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## Foreword

As destination managers we are managing a great deal of wonderful resources; from cultural history and human capital to beautiful landscapes with high mountains and deep fjords. The region of Fjord Norway is one of the most beautiful destinations in the world and two of the fjords are listed on the UNESCO world heritage list. The main stakeholders in tourism planning and development are the destination managers as they often set the good examples and they are the promoters of what kind of tourism development one wishes for. This was the reason why I wanted to conduct this research on them. Further it was natural to compare with other regions which beautiful landscapes and travelers with the same motivation so the region of the “Alpine Pearls” became one of my focus groups. They’ve been working with sustainable tourism for over a decade and I found this experience a great asset.

I would like to thank my advisor Øystein Jensen at the Norwegian Hotel School of Management at the University of Stavanger. Further I would like to thank Mr Brandenauer - the Mayor in Werfenveng and his assistant Ms Birgit Hafner, and Mr Thiel (product manager) for meeting with me in Germany and Austria. A special and great thanks to all the nine destination managers in the region of Fjord Norway for taking the time to conduct the interviews. I will also express my gratitude to Professor Carlo Aall and Head of Research Mr. Ivar Petter Grøtte at the Western Norwegian Research Institute. And last but not least my family, my parents for always being there for me and my partner Marius and my lovely children for patiently waiting for me ; I could not have done this without you!

Lærdal, June 2013

Helene Maristuen

## **Abstract**

This research is to examine the level of interest, understanding and implantation of sustainable tourism and practices at destination level. It's a qualitative study exploring how sustainable tourism is perceived among destination managers and their attitudes regarding sustainable tourism. The main stakeholders in tourism planning and development are the destination managers as they often set the good examples and they are the promoters of what kind of tourism development one wishes for .It was conducted nine in depth interviews with destination mangers from the region of Fjord Norway.

To sum up one concludes that the destination mangers all agree on a basic definition of sustainable tourism which included environmental, socio-cultural and economical sustainability. The main benefits are also the barriers including the long term perspective is good for the resources but difficult from a business perspective when it's a struggle to survive from day to day. Some benefits are cost savings, better image, consciousness, destination development and quality and the involvement, pride and economical gains to the local community. On the other side it seems like a pervasive issue the difficulties in defining and decide what's included in sustainable tourism. It's also mentioned the fact that its too demanding to get those certifications. Further, the destination managers define nature based projects at sustainable tourism on an operational level and some mentioned eco-certifications, knowledge and the national pilots program of Innovation Norway. When it comes to who's responsible for initiating sustainable tourism the most of the destination mangers thinks it should be on a national level by the government or Innovation Norway and some thinks it should be at the business level or interdisciplinary projects.

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## **Introduction**

### **Background**

Globalization and rapid growth in the tourism industry the last twenty years, (Butler, 2007) has made many organizations call for a change and re-organize. Also Butler (2007) states that sustainable tourism is one single factor that has the potential to change tourism but he also claims that “with a few exceptions, geographers, like many other researchers in tourism , have been reluctant to take a critical view of sustainable development and the way it has been applied to tourism.

The fact that there are now over one billion travelers (UNWTO, 2013) and that only the last year, from 2011 to 2012 grew 4% which was 39 million travelers show the large numbers in the tourist industry.

Thus gives the industry and others a responsibility to preserve and sustain our resources for the future. However, sustainable tourism is often spoken of by politicians or in the academic world and its time to take a look at the perceptions in the industry. After all it is the industry that may implement practices and make the difference. Bramwell & Alletorp (2001) argues that after all it is the tourism managers in the local tourism associations who work closely with private sector. Also Hardy (2005, p.111) argues that despite the discussions of the importance of stakeholder analysis as a tool to track cultural change and perceptions, there has been only limited research which has assessed individual stakeholder perceptions of sustainable tourism. Tourism managers may be defined as regulators and like Hardy (2005) argues – regulators are those who were defined as those who contributed to the management of the area. In tourism planning they are the main advocates of sustainable tourism even though many different stakeholders should be included, tourism managers are often those who facilitate tourism planning (Inskeep, 1993).

The region of "Fjord Norway" is totally dependent on the nature as they are a nature-based destination with the fjord landscape as the main motivation for travelers to see. Sustainable tourism may be a tool for balancing the interests of nature, culture, environment and tourism industry and other stakeholders (Inskoop, 1993). Therefore it will be interesting to see how sustainable tourism is perceived among destination managers and their attitudes regarding sustainable tourism.

The purpose of this study is to get a profound view from the tourist industry about the attitudes regarding sustainable tourism and how they define it and perceive it from their point of view, benefits and barriers, and what motivates them to implement sustainable tourism practices and what they are doing within sustainable tourism today.

It should be noted that many, one of the Butler (1999), argues that one may not speak of sustainable tourism without talking about how to measure and that one needs indicators in order to do so. This research will not look into how to measure neither anything about indicators or criteria. Innovation Norway just finished a three year long national pilot program including four destinations. These were Trysil, Roros, Vega and Laerdal. The main task in pilot program was to make a system of indicator which each destination may be measured from. Each of the four destinations achieved a diploma from the minister of commerce as a proof of their sustainability. This will be referred to as the "Brand" from Innovation Norway throughout this paper, but as stated this research will not look into how to measure or discuss the implications of indicators within sustainable tourism.

This research might be useful for planners and developers in the future and how to approach the subject. It might also be useful for the public, like municipalities and county governments in their policy decisions and further, funding agencies in how to motivate and stimulate to more sustainable tourism practices.



Like Budeanu (2005, p.89) states “tourism and nature are closely interlinked, since much of the tourism depends directly on the environmental quality of its product”. Because of this one found it interesting to do this research on destination managers as they control to some degree, the destination and the product development there.

It’s important to explore perceptions among destination managers in the industry and to get a deep insight about their attitudes and definitions of sustainable tourism. They will also have a great insight into barriers in the industry and this research may help them improve these. And who should have the prime responsibility of initiating sustainable tourism practices.

Hobson & Essex (2001, p.145) concluded in their research on accommodation businesses in Plymouth “the translation of the concept of sustainable development from theory into practice in tourism remains a long-term commitment”.

In order to secure the questions in the interviews two focus groups were chosen to test the questions and maybe raise new questions or topics. Neuman (2011, p.459) states that “focus group is a special qualitative research technique in which people are informally “interviewed” in a group discussion setting”. According to Neuman (2011) group members should be homogenous and they should be divided according to status because people often respond very differently when people of higher or lower status are present.

The first focus group was chosen as product developers and politicians working with sustainable tourism within the region of “Alpine Pearls” (Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Slovenia, Italy, and France).

The reason why one chose representatives from this region was because they have been working with two EU projects (mobility I and II) including sustainable tourism since 1993 were both projects was initiated by the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. Then as a result the idea of “Alpine Pearls” “was

created and the idea was innovative, sustainable tourism packages that protect the environment. It's a concept of a carefree holiday.

Both destinations – the region of "Fjord Norway" and the region of "Alpine Pearls" depends on the nature as the nature is their primary attraction. The effect of tourism on the environment is growing along with the numbers of tourist arrivals. The responsibility for protecting the resources for tourism (i.e. nature) but at the same time from tourism (i.e. damage, people pollution etc) therefore rests with the tourism industry. Not entirely but the destination managers attitudes and perceptions will be crucial in order to implement sustainable tourism practices and to make an action plan. This research wants to see if there is some common ground on this issue.

Focus in this thesis is how to define sustainable tourism, what are the perceived benefits and barriers of sustainable tourism and how, and who should have the prime responsibility for initiating sustainable tourism practices. And as with other sectors, the translation of theory into practice has been problematic as understanding, interest and implementation within the tourism sector have been highly variable.

One had a meeting and an interview with the mayor of Werfenweng, Mr. Peter Brandenauer, which is also the chairman of the local tourism association and the president of "Alpine Pearls". Afterwards one interviewed his assistant Birgit Hafner.

The third meeting and an interview was with the product manager of Berchtesgadener Land Tourismus (thus representing Bad Reichenhall as one of the "Alpine Pearls"), Mr. Christian Thiel.

The second focus group included Professor Carlo Aall from the Western research institute and Head of research Mr. Ivar Petter Grøtte.

