport	7	27	34	12%
Co-production	9	9	18	6%
Digitalisation	6	3	9	3%
Competence development	2	3	5	2%
Marketing	0	3	3	1%
Others	17	12	29	10%
Total	147	144	291	100%

In the tourism- and project intense region of Jämtland Härjedalen the majority of projects during the studied period focused on destination development, nature/culture and events (Table 5). The applications meet with the ambition to strengthen growth and development and make the region more competitive.

6.4 Insights from the interviews with Jämtland Härjedalen tourism stakeholders

The interviews with project and funding actors provided knowledge about the practical use of EU program and public funding. Adding perspectives of the tourism stakeholders in Jämtland Härjedalen, created a more complete picture. This picture demonstrates strengths as well as challenges and weaknesses, along with tactics used in both EU and national funding as well as the projects. The EU- and public funding are important for many, if not all, aspects of tourism development, from skills and competences training, via infrastructure and SME support to product development and innovation.

After talking to administrators at the funding and supporting organisations, it became clear that EU-funding and regional project funding have a continuous dialogue and collaboration when it comes to regional tourism development. This tight relationship is important to achieve smart and innovative funding. On the other hand, the sector risks being dependent on individual administrators.

In a region like Jämtland Härjedalen, EU and public funding have been used to strategically increase the number of DMOs. This, in turn, has increased the number of professional project actors systematically applying and using public funding for tourism development.

6.4.1 Impacts from tourism projects

Tourism and the hospitality sector can play a major role in the attractiveness of places. Strong brands, rich culture and developed local services attract not only tourists but also migrants from within as well as outside national borders. In times when it has become easier for many to work from home, and the boundaries between spaces of labour and leisure are blurred, tourist destinations become attractive places to work and live. Population statistics shows that tourism-intensive municipalities, have a more positive population development than municipalities with little tourism. Attracting new residents is crucial, especially for the northern peripheries, often struggling with chronic depopulation.

Many of the projects' results and effects mentioned during the interviews with the tourism stakeholders are in line with the aims of the European funding programmes. Project results are often in line with the "classic" project indicators of

success, e.g. growth, business development and job creation. The projects also contribute to long-term investments and infrastructure, such as ski lifts, hiking trails and roads. In addition, the interviews show, just as research indicates, that project efforts also contribute to creation of soft values, such as better public health, integration and development of local services.

Tables 6-8 show direct and indirect effects that publicly funded tourism projects are reported to have achieved. They are divided into three areas: *Entrepreneurship and jobs*, *Investments and infrastructure*, and *Regional competitiveness*. For each area examples of the most prominent direct and indirect effects are listed. As can be seen, they very well match the typical aims of funding programmes, but they also contribute to other effects. Some of the created effects are well established, measured with standardized methods, and are direct. Other effects are much more subtle, more difficult to measure and are more indirect. The extent to which the effects can contribute to value creation in the region depends on geographical location and other local specifics.

Table 6. Entrepreneurship and jobs. Direct and indirect effects.

Direct effects	Indirect effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New businesses - New jobs - New services and products - Competence development - Innovations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jobs for newcomers and young people. - Companies and jobs that can't be relocated. - The area becomes less dependent on a large employer. - Diversified labour market. - More jobs that stretches year-round.

Investments in tourism and hospitality sector contribute directly to local economies through creation of new businesses and jobs, but also help create many more social values for a place. For example, tourism businesses are often based on, and are strongly linked to a specific place and its unique conditions. This makes them more difficult to relocate. The nature of such newly created jobs can also encourage young people to become employed and stay in the region, preventing their outmigration, as well as contribute to attracting new residents.

Table 7. Investments and infrastructure. Direct and indirect effects.

Direct effects	Indirect effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roads, bridges, tunnels, etc. - Indoor and outdoor arenas. - Walking trails, ski lifts and other tourist infrastructure. - Accommodation facilities. - Activity facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More train, flight and bus departures. - Improved communications for visitors and locals. - Housing supply that allows for growth and development.

A tourism-intensive place benefits from the increased opportunities for socially beneficial investments that an increased demand from visitors creates. This becomes especially vivid in in sparsely populated areas, where places with developed tourism sector tend to have much more extensive infrastructure compared to similar but less tourism-intensive places.

Table 8. Regional competitiveness. Direct and indirect effects.

Direct effects	Indirect effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased popularity and visibility for the place. - Increased accessibility to recreational activities and places. - Broadened and expanded range of cultural activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased visibility and demand for local products. - Increased attractiveness for the place among visitors and companies. - Increased supply and expanded range in the local trade. - Increased value of local brands.

A tourism-intensive place can deliver leverage and linking effects in a place. The tourism sector in such cases becomes a driver for raising attractiveness of a place, balanced on increased business and job opportunities, sustainability and the overall quality of life.

6.4.2 Challenges in the funding system

Publicly funded projects contribute to many positive impacts to the region, on the level of individuals, companies and destinations. However, the interviews with the tourism stakeholders also uncover several challenges and areas of improvement in the funding system (Table 9).