Then the interviews were conducted whereas all 14 tourism managers (representing their sub-region) in the region of "Fjord Norway" were picked. 9 responded positively while two were on maternity leave and three didn't find the time to conduct the interview.

The originally plan was to conduct a face to face interview but because of limited time for both sides, the interviewer and the interviewees one chose telephone interviews instead.

The interviews lasted between 30 to 60 minutes each and the respondents answered 20 questions.

Also the scholars and academics have been discussing it for several years and therefore one found it interesting to see what the opinions in the tourism industry is.

However with this research the aim is to investigate how tourism managers define sustainable tourism, what they see as benefits and barriers regarding sustainable tourism, what does it mean in an operational manner on their destination and their opinion of who should have the prime responsibility of initiating sustainable tourism practices. The results may have implications for future strategies in how to promote and implement sustainable tourism. The results of this research will therefore be of great guidance to the four counties in Western Norway, to the "Vestlandsrådet" which is a council of politicians from the four counties. One also hope this research will make a contribution to the work in the Norwegian Centre of Expertise Tourism Fjord Norway as the main product development project for the four counties and thus gives the research high industry relevance. Last but not least one hope this research will make an contribution to the research project conducted and led by the Norwegian Western Research Institute with their project on Interaction for Sustainable Tourism.

## **Research approach and proposal**

In order to find out how tourism managers perceives sustainable tourism and their attitudes towards it one chose to use a qualitative approach. Further it was interesting to find out how they defined it and if they have implemented sustainable practices.

One chose to conduct the research in the four western counties in Norway as they all belong to the marketing organization of "Fjord Norway" and the destination features are similar with nature as the main travel motivation .

In addition – two of the fjords in the fjord region was added to the list of UNESCO world heritage sites and there is always a challenge in preserving the landscape and at the same time grow as a nature based tourism destination.

Another justification of why one chose to ask the destination managers is that the all the destination management organizations are responsible of product development of the common infrastructure and products like hiking trails, cycle trails, ski slopes and so on. This is usually with focus on the destination level. However they are also responsible of promoting best practices for the businesses at their destinations such as accommodation, restaurants, attractions and transportation companies which therefore represents the business level.

One wishes to find out how these destination mangers define sustainable tourism.

Bramwell & Alletorp (2001) states that the awareness of sustainable issues may influence how much and how often tourism managers introduce sustainable tourism practices.

There are done studies about attitudes towards sustainable tourism from different stakeholder perspectives. Bramwell & Alletorp (2001) conducted a study on attitudes in the Danish tourist industry to the roles of business and government in sustainable tourism. Also Horobin & Long (1996, p. 15) "found that even if there is a great deal of sympathy with the general principles of sustainability, there is a general confusion around the term "sustainability" end even "environmental concern". Further Bramwell & Alletorp (2001, p.93) states that

“decision-makers in tourism businesses also need to display an interest in environmental and community issues and also to be inclined to take action”.

Further, Budenau (2005) conducted a study on “impacts and responsibilities for sustainable tourism from a tour operators perspective. Dickinson (2010) conducted a study on local transport and social representations – challenging the assumptions for sustainable tourism.

Hardy (2005) used grounded theory to explore stakeholder’s perceptions of tourism in Australia and (Ye, Scott, Ding & Huang, 2012) looked into the residents’ attitudes toward the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai prior to and during the event. Another research on resident’s attitudes toward sustainable community tourism was done in 2010 by Choi & Murray.

Hobson & Essex (2001) conducted a research on sustainable tourism with a view from the accommodation businesses. Hardy & Beeton (2009) looked into sustainable tourism versus maintainable tourism. Haukeland (2010) conducted a research on tourism stakeholders’ perceptions of national park management in Norway. Budenau (2007) discussed the sustainable tourist behavior as an opportunity for change.

All of these researches are from different stakeholders within tourism development. However, by conducting a research on only tourism managers’ one hope this thesis will contribute in the discussion of how to implement sustainable tourism on the local destination level and to find out where they stand on the issue. In destination planning and development there should be a lot of stakeholders included in the work (Inskip, 1993) but it is the tourism managers who often are the advocates for what and how tourism development should be done and therefore this research aim to take a look at their view of sustainable tourism. It is also the destination managers who are promoters for product development both at destination level and they should provide guidance for the business level.

Research proposal:

A qualitative study exploring how sustainable tourism is perceived among destination managers and their attitudes regarding sustainable tourism. The aim of the study is to examine the level of interest and their understanding of sustainable tourism.

Research questions:

1. How do they define sustainable tourism?
2. What are the perceived benefits of sustainable tourism?
3. What are the perceived barriers of sustainable tourism?
4. What does sustainable tourism mean on an operational level at their destination?
5. Who should have the prime responsibility of imitating sustainable tourism practices?

## **Theoretical framework**

Butler (2007, p.15) states that “one of the main problems is to define to the satisfaction of all, or even most, of the stakeholders in tourism, exactly what is meant by *sustainable tourism*”.

Butler (2007) further states that almost any kind of tourism is referred to as sustainable tourism and that there is a lack of a common acceptable definition of sustainable tourism.

According to Butler (2007), there is an additional challenge which is that there is a lack of monitoring systems and how to measure sustainability.

How often do you hear speeches or policy makers talk about” sustainability” or” the most natural step for us now is to consider sustainable tourism development” or “we wish to develop sustainable tourism?”

Wall (Wall, 1996, cited in Butler, 1999) also points out that it has “become a form of ideology, a political catch phrase and, depending on the context in which it is being used, a concept, a philosophy, a process or a product”.

## **Literature Review**

The overall focus of this thesis is attitudes and perceptions in the tourist industry towards sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is often suggested as an integrated part of tourism planning and development (Inskip, 1993) so therefore it's natural to take a look at general approaches to tourism planning and development and definitions of sustainable tourism. How the tourist industry defines sustainable tourism and what they consider as practical implementations of sustainable tourism. Some general theory about tourism as a system and tourism planning is needed as an introduction and understanding of the overall complexity of tourism before moving on to the discussion and theory about sustainable tourism.

## **Tourism**

There are many different definitions of tourism and if one is to plan tourism one must have some understanding of how tourism is being defines (Gunn & Var, 2002). Mathieson and Wall (1982) defines it like this:

“Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal place of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs”.

Inskip (1991) defines the term visitor into two distinct types of travelers: tourists – which are visitors staying at least 24 hours in the country and excursionists – which are temporary visitors staying less than 24 hours in a destination.

Cohen (1974, p, 547) refers to the phenomenon of tourism as a “conceptual tree”; “ranging from the more general characteristics to those more specific to the tourist role”.

But as Cohen (1979) states: “different kinds of people may desire different modes of touristic experience – hence “the tourist” does not exist as a type”.

Several authors have proposed models of the tourism system: Cuervo (1967), Gunn (1972), Leiper (1979), Mill and Morrison (1985) and Jafari (1989) and key elements of the holistic and interrelated model include (Leiper, 1993) the fact that tourism is not a discipline but a multidisciplinary field which is generated by demand and supply. The demand side is driven by the travelers interests and abilities and the supply-side is all the physical and program developments required to serve tourists. And tourism includes many geographic, economic, environmental, social and political dimensions.

Some authors like Gunn (1988) and Mill and Morrison (1985) describe the tourism system in terms of demand and supply. Further Gunn (1988) identifies the “population” with an interest in, and ability to travel, that is, the tourists as the demand, and the supply side comprised of the various modes of transportation, the attractions, facilities and services for tourists, and the tourist information and promotion provided. Gunn specifies influencing factors on the functioning of the tourism system as natural resources, cultural resources, entrepreneurship, finance, labor, competition, community, government’s policies and organization/leadership.

Gunn (2002) further points out that the causes of travel to a destination are grounded in the destination’s resources, natural and cultural, and the attractions that relate to them. Gunn/Var (2002) states that natural resources in tourism development includes water such as resort, campgrounds, parks, fishing sites, marinas, boat cruises, rivers, water scenic areas etc.

Topography such as mountains resorts, winter sports areas, mountain climbing, hang gliding areas, parks etc. Vegetation such as parks, campgrounds, wildflower sites, foliage areas, scenic overlooks, scenic drives, vacation homes etc. Wildlife including nature centers, nature interpretative centers, hunting, wildlife observations, hunting resorts etc. Finally climate including sites suited to sunbathing, beach use, summer and winter resorts etc.



Future tourism development is dependent on the location and quality of the natural resources that support outdoor recreation activities sought by those travel markets (Gunn/Var, 2002).

According to Gunn &Var (2002) cultural resource include prehistory/archeology like visitor interpretative centers, archeological digs, prehistory parks and preserves, nautical archeological sites, festival sites related to prehistory, exhibits and customs related to history. Further they define history as a culture resource including historic sites, historic architecture, historic shrines, museums depicting eras of human history, cultural centers, historic pageants, festivals, landmarks and historic parks. Further, industry/trade which includes manufacturing and processing plants, retail and wholesale businesses, conference centers, educational and research institutions, convention centers, educational and research institutions, conventions centers, performing arts, museums, galleries.

And last entertainment/health/religion/sports including spas, health centers, fitness resorts, health specialty restaurants, religious meccas, shrines, sports arenas, night clubs, gaming casinos, theaters, museums (history, art, natural history, applied science, children's folk) art galleries etc.

### **Tourism planning and tourism development**

Planning is according to Inskeep (1991) organizing the future to achieve certain objectives and a continuous process which must be flexible and ready for revision.

The main purpose of tourism planning is to generate economic benefits of foreign exchange earnings, income, employment and government revenues (Inskeep, 1991) and to serve as a catalyst for development of other economic sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry and manufacturing. Further to contribute to the infrastructure that serves general community.

Tourism may contribute to the conservation of environment and resources that otherwise

might not be available, and socially by providing recreational, cultural, and commercial facilities and services that is available for both residents and tourists (Inskeep, 1991).

On the other side tourism may also generate problems like loss of potential income and local economic distortions, environmental degradation; the loss of cultural identity and integrity and cross- cultural misunderstandings, reinforcing existing prejudices (Inskeep, 1991).

Therefore good planning and careful management of tourism is essential and a tourism plan and development program may provide guidelines in those areas for developing this sector.

Inskeep (1991) points out the fact that in the planning for tourism development, the concept of tourism as an integrated system based on demand and supply factors is basic to its effective planning and management. According to Inskeep (1991) in the sustainable development approach to tourism planning, the demand or market side should be allowed to determine the supply side to the extent that socio-cultural and environmental integrities are compromised and tourism resources degraded. The demand and supply side must be balanced within the framework of maintaining social and environmental objectives (Inskeep, 1991).

According to Inskeep (1991) sustainable development became an approach because of the increasing concern about environmental and cultural degradation. It refers to sustaining the resources of development from depletion so that they are available for continuing and permanent use in the future.

According to Gunn & Var (2002) tourism does not produce a single product, such as the car. Tourism thus involves a tremendous diversity of “products” and therefore destinations require entirely different planning strategies compared to manufacturing industries.

Some of the main advantages of tourism is that it has great quality in income generation and distribution compared to many other industries in that it promotes regional development, has a high multiplier effect and consumes a wide variety of local goods and services (Liu, 2003).

The host community is one of the main stakeholders in sustainable tourism planning/development and Liu (2003) argues that the host population is itself a part of the tourism “place” product. For instance the locals are subjects to be viewed and interacted with, or settings for tourist activities, and their attitude and behavior reflects the “hospitality” resource of a destination (Smith, 1994 cited in Liu, 2003 p. 462).

Liu (2010, p.462) states “that the demand push a tourist into a travel decision while the supply factor pull the tourist towards a particular destination. The size and preferences of global tourist demand are determined by variables in generating countries, whereas the spatial distribution of tourist flows will be influenced by the competitiveness of various tourist destinations”. Simplified that is what tourism is all about; the push and pull factors.

### **Attractions in tourism**

The central aspect of tourism is attractions. According to Mill (1992, p. 265) “attractions have the ability to draw people to them”. Further, (Ibid, p.265) “although attractions for the tourist concern the satisfactions perceived from various experiences, the task for the developer and designer is to create an environment made up in part of “attractions” that will provide an opportunity for the tourist to enjoy a visits”. The purpose of attractions is to serve the recreational needs of visitors.

Gunn (1979) states that because of the importance of attractions and the power they provide in the tourism system – “the lure to travel and the things to see and do- they must be foremost in the all tourism planning” (p.71). According to Gunn (1979) sometimes natural and historical

features have great attraction power but it's necessary and highly important that the attractions are designed, developed and managed to function as attractions.

MacCannel (1976, p.100) refers to the development of society is marked by the appearance everywhere of touristic space. He calls this space a "stage set, a tourist setting, or simply, a set depending on how purposefully worked up for tourists the display is".

Further, Mac Cannel (1976) states that tourists are motivated by its desires for authentic experiences, and the tourist may believe he or she is experiences something real authentic but on the other side it's very hard to distinguished it the experience in fact was authentic!

This should be kept in mind when developing and planning for tourism destinations.

Mac Cannell (1976) states that most tourists experience "staged authenticity" as a manufactured or "pseudo-culture" of the host community. Also sometimes the tourist themselves are part of the hybrid resort culture which they more likely are to interact with other tourists rather than interact with the host community.

Leiper (Leiper, 1995, cited in Pereira, Correia & Shutz, 2012, p.81) explains that "destinations are places towards which people travel and where they choose to stay for a while in order to experience certain features or characteristics, a perceived attraction of some sort".

Liu (2010, p.463) states "that the motivations, preferences and perceptions of tourists influence the tourism resource itself in the sense that they determine what object or site becomes a tourist attraction and its relative value in the marketplace. Tourist never buy "resources", they go to tourist destinations, visit attractions and use facilities".

Budeanu (2007, p.502) states that “tourist motivations for travelling steer their choice of destinations as the best locations for satisfying their desires to escape and to seek authentic experiences (Iso-Ahola and Park, 1996, cited in Budeanu, 2007, p.502).

### **Destination life cycle**

There might be several reasons for tourism planning and according to Mill (1992, p.359) “one of them relates to the destination life-cycle concept as defined by Plog. Plog’s hypothesis is that destination areas tend to rise and fall in popularity according to the whims of those in the predominate *psychographic* groups to which they appeal at different stages in their development histories”. Thus it matches the destination area’s stage of growth with certain personality profiles. In short its about the rise and fall in the destinations popularity and planning may be a method to react to changes as they occurs.

But like Liu (2003) states it all depends on where the destination is at in the destination life cycle. For instance if in early stages, one may need to attract badly needed foreign investment and therefore governments in developing countries may offer generous incentive to multinational companies to develop tourist facilities and managers to run these. But when the destination has moved on in the destination cycle there will be stronger emphasis on local control.

### **Sustainable development**

The original definition of sustainable development was provided by the Brundland Commission in “Our Common Future” as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: 43, cited in Liu, 2003, p.460). The commission did not mention the tourism industry in any way.

## **Sustainable tourism development**

Bramwell and Lane (2000, cited in Liu, 2010, p.467) says “that sustainable tourism development is a process where one need to align the needs of the tourists, the tourist businesses, the host community and the need for environmental protection”. They further state that is calls for effective planning and implementation of collaboration and partnerships among various stakeholders in the process of tourism development. According to Inskip (1998, p.19) “sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems”.

According to Lozano, Blancas, Gonzales & Caballero (2011, p.659) sustainable tourism is “not a specific form of tourism but more an approach that can be used to make all types of tourism more environmentally, socially and economically beneficial”.

Hobson & Essex (2001, p. 134) states that: “the scope of the term “sustainable tourism” has been diverse, ranging from principles that require a high level of responsibly for the environment, and therefore involve substantial adjustments to the operation of tourism-related businesses, to interpretations that are simply marketing ploys designed to attract new clientele” Beioley (1995, cited in Hobson & Essex, 2001, p.135) includes four aspects of sustainable tourism; first it has to respect the economic well – being and social and cultural concerns of the host communities. Second is has to respect the local environment. Third it has to reduce impacts on natural resources and pollution. Forth is has to provide the visitor with good experiences.

Liu (2010) states that tourism development is both supply-led and demand-led and the provision of tourist facilities and services may arise as a response to growing demand or aim to stimulate tourist demand.

According to Liu (2003) some argue that tourism is a resource industry and very dependent upon natural environment assets and maybe that is why sustainable tourism has focused on the preservation and conservation of natural resources. But as Liu also states (2003) tourism requires three levels of resources; 1) the attractions of tourists including natural, cultural, and purpose- built, 2) the infrastructure and superstructure to support tourist activities and 3) the physical and social settings including the hospitality of the community. Last but not least the tour operators or agencies that may package everything and promote the whole destination (Liu, 2003).