Table 9. The most frequent challenges in the funding system identified during the interviews.

Application phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short notice before calls, and short deadlines for application. • Need for more support early on during the application phase. • Widely spread feeling that support functions are afraid of making mistakes, and because of this it is sometimes hard to get clear answers. • Unclear roles and mandates when it comes to who does what in the support system.
Implementation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar projects are run in parallel by different actors without collaboration. • Payments take time before they arrive.
Post-implementation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the project ends, a lot of knowledge is jointly produced, but then (in many cases) the project-members loose contact. • Results, knowledge and experiences risk to end and fade out when the projects end.
General concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-active logic, where the projects tend to become oriented on external goals, rather than based on actual needs. • Hard to have funding for important but basic activities, everything has to be “projectified”. • Requirements for co-funding (you must have money to get money) risk pushing smaller stakeholders aside.

Based on the aforementioned, there are several areas of improvement, but one should keep in mind that overall, the project owners are positive towards the public funding system (and keep applying for funding). It could also be noticed that the criticism is mainly directed to the national and international level, rather than the regional level.

7. Concluding remarks

Projects have become an inherent part of policy making both on EU and national level. Initially stemming from an innovative approach to restructure businesses to organize production through discrete, manageable units, project-based mentality has enjoyed enormous success spanning far beyond the business sector. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that projects have become omnipresent in our society and all parts of life. Starting from the 1990s, project-based approach to structure activity, or 'projectification', has been celebrated as a way to enable positive development in any sector through e.g. increasing flexibility, innovation, and efficiency (Hodgson et al., 2019).

At the same time, however, this trend has attracted substantial critique. Jensen et al. (2016) for example, argue that the fundamental transformation of time, space, activity, and relations has given rise to 'project society', which prioritizes fragmentation, discontinuity and short-term planning in all its aspects. "In this way, many services and organisations that have traditionally been characterised by permanence are now described and understood as projects – defined by assignments (rather than goals), by time (rather than survival), by teams (rather than working organisations), and by transition (rather than continuous development) (Hodgson et al., 2019, p.18). Short-term and discrete nature of projects, disappearance of created competences and networks after the project end, and difficulties in securing funding for 'boring' but important development- and maintenance-related routines have also been pointed out as a challenge by the Jämtland Härjedalen tourism stakeholders.

Nevertheless, project-based approach continues to be the most accepted and standardized way to organize public spending, and EU continues to play a leading role in this process, with more than 60% of its budget being administered via projects (Mukhtar-Landgren & Fred, 2018). This complexity needs to be kept in mind when discussing project-based regional development through tourism.

7.1 Tourism, regional development and value creation

The role of tourism in regional development has been subject of extensive research within tourism and geography during the last decades (Brouder, 2013; Hall, 2006; Giaoutzi & Nijkamp, 2006; Kauppila et al., 2009; Lundmark et al., 2020). Importance of tourism becomes even more visible for the development of peripheral regions, such as the Swedish north (Hall & Boyd, 2005; Brouder, 2013; Byström, 2019; Kronenberg & Fuchs, 2021; Lundmark et al., 2020). Tourism is expected to contribute to labour diversification, restructure the 'post-industrial' economy away from primary production towards service- and experience- based 'new rural economy' (Almstedt et al., 2016). The role of tourism in regional development started to become noticeable especially after the 1990s, but our understanding of the impacts of this sector on regional development is still far from satisfactory (Calero & Turner, 2019). Nevertheless, there is a wide-spread consensus that tourism has an overall positive impact on regional development and, therefore, provides a suitable avenue for public spending, both in Sweden and the EU in general (Almstedt et al., 2016).

Being recognized as a universal tool for regional development, hardly any local policy document gets away nowadays without mentioning tourism as one of its strategic goals. However, overly optimistic project-based approach to regional development, not the least through tourism, has also long been subject to criticism. It has been argued, for example, that such approach disproportionately benefits regions with already well development infrastructure, tourism amenities, capacities, and competencies, while weaker regions cannot compete for funding (Almstedt et al., 2016; Hall, 2006; Pike et al., 2006). In their analysis of the public funding of rural tourism in Sweden in 2000-2013, Almsted et al. (2016) find that the majority of tourism development projects go to already well-developed tourist destinations (one of which is Östersund area). This has also become visible during the interviews with the stakeholders in Jämtland Härjedalen, who pointed out that securing co-funding is often a major challenge when applying for public project calls.