Liu (2003) further states that tourist attractions, like resources in general, need not refer to a fixed or finite quantity or quality. The human perspective perceives an attraction via the kind of knowledge and technology acquired by a society and upon human tastes, values and lifestyles. Or as (Zimmerman , 1951, cited in Liu, 2003, p. 467) stated; “resources are not, they become”.

Garrod and Fyall (Garrod and Fyall, 1998 cited in Liu, 2003, p. 465) speak of two approaches to sustainable tourism: the macro and the micro approaches. The macro approach includes the use of environmental balance sheets to measure sustainability conditions, while the micro approach includes the use of social cost-benefit analysis at the level of the individual tourism development project.

However , (Fossati and Panella, 2000 cited in Liu, p. 465) argues that there is “strong” and “weak” sustainability. Strong includes the importance of irreversibility regarding natural assets and weak allows substitution between man-made and natural components. Liu (2003)

therefore raises the question of how we use our resources. Questions like Liu (2003) asked are highly relevant and one may ask should a destination keep its natural assets such as wilderness areas untouched or transform them into tourist attractions through tourism increase capital stock in the forms of improved technology and infrastructure while accepting limited changes or reductions of the natural assets?

Further, (Healey & Ilbery ,1990, cited in Liu, 2003, p. 463) states that natural resources may be classified, according to availability, mainly into four groups; ubiquitous which you may find everywhere, commonalities, which are widely available across many areas, rarities which you may find only in few destinations and univities which you may find only one place.

### **Definitions of sustainable tourism**

Butler & Wheeler (1993) argues that there is so many interpretations of the term and that all of them are appropriate or accepted. Is this the foundation of the problems regarding sustainable tourism? And further how can one apply to a concept that lacks a universally common accepted definition?

According to Liu (2010) the concept of sustainability has its origins from the environmentalism that grew in the 1970s. Probably the most used and common definition of sustainable development is from the Brundtland Commission Report which defined sustainable development as “ development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987: 43).

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) use the following definition of sustainable tourism development: “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and



host communities". The definition from Innovation Norway with their ten principles of sustainable tourism comes from the WTO definition.

The conceptual definition of sustainable tourism refers to sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices that are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments (WTO, 2013). Further they state that sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability (WTO, 2013).

Butler & Coccossis (1996) have suggested that there might be four ways to link sustainable development with tourism; economic sustainability of tourism, an ecological viewpoint of tourism, the long-term viability of tourism, i.e. the competitiveness of destinations, and sustainable development throughout the physical and human environments.

Butler refers to Bramwell (Bramwell, 1996, cited in Butler, p. 23) in the review of principles and practice of sustainable tourism management there is several dimensions of sustainability; environmental, cultural, political, economic, social, managerial and governmental. They also points out the fact that each of the decision makers and researchers on these different dimensions have different interpretations of the concept.

Bramwell (1996) further points out that the concept is not value-free and therefore not a single unified concept. He states that this is the success of the term so that each stakeholder may define it for his or hers use. I.e. a politician may use words instead of action, the environmentalist gets focus on the preservation and the tourist may feel good about themselves.

Butler (2007) refers to the definition of sustainable tourism is “tourism which is in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time” (Butler 1993, p. 29). Further, Butler claims that the most common used definition of sustainable tourism is: “tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such scale that it remains viable over an infinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well being of other activities and processes (Butler 1993, p. 29). However, Butler also states that “the key problem is the current inability to define to the satisfaction of all, or even most, of the stakeholders in tourism, exactly what is meant by sustainable tourism” (Butler, 1999, p.19).

According to Liu (2010) some of the main aspects of sustainable tourism is persevering cultural heritage, maintaining traditional values and providing authentic experiences for tourists. Liu (2010) believes that most socio cultural changes brought into the community by tourism development is beneficial and the fact that tourism is promoting modern values, social progress and cultural evolution should be appreciated. This is argued by that societies in developing countries needs changes and input from the rest of the world.

Should the less developed world keep its traditional culture in the sake for the tourists who wish to seek exotic and authentic experience? Liu (2010) states that for many tourist destination s the key attraction to tourists is their exoticness or primitiveness, whether it is reflected in the forms of how they live, traditional crafts or pristine environment.

Clarke (2010) made a framework of approaches to sustainable tourism where it was proposed four positions, chronologically sequenced according to the understanding of sustainable tourism a possession or goal. The first position was according to Clarke (2010) that of mass tourism and sustainable tourism was conceived as *polar opposites*, meaning that sustainable

tourism and mass tourism were stereotyped as the “good” and “bad”. Clarke (2003) also refers to at its most extreme many suggested a total replacement of mass tourism and i.e. of Cohen’s (1972) institutionalized tourist.

Then by the 1990s Clarke (2003) states that a continuum replaced the polar opposites and it presented a flexible adaption of the earlier ideas. However it still regarded the phenomenon as a possession and used the sale as the defining criterion and Clarke (2003) states that polar opposites and continuum there formed a natural pair even though the understanding of sustainable tourism was moving into a new direction.

Butler (1990) was one of many to criticize these approaches as “grossly misleading” as it was too simple and too impractical . I.e. tourism is a dynamic and complex phenomenon and that tourism arrivals was growing so rapidly that replacing mass tourism with sustainable tourism was illogical. Several authors have been pointed out this, i.e. Butler (1992) and Cohen (1987) stated that sustainable tourism could neither manage the number of arrivals nor replace the economic benefits accomplished (Clarke, 2010). Clarke (2010) refers to Wheeler’s (1990, 1991a, 1991 b) statement that “the idea was a “micro solution” struggling with a macro problem”.

Clarke (2010) further points out the fact that Krippendorf (1987) was not opposed to mass tourism as long as it progressed towards “harmonious” tourism by stating “ only if we success in living with the mass phenomenon, can we claim to have made a decisive step forward (Krippendorf, 1982: 111) .

As the third position was movement, according to Clarke (2010), the sustainable tourism differed on three key attributes; scale became more objective i.e. mass tourism could be a form of improvement instead of being the “worst case”. Second sustainable tourism became something to strive for and third operationalising knowledge to move towards the goal became the practical focus, rather than “is it or isn’t it” sustainable tourism” (Clarke, 2010).

Also the fact that governments started to focus on the environmental issues made the tourism industry require a response (Clarke, 2010). Another motivation point for the industry would be the interest in green issues from the demand side and last but not least financial institutions in environmental practices is also a motive for the tourist industry to respond in a acceptable manner (Clarke, 2010). As Clarke (2010) points out that there are over thirty environmental or ethical funds in the United Kingdom, representing approximately £750 million of investment. Clarke (2010) also refers to Holden Meehan (1994) about the idea of “profit with principle” has moved from only a few to be very common.

The fourth position of *convergence* represents the latest understanding of sustainable tourism as a goal that all tourism, regardless of scale , should strive to achieve (Clarke, 2010).

Clarke (2010) further states that this position recognizes two interpretations;

- 1) The large scale interpretation of sustainable tourism has a dominantly physical/ecological perspective expressed as a business orientation
- 2) The small scale interpretation of sustainable tourism offers a social point of view from a local or destination platform

According to Clarke (2010) both interpretations focus on the implementation of current knowledge of sustainable tourism to move towards the ultimate goal of sustainability, and they both seek future progress towards the desired goal .

Clarke (2010) gives an example of large scale tourism is experimenting with techniques for inducing shifts in tourist behavior compatible with environmentally friendly travel, and educational component started by the small scale enterprises.

It is more and more common for large tour operators to provide environmental guidelines for guests and i.e. TUI have produced an environment ranking for products featured in all their mainstream Euro-brochures (Clarke, 2010) . On the other hand, small scale

enterprises are learning about the development of effective environmental management systems, originally the focus of large scale organizations (Clarke, 2010).

Clarke (2010) points out that like large scale tourism, the small scale interpretation of sustainable tourism has produced guidelines and codes of good practice, established destination – based projects like for instance the Devon –based Tarka Project and offered and conveyed advice to interested parties (Clarke, 2010: ETB, 1992a, 1992b,1993).

Clarke (2010) further points out that tourism was perceived as a possession of certain types of tourism or situation – while now any tourism development should include sustainable tourism and strive to achieve this.

However, it seems like Liu (2010) have a great point stating that our main task is not to limit growth but to manage growth in a way that is appropriate tot the tourist, the destination environment and the host population. How to operationalize the concept is also a great challenge. According to Liu (2010) one need to develop policies and measures that are not only theoretically sound ut also practically feasible. One need to develop ideals into action to show what sustainable tourism is and promote standards and best practices. Mass tourism should learn to follow ways of principles of sustainable tourism. This is also very similar to what Clarke (2010) stated that sustainable tourism now has entered the stage of convergence. Like Liu (1994) is stating, the demand determinants push a tourist into a travel decision while the supply factors pull the tourist towards a particular destination. According to Liu (1994) the size and preference of global tourist demand are determined by variables in generating countries, where the spatial distribution of tourist flows will be influenced by the competitiveness of various tourist destinations.

Today the types and quality of products tourist search for are changing all the time (Liu, 2010) and tourist are becoming more experienced, more critical, more quality conscious and

seek new experiences as well as “good value for money”. Liu (2010) also points out the fact that tourist destinations across the world are facing increasing competition from other leisure industries and other destinations as well as constantly changing tourist tastes and behaviors. Liu (2010) states that the motivations, preferences and perceptions of tourists influence the tourism resource itself in the way that they determine what site or object becomes an attraction and its relative value in the marketplace.

Goodall’s study (1997, cited in Hobson & Essex, 2001) of the hospitality sector on Guernsey amply demonstrated the disposition of businesses to sustainable tourism.

Hoteliers possessed a general knowledge of environmental problems but had limited or no understanding of tourism-environmental interactions. Only 18 percent of the respondents were aware of, and could explain “sustainable tourism”. Of the one-fifth who claimed knowledge of environmental auditing, less than half actually understood its use. About one-third had introduced sustainable practices since 1990, although these activities were relatively low-key and conventional, being dominated by paper, tin and bottle recycling....()

### **Benefits of sustainable tourism**

Some practical measures within the tourism industry have been energy efficient lighting and heating, water conservation, recycling and local purchasing. And according to Hobson & Essex (2001, p.135) “the benefits of sustainable tourism are not solely in terms of environmental gains. There can also be benefits for the business in terms of reductions in the cost-base through savings, enhanced reputations, greater appeal to more affluent customers, a favorable impression to investors, improved job satisfaction for staff and enjoyable

experiences for visitors and benefits for the local community". (Swarbrooke, 1994, cited in Hobson & Essex, 2001, p135)

Bramwell & Alletorp (2001, p.96) found "that 20 of the 47 respondents identified increasing customer awareness of environmental issues and the emergence of green consumerism as a main incentive behind the adoption of sustainable practices. The next most frequently mentioned incentives were the potential cost savings to business and also the ethical beliefs of people in tourism organizations".

### **Barriers of sustainable tourism**

Hobson & Essex (2001, p.133) did a research on accommodation businesses in Britain and their interest, understanding, and perceived opportunities and barriers to the adoption of "sustainable development". Barriers in adoption of such practices were time, cost and expertise (Ibid, 2001).

Further Hobson & Essex (2001, p.138) points out that "despite the growing international recognition of the importance of environmental sustainability across many economic sectors the main issue remains the translation of the concept into effective workable and practical strategies. "They also refer to the fact that the main barriers in earlier research appear to be a lack of understanding and awareness of environmental issues related to tourism, the fear of extra costs, and skepticism of what is perceived to be an impractical and overly theoretical concept" (Hobson & Essex, 2001, p. 138).

Another barrier, is according to Hobson & Essex (2001, p.134)"the highly fragmented nature of the tourism industry, involving accommodation, transportation, destinations, attractions as well as the public sector, acts as a barrier to the common interpretation and widespread acceptance and adoption of the concepts of sustainability.

### **Sustainable tourism on an operational level**

Hobson & Essex (2001, p.135) states “that the response of the tourism industry to the concept of sustainable development has been mixed, and many of the larger businesses within the accommodation sector have introduced initiatives to promote the principles of sustainability”. I.e. in 1993, the International Hotel and Environment Initiative, including nine of the world’s major hotel companies, produced a manual on how the environmental performance of hotels could be improved (Middleton & Hawkins, 1993, cited in Hobson & Essex, 2001, p.135).

According to Butler (1999, p.20) there is a “disturbing tendency, in the desire to promote sustainable tourism, to claim that any small -scale , environmentally or culturally focused form of tourism is sustainable, particularly where it is developed by or for local residents”.

According to Shapley (2000, p. 9) “the complex, fragmented, multi-sectorial and profit oriented nature of the tourism industry, operationalisation of sustainable tourism development is fraught with difficulties (Hunter, 1995 cited in Shapley, 2000, p.9). Shapley (2000, p.9) further states that “sustainable tourism strategies in practice tend to focus almost exclusively on local or regional boundaries or on particular industry sectors. At the same time “although different sectors of the tourism industry are , to varying degrees, adopting environmentally sound policies, there is little evidence of common development and business philosophy according to sustainable principles across the industry (Forsyth, 1995, cited in Shapley, 2000, p.9).

Butler (1999) states that the best one may do is to operationalize the concept of sustainable tourism and evaluate. This is a complex and difficult and a multi –sectoral approach is essential.



## **Stakeholders part I**

Tourism planning and development is co-operation between many different stakeholders and that's what makes it a challenge for many.

Butler (1999, p. 20) states that "even when the elements and processes of sustainability are identified and understood, there is still no guarantee that it will be practiced in destination areas. It will be necessary, if sustainability is to be achieved, to ensure that all stakeholders are willing participants in the process. If the industry, at all scales, cannot be persuaded, that it is in its own direct interest to commit to some principles of sustainability, then efforts of other stakeholders will have little effect". Butler (1999, p.20) states further "that if the public sector is not willing to educate and if necessary, enforce sustainable policies and actions of, and then few are unlikely to follow them.

Butler (1999, p 20) states "that if local residents cannot see the short-term as well as long-term benefits, to themselves of sustainable policies, they will subvert or ignore them. And if the tourists themselves do not enjoy anticipate satisfaction sustainable forms of tourism, they will not participate and not visit destinations geared to offer this type of tourism".

Bramwell & Alletorp (2001, p. 100) did a research on attitudes in the Danish Tourism Industry to the roles of business and government in sustainable tourism. They concluded "that the senior managers in the Danish tourist industry considered that the prime responsibility rests with the industry or else with the industry working alongside the government".

As mentioned earlier tourism planning and development requires good co-operation between many different stakeholders (Inskeep, 1993) and like Butler (1999) pointed out the importance that they all take responsibility and feel motivated to do. Forsyth (1995,1996, 1997, cited in Bramwell & Alletorp, 2001, p.100) "examined the attitudes in the tourism industry to who should be responsible for implementing sustainable tourism .The result was that as many as

63,8% considered that responsibility lies with government, 30,4% with tourism operators and also host governments, and only 5,8% with tourism operators (including trade associations)”.

According to Liu (2010) there are a range of stakeholders who have the right and, to a varying extent, ability to make changes to the tourism system and influence the process and consequences of development. These are tourists, tourist businesses (investors, developers, operators, shareholders, management, public and private employees) the host community and their governments. (Wahab & Pigram, 1998, cited in Liu, 2010, p.466) states “that these groups often have conflicting interests and different perceptions of tourism development, and to be successful and sustainable tourism development one should involve various government departments, public and private sector, community groups and experts”.

## **Stakeholders part II**

According to Budeanu (2007, p. 501)...() “half of Dutch and German tourists expect their destination to have good environmental quality....”(). Further, (CREM, 2000, cited in Budeanu, 2007, p.501) “inquiries over tourists willingness to pay for environmental protection and the well –being of local communities show Dutch tourists to be uninterested, but (Martin, 2001, cited in Budeanu, 2007, p.501) points out that “over 80% of British tourists being willing to pay up to 3% of the value of their holiday....()for environmental quality in their holiday. Budeanu (2007, p.502) also states that “despite optimistic views generated by studies of tourist preferences, research indicates that while 70 – 80% of tourists state their high concerns for eco-social components for holidays, only about 10% convert this concern to purchasing decisions (Chafe, 2005, cited in Budeanu, 2007, p.502), and in reality, the majority are reluctant to change their own behavior in support of sustainability goals (CREM, 2000, Grankvist 2002; Yan et.al, 2006, cited in Budeanu, 2007, p.502). It should also be noticed that (Budeanu, 2007, p.502) “one reason for the differences between stated

environmental attitudes and actual behavior may be the social desirability bias, which entice people to answer positively to questions related to concerns about sensitive subjects such as environmental protection “(Chung and Monroe, 2003, cited in Budeanu, 2007, p.502).