Overall, tourism research shows that tourism is best suited as a *complementary* tool for regional development, in regions which already have, or have the capacity to substantially invest in, a number of other necessary components of a tourism system, such as tourist attractions and their active promotion, infrastructure and

transportation, accommodation, restaurants and other services, friendly locals and skilled professionals in the sector. In fact, Müller (2013) pointed out that greatest challenges to tourism development in peripheral areas are not directly tourism-related per se, but are rather posed indirectly by depopulation, and erosion of services and infrastructure. Almstedt et al. (2016) argue that when it comes to the sparsely populated rural areas of the Swedish north, tourism has not had any major impact on the restructuring of local economies and labour markets, with the only exception of ski resorts. Similarly, Margaryan & Fredman (2017) found that quantity of nature-based tourism entrepreneurs is better predicted by the density of infrastructure rather than share of natural amenities in a given county in Sweden. Here the key analytical concepts in the theory of regional development such as path dependency and institutional lock-in become highly relevant. It is therefore important to acknowledge that tourism alone cannot 'save' or restructure rural and peripheral economies, but rather can be an integral part of larger and complex development efforts.

Keeping all the aforementioned in mind, it has to be emphasized that the positive impacts of tourism on regional development are widely acknowledged, and promoted by tourism and regional development agencies, aiming to demonstrate that public funds for tourism result in significant economic benefits. Here a key issue would be to focus not only on the direct, but also indirect and induced effects from tourism, and not only on economic but also social impacts of tourism development in the regions, going beyond the standard assessment models (Ferrante et al., 2021). Tourism actors in Jämtland Härjedalen, for example, mention, apart from the direct impacts, such indirect positive impacts as increased attractiveness and visibility of a place, increased value of local brands, employment opportunities for immigrants and youth, or wider range of cultural activities in the region due to tourism. These indirect but important impacts of tourism are often left out of standard economic analyses (Ferrante et al., 2021).

One analytical direction could be focusing on understanding the role of tourism from the perspective of value creation in a region, especially when it comes to intangible and non-monetary values. Nilsson (2016) for example finds that tourism generates value in sustainable agriculture and gastronomy in the south of Sweden. Apart from the economic value, tourism creates complex social and relational forms of value, expressed in enhanced authenticity, personal connections, trust, tighter networks, and feelings of shared responsibility in the region. Further,

tourism contributes to biodiversity and heritage conservation through maintenance of cultural landscapes, as well as helps sustain healthy and eco-friendly food production in peripheral regions. Additionally, tourism was identified as an important driver for innovation (Nilsson, 2016). Similarly, Margaryan et al. (2018) find that presence of tourism contributes to strengthening the feelings of local identity and pride, attracts new residents to the area, not the least young families and the creative class, as well as ensures access to higher quality outdoor recreation. Similar effects of value creation for the region are expressed by the stakeholders in Jämtland Härjedalen, as well as claimed in the reviewed publicly funded project applications.

Intangible and non-monetary values are notoriously difficult to capture and measure, but are nevertheless, fundamental part of human life and deserve more research attention. Due to the complex and multifaceted nature of tourism, its effects span far beyond the direct economic impacts, which are, of course, also highly important. The significant quantity and volume of publicly funded tourism development projects, shown in this report, therefore, call for more in-depth research, with more sophisticated and fine-tuned methods, in order to understand the true scale of tourism-induced impacts and value creation for regional development in Jämtland Härjedalen, Sweden and beyond.

7.2 Recommendations

The report shows a need for clearer roles and responsibilities in the support system of project funding. The project owners want a more robust support system with better coordination through monitoring calls, matching support between different applicants, financiers and project managers, offer support for application writing, budget support and support for evaluation and implementation. This is in line with OECD (2018) recommendations for improving regional development policies, among which is simplification of procedures to increase the effectiveness of regional policies, particularly where capacities are low, such as peripheral regions.

A more strategic discussion about the support system itself needs to question for whom or from whose perspective the system is designed. In a robust system the actors are allowed time for preparation, the project content is defined from strategic areas and assignments, duration of time and performed by tailor-made teams. The projects are also driven from potential innovations and required transformation. An important part of a stronger financing system is not only the

support system itself, but well-prepared applicants that have updated and anchored strategies that point out focal areas and project needs.

Tourism development and regional development strategies should work towards common long-term goals. In search for the "right" projects, a well-developed and well-established strategy plays an important role. It is important that those who work with the regional tourism strategy also works and are close to the regional efforts for the regional development strategy and the strategy for smart specialization. It is desirable that all these strategies can work with relatively long-term goals, perhaps broken down into separate phases. A good regional strategy should not only "choose", but also contribute to strategic priorities, and makes it possible to "opt out". It is important to also address difficult issues such as sustainability and the wicked problems of our age, such as climate change and biodiversity decline.

Evaluation and communication of project impacts for regional development should be improved. It could be helpful to formulate this as a specified responsibility on a regional level. Such a function could provide an overall picture of previous and ongoing projects, but also formulate needs for future projects. The function would work to make results visible and to share good experiences gained in previous projects. Tillväxtverket has methods for evaluation that has been developed over the years. Today, there is a robust structure where the set-up with external evaluators working with ongoing evaluation. However, more attention should be also paid to non-monetary, intangible and indirect impact of tourism for regional development.

Public-private partnerships should be stimulated further. Initiatives taken in the last ten years show that collaboration between private investments and public project money can give strong positive impacts. When private interests have collaborated with the County Administrative Board's investment support and other public project money, great outcomes have been seen.

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