Budeanu (2007, p.504) states that some tools to steer the tourist behavior may be “decreasing the cost of environmentally destructive behavior”, provide education to make people aware and also show how they can contribute, giving feedback to people about the consequences of their behavior, rationalizing available resources for a better distribution, etc”.

### **Motivation & product development**

Bramwell & Alletorp (2001, p.97) found that “another encouragement mentioned by 13 respondents was financial support from public funds to compensate businesses for the extra costs often involved when introducing sustainable practices or to reward businesses that take the lead in these practices”.

The dominance of motivations in small family businesses are often non-economic such as “wish to get out the business”, retirement or other family reasons might implicate that they are not so receptive of sustainable initiatives (Hobson & Essex, 2001).

Brown’s (1994, cited in Hobson & Essex, 2001, p.136) “survey of 106 managers from large and medium-sized hotel groups in the UK indicated that the main reason for introducing environmental initiatives was on the basis of cost – savings rather than the benefits for the environment.

## **Methodology**

### **Method and research design**

Research is a way to get knowledge according to Neuman (2009) and is an ongoing process of searching and trying to work towards the truth. There may be several purposes of research types and Neuman (2011) states that there are three such types.

There is explanatory research whose primary purpose is to explain why events occur and to build elaborate, extend, or test theory (Neuman, 2011, p. 40). Further there is exploratory research where the research rarely gives a definitive answer. Second one has descriptive research which presents a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting or relationship (Neuman, 2011, p.38). Exploratory and descriptive often mix together. However the result of a descriptive study is a detailed picture of the issue or answer to the research question (Neuman, 2011, p. 39).

One may chose between two data collection techniques, these are quantitative or qualitative data collection techniques. In quantitative data collection it may include experiments, surveys, content analysis or existing statistical sources. In qualitative data collection analysis you can chose between ethnographic field research and historical-comparative research. Neuman (Neuman, 2011) states that the survey is the most widely used social science data-gathering technique and has many forms as for instance questionnaires, Internet opinion polls, phone interviews etc. According to Neuman (2011) survey research proceeds deductively and this means one should conceptualize variables first and then operationalize each variable as one or more survey questions. It means one write, rewrite and again rewrite survey questions for clarity and completeness. Open-ended interviews is one of the qualitative data collection techniques and used in this research.

Since this research will describe the tourism managers attitudes on sustainable tourism, their definition of sustainable tourism and their perceived barriers and benefits of sustainable tourism, and who should have the prime responsibility of imitating sustainable tourism practices it seemed best to go “in – depth” in order to get profound insights regarding their attitudes. The goal was to find out their thoughts, values and attitudes regarding this issue.

The purpose of this research is therefore descriptive and one chose to gather the information via telephone interviews. According to Neuman (2011) interviews can be conducted by mail, telephone or face-to face.

### **Telephone - interviews**

Some of the advantage of telephone interviews is that you can reach about 95% of the population by telephone and is a flexible method (Neuman, 2009, p.168). Further interviewers can pick a specific respondent, control the sequence of questions and use some probes (Neuman, 2009, p.168). Telephone interviews are time efficient and offer lower costs that if one were to travel and get face-to-face interviews. Because the interviewees are tourism mangers which all have very busy schedules and the fact that they travel very often one found it most suitable to conduct telephone interviews. The fact that it would take a lot of time to travel for the interviewer in the region of ”Fjord Norway” with its four counties and the costs to travel were seen as a disadvantage. Some disadvantages of this are according to Neuman (2011, p.169) limited interview length and potential interviewer bias. Open –ended questions may be difficult to use and interviewers can only note serious disruptions.

According to Neuman (2011) one should also pilot test the questions with a small set of respondents who are similar to those in the final survey. One asked whether the

questions were clear and explores their interpretations to see whether the intended meaning was clear. Neuman (2011) calls it cognitive interviewing which is a technique used in pilot testing surveys in which researchers try to learn about a questionnaire and improve it by interviewing respondents about their thought processes or having respondents “think out loud” as they answer survey questions (Neuman p.350, 2011).

### **Cognitive interviewing**

In this research one chose to pilot test the questions with two focus groups. The first focus group was conducted as interviews. This was done to get a realistic and truthful feedback on the questions. Especially as the respondents were from other countries and one wanted to see how they responded around the questions. Neuman (2011, p.350) refers to cognitive interviewing which is a technique used in pilot testing surveys in which researchers try to learn about a questionnaire and improve it by interviewing respondents about their thought process or having respondents “think out loud” as they answer survey questions. A section of advantages and dis-advantages around face –to-face interviews are therefore presented later.

### **Possible pitfalls**

Prestige bias may occur in survey research question writing when a highly respected group or individual is associated with an answer choice (Neuman, 2011) . Or social desirability bias – when respondents give a “normative” response or a socially acceptable answer rather than an honest answer. Neuman (2011) also states that studies suggest that a large majority of the public cannot correctly answer elementary questions and one should be careful if one use knowledge questions because

respondents may lie because they do not want to appear ignorant. Pilot testing will help to improve this possible pitfall.

### **Face-to-face interviews**

Some of the advantages in face-to-face interviews are that they have the highest response rates and permit the longest and most complex questionnaires (Neuman, 2011). They allow interviewers to observe the surroundings and to use nonverbal communication and visual aids.

Other advantages of the interview is that it may allow for the longest number of questions and it allows for probes (Neuman, 2011). Further the interview includes open-ended questions, contingency questions, and complex questions but may be limited to sensitive questions. Some of the disadvantages is that it is expensive and time consuming. Altogether the training, travel, supervision and personnel costs for interviews can be high. Interviewer bias – in other words – the interviewer's appearance, tone of voice, questions wording and so on may affect the respondent (Neuman, 2011).

Neuman (2011) states six different categories of interview bias; 1) errors by the respondent, 2) unintentional errors or interviewer sloppiness, 3) intentional subversion by the interviewer, 4) influence due to the interviewer's expectations, 5) failure of an interviewer to probe or to probe properly and 6) influence on the answers due to the interviewer's appearance.

The interview goes through several stages and after the exit the interviewer may sit down and write something about the interview situation, including the respondent's attitude and unusual circumstances. Also if any disruption happened and something

about the interviewer's personal feelings and if anything unusual happened (Neuman, 2011).

### **Types of interviews**

One may choose between different types of interview and Neuman (2011) refers to standardized interviews and conversational interviews. Postholm (2010) refers to three types of interviews; structured, unstructured and half-structured interviews. In this research one chose half – structured which gives the respondents a chance to talk freely where this type of interview is some kind of a conversation, it is still structured around the key questions. It gives flexibility and the respondents can talk and give information around difficult subjects at the same time as the interviewer have some structure and control around the conversation in order to get the right answers.

### **Sample selections**

According to Neuman (2011, p.241) in qualitative sampling the goal is to deepen the understanding about a larger process, relationship or social scene and a sample give valuable information or new aspects. One sample to get new theoretical insights, reveal distinctive aspects of people or social settings, get a deeper understanding of complex situations, events or relationships. "It is their relevance to the research topic rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which the people to be studied are selected" (Flick, 1998, cited in Neuman, 2011, p.241). Non-random sampling like in this research – is the most common in qualitative research (Neuman, 2011).

In this research one has chosen to interview tourism managers who represents destinations in the region of 'Fjord Norway'. There are a total of fourteen destination management organizations and thus fourteen destination managers. Nine of the



fourteen were able to conduct the telephone interview of this research, so approximately 64, 28 percent of the total amount managers. However the sample included six rural destination and three city & rural destinations. Eight of the nine organizations were fully destination management organizations with tasks within both product- development and marketing, while one of them was only a marketing organization. There were three destination managers from the county of Møre og Romsdal, three destination managers from Sogn og Fjordane, two from Hordaland and one from Rogaland.

One chose to keep the managers anonymous with a goal to get the answers more truthful and because the overall research purpose is to describe how the destination managers define sustainable tourism and their attitudes towards this. Another reason to keep the managers anonymous was to reduce social desirability bias.

The reason of why one chose to look how sustainable tourism is perceived among destination managers and their attitudes regarding sustainable tourism is that a destination manager is working with two levels; he is working with the business level like accommodation, restaurants, transportation companies and attractions. On the other hand he is also working with the destination level meaning the common goods as hiking trails, cycling trails, ski – slopes which have many owners and are usually developed by a co-operation of stakeholders on the destination.

Another reason why one chose the destination managers in the region of ”Fjord Norway” was to that they are all depend on the nature and assessments of the landscape as they are nature –based destinations with the fjord , coastal - and mountain landscape of region. Further, the tourism managers are the one stakeholder group in tourism planning and development who should act as the advocates to the rest of the stakeholders in tourism planning and development. They are the regulators who are

defined as those to contribute to the management of the area and often lead tourism development processes (Inskeep, 1993).

### **Data collection**

Like mentioned earlier in this paper one chose to use a qualitative data collection technique. In quantitative data collection one includes experiments, surveys, and content analysis or existing statistical sources. Neuman (Neuman, 2011) states that the survey is the most widely used social science data-gathering technique and has many forms as for instance questionnaires, Internet opinion polls, telephone interviews, face-to-face interview etc.

The first step in this research was to develop a question guide which was a result from the theory section and literature review in this paper. Second step was to test the questions in focus groups. One used cognitive interviewing which is a technique used in pilot testing surveys in which researchers try to learn about a questionnaire and improve it by interviewing respondents about their thought process or having respondents “think out loud” as they answer survey questions (Neuman, 2011, p.350).

The focus group consisted of the product manager of Bad Reichenhall in Germany, the president of “Alpine Pearls” and mayor of Werfenweng, and the project - assistant of the mayor in Werfenweng. These three were chosen as representatives of the concept of “Alpine Pearls”. The “Alpine Pearls” is a co-operation between Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Slovenia, Italy and France.

The reason why one chose representatives from this region was because they have been working with two EU projects (mobility I and II) including sustainable tourism since 1993, and both projects was imitated by the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. Then as a result the idea of “Alpine

Pearls” was created and the idea was innovative, sustainable tourism packages that protect the environment and the concept of “Alpine Pearls” were created and it’s a concept of a car - free holiday.

Both destinations – the region of “Fjord Norway” and the region of “Alpine Pearls” depends on the nature as the nature is their primary attraction. The effect of tourism on the environment is growing along with the numbers of tourist arrivals. The responsibility for protecting the resources for tourism (i.e. nature) but at the same from tourism (i.e. damage, people pollution etc) therefore rests with the tourism industry. Not entirely but the destination managers attitudes and perceptions will be crucial in order to implement sustainable tourism practices and to make an action plan. This research wants to see if there is some common ground on this issue.

Focus in this thesis is on the perceived definition of sustainable tourism, the real and perceived benefits and barriers of sustainable tourism, and who should have the responsibility of the implementation of sustainable tourism. And as with other sectors, the translation of theory into practice has been problematic as understanding, interest and implementation within the tourism sector have been highly variable.

The second focus group included Professor Carlo Aall from the western research institute and Ivar Petter Grøtte. They were asked directly how to improve the question guide and not tested in the same way as the first focus group.

### **Conducting the interviews**

The interviews with the first focus group in Austria and Germany were conducted in the period of 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2013, face –to –face at their offices in Werfenveng and Bad Reichenhall. The interviews lasted between 40 to 65 minutes and were

conducted in English language. Some language challenges might affect the validity and this will be discussed later. All the interviews were recorded on a I phone 3G.

The testing with the second focus group were conducted face-to face and by telephone in the period of 23<sup>rd</sup> of May to 27<sup>nd</sup> of May.

The question guide were reduced and improved from first to second focus group and after the second. Finally question guide is enclosed in appendix 1.

The interview with the destination managers were done by telephone in the period of 28<sup>th</sup> of May to June 4<sup>th</sup> 2013. They lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. All the interviews were recorded on an I phone 3G and one had to stop the recording four times because of interruption of other telephone calls. It should be noted that the interviewer asked the questions in English in order to reduce misunderstanding due to the language or translation errors. Both the records from the first focus group and the telephone – interviews are stored and can thus be checked for authenticity.

All the respondents received a request on e-mail or telephone of a meeting or telephone interview (appendix 2).

### **Coding**

The telephone – interviews with the destination managers were recorded, transcribed and after that translated from Norwegian into English. According to Neuman (2011, p.510) “qualitative research often involves the use of general ideas, themes or concepts as tools for making generalizations”. Further (Ibid. p.510) one organize qualitative research data into conceptual categories and create themes or concepts. Coding is used to sort the information stored into sub- categories and identified by the researcher. In qualities research this is a central part and it gives the answers a system with location

of certain issues. Further it may help one to identify the range of issues and subjects in the data, and understand the meanings the participants give these issues (Neuman, 2011). The findings are presented in the “findings” section and it follows the chronological order as the questions in the question guide except two of the questions. The two questions are presented in the beginning under the section of “definition of sustainable tourism” while asked in the end of the interview. Those are number eighteen and nineteen (appendix 1). This was asked separately in order to see if their perceptions changed during the interview.

The section of findings has quotations from all the respondents and one chose to include all the quotations because of the in-depth objective one look for in this research.

The section of findings further has summaries of the main findings in order to make it easier to read. These summaries include sub categories of the respondent’s answers.

### **The question guide**

The question guide is divided into sections of an introduction where the goal was to get some information regarding the interviewees, such as human capital. Next one asked about the definition of sustainable tourism. However since this is one of the main questions in this research project one should consider all the answers in into this. Later in the interview they were asked about measures of sustainable tourism, thus being a concrete answer of their definitions. The same thing with the section of tourism planning and what they consider as the most important aspect regarding sustainable tourism. One has tried to use different approaches but to measure the same. The same thing regarding the questions about benefits and barriers; the interviewees were asked about motivation and product development and this was to make them talk

about benefits and barriers in another way. In the question of who should have the prime responsibility one asked that precise question first and then afterwards asked more specifically about each one of the stakeholders which are included in tourism planning and development. All of this should give the research project improved validity as it is measures in different ways.

### **Reliability and validity**

According to Neuman (2009) one will have reliable qualitative data as long as one collect data consistently and one wants not to be vacillating and erratic over time. The purpose is to measure in a thoughtful and consistent manner so that it is dependable. As a researcher one interacts with and develops deep social relations with people and one should consistently monitor how one are observing over time (Ibid, 2009).

Further, Neuman (2009, p. 125) states that “validity is linking a concept to empirical measures. Valid measures of qualitative data validity have authenticity. Authenticity means a fair, hones and balanced account of social life from the standpoint of a person who lives in a specific world. The goal is to capture social life in a manner that is rings true to the experiences of people who are being studies. Valid qualitative data get an inside view. One may capture and offer a detailed account of how the people you study see, feel about, and understand events”. However Neuman (2009, p. 125) states “that reliability is necessary for validity and is easier to achieve than validity”.

In this research one asked only the destination mangers in the region of ”Fjord Norway” and this decreases the reliability because one does not know if the result would be the same doing the same research on other parts of the country.

All the interviews were recorded and it’s possible to check for authenticity. The answers are quoted exactly as they were said in the section of findings. One even

asked the questions in English in order to reduce potential misunderstandings. Afterwards one noticed that this occurred the other way around. The responders misunderstood some of the English language. This was questions asked about measures as the word in the question guide referred to things being done. In other words one used the word as a noun and not a verb (not to measure). However one noticed this error as it occurred and it has been taken into consideration in the section of findings. The answers were after that translated and some translation errors may have occurred. Also it should be noted that as an interviewer one noticed that one became better and paused more after doing a few interviews. The experience made one behave more calmly and maybe the last interviewees got more opportunity to say more due to those pauses. Some of the interviewees were also colleagues of the interviewer and this made the interview and conversation more in-formal. However as an interviewer one tried to stay stable and behave exactly the same for each interview but one noticed especially one thing regarding interview bias. The researcher and author of this thesis also works as a project manager with sustainable tourism in one of the national pilot destinations. The project started three years ago and was initiated and is partly funded by Innovation Norway. However it seems like the tourism industry in Norway has heard about the pilot projects and the media has given the project great attention throughout these three years. In March this year all the four pilot destinations got awarded by the Brand as sustainable tourist destination in Norway. Because of this attention many of the interviewees responded by: “you probably know this” or “you should know” or “I should ask you, right”. Neuman (2011) states that one interview bias might be that the interviewee wants to make a good impression to the interviewer or feels insecure because of the low level of knowledge. However, as stated earlier one

treated all the interviewees the same way and one didn't try to influence the interviewee in some way.

It is also common to find social desirable bias in research of attitude and beliefs and especially about environmental issues the respondent wants to give a good impression (Budeanu, 2007).

Another weakness of this research is the instrument chosen, the open-end interview. On the one hand it opens up for deep and detailed information in the respondents answers but on the other hand it's more difficult to code the answer as the respondent may answer too much. For instance in the question of "who they think should be responsible for initiating sustainable tourism" they answered many instead of appointed one.

It should be noted that the interviewer should have been more active in the use of probes and some of the answers may reflect this. Especially those places where one got short answers and sometimes incomprehensible answers as they were so short.

"The validity refers to measures truthfulness; how well an idea and the measure for it fit together" (Neuman, 2009, p.139). One should try to "create a tight fit between understandings, ideas, and statement about the social world and what is actually occurring in it" (Neuman, 2011, p.214). Further there are internal and external validity. According to Neuman (2011, p. 217) "*internal validity* means we have not made errors internal to the design of a research project that might produce false conclusions".

"External validity refers to whether we can generalize a result what we found in a specific setting with a particular small group beyond that situation or externally to a wider range of settings and many different people" (Ibid, p.217).



Regarding this research on the nine destination managers it's difficult to transfer the findings and generalize the result. As mentioned earlier regarding the fact that in tourism planning and development there are many different stakeholders and one may not generalize the findings to them. However, this was not the purpose of the study. The purpose was to find out how sustainable tourism is perceived among destination managers and their attitudes regarding sustainable tourism.

### **Ethics**

It is important to be aware of ethics when conducting social research and according to Neuman (2011) one should consider issues like personal information, the voluntary participation or agreement of the respondent and a pseudo survey (survey to mislead others), misuse of survey results and finally the abuse of survey results in mass media.

### **Findings**

To sort out the findings one has used “deductive coding” and the questions used in the interview guide arrive from different theory regarding the issue of sustainable tourism.

The findings are divided into five main categories like earlier in this thesis. These are “definition of sustainable tourism”, “benefits of sustainable tourism”, and barriers of sustainable tourism”, “sustainable tourism on an operational level”, “who should have the prime responsibility of initiating sustainable tourism practices”. These five categories reflect the main and overall question asked in this thesis: “How sustainable tourism is perceived among destination managers and their attitudes regarding sustainable tourism”. Further some of the main categories have sub-categories Some general findings is presented first with regard to the respondents background such as education and work –experience ,age and political view. Please see the section “question guide” for more detailed information. Also some information regarding the destinations is presented. The respondents are numbered in

order to give them anonymity. The numbers are assigned due to time of interview in order to track them in the tape records. Some of the respondents didn't finish their sentences before starting on new ones so it really took time to interpret and code the answers.

### **Quotations**

The quotations from the interviews will be in Times New Roman, size 10, single space. A parenthesis with three dots inside: (...) will illustrate a temporary end to a quotation, where some of the content is not included if it is mentioned earlier or not relevant for the topic.

The destinations included in the research are presented by letters (i.e. A, B, C) and the interviewees are further referred to in numbers in order to give them anonymity.

Some quotations from the focus groups will also be presented in order to get a deep insight to the issue. The first focus group will be referred to as F1 while the second focus group will be referred to as F2. Quotations from the focus groups will be presented after the quotations from the respondents in order to add more valuable information to the topic and a contribution to the findings.

### **The interviewees**

This research conducted nine interviews with nine tourism managers in the region of "Fjord Norway", where each one represents one destination. There are a total of fourteen destination management organizations in the region of "Fjord Norway". A summary of their background, education, work-experience and political view will be presented here:

- Age: The interviewees included four women and five men, in the age from 38 years to 53 years with an average of 45,66 years.

- Education: Two of the interviewees had an MBA, three of them held a master within tourism & marketing, one had a BA within tourism, one had a BA within marketing, one of them master of nature conservation and one had a master within social science.
- Work –experience: All of them had more than five years of work-experience and most of them from managerial positions from both public and private sector.
- Political view: five of the interviewees said they belong to the centre while one at the right end and one at the left, one didn't have a political belonging and one didn't answer.
- Destinations: Six of the interviewees represented rural destinations while three of them represented city/rural destinations. ( Putt inn statistikk)
- Eight of the nine were fully destination management organizations with tasks within both product- development and marketing, while one of them was only a marketing organization.
- Geographical: There were three destination managers from the county of Møre og Romsdal, three interviewees from Sogn og Fjordane, two from Hordaland and one from Rogaland.

Like stated earlier the interviewees will be referred to by numbers and this will be like this: dm 1, dm 2, etc in order to separate them. One will refer to them as interviewee or destination manager.

### **Definition of sustainable tourism**

This part of the findings will show how the interviewees define sustainable tourism when asked straight forward. However the other questions in the interview guide will support and add information to this section and this will be presented under the other headings. But in the discussion part of this paper one will include an overall discussion and see the different parts

together. The interviewees understanding and definition of sustainable tourism will become more clear and highlighted after answering all the questions. And one may note that some of the sections blend together and one should see the entire research together.

“I have been thinking a little bit about it. It’s not a clear definition... It’s all about climate and the environment, and economy and profit. And to have a long –term thinking “(dm 1).

That means that we should make sure that we get development but at the same time viable development for future generations. Its divided into three parts; preservation of nature, culture and environment, economical with the focus on making money. The third part is the social sustainability meaning the local society. It is quite comprehensive and much to work with (dm 2).

Sustainable tourism should have elements of environment, people and economical development.

Interaction between these three is important (dm 3).

I like to use the definition of people, planet and profit. Planet means physical effects on the environment. An activity... Energy consumption, garbage...

People mean local societies - we have some examples in Norway of people pollution. One should support the local community and not consume... ()

Economy ...one should add money to the businesses, destinations or local society is. It will not be sustainable if one miss this last part... ()(dm 4).

I like to deal with the ten principles from Innovation Norway’s definition (dm 5).

I have great experience with sustainable tourism. I know the definitions which are made. I know the ones in Norway and abroad. I think it is divided in two; on the one hand you have Innovation Norway’s perception with the emphasis on socio cultural, environmental and economical. This is a good platform for the tourism development and this is what is wise and most common to use and will provide the best foundation for the industry. But the new sustainable tourism and development work is more with an

environmental focus with a larger global responsibility than the two other. The other two is more local and up to the businesses themselves. To earn money and if you act ok is more local ... (dm 6) (sjekk!!)

My understanding of sustainable tourism is when you are able to make money at the same time as you take care of the local merchandise. We have only nature based tourism here... () I am concerned with sustainable tourism in a way of how we manage our resources in a good way and earn money at the same time...we have to focus on this even if it might be wrong. But the importance must be how to manage our resources so they last. I don't have a descent definition of this (dm 7).

I am thinking it's about environment, economy and social sustainability. It's a little diffuse..so what? It has to be sustainable for the local society but sometimes at the expense of the environment. It's a broad definition (dm 8).

I thinking sustainable tourism is...or it should be a balance with the nature and not to damage nature, and be in balance with the social environment and give some economical benefits. Its three circles which all connects with each other - that is sustainable tourism (dm 9).

### **Summary of the main findings:**

#### **Environment & economy**

One interviewee thinks of sustainable tourism as climate and environment, economy and profit and long term thinking.

#### **Environment, economy & people**

Seven out of the nine interviewees mentioned the three folded definition of sustainable tourism including environment, people or socio – cultural sustainability, and economical sustainability/profit. Three of them stressed the importance of interaction between these three factors.

One interviewee emphasize that there is a two folded definition of sustainable tourism today; on the one side there is the socio-cultural, environmental and economical factors while on the

other side there is the “new sustainable tourism”. This “new sustainable tourism” means a larger environmental global responsibility.

### **Manage resources and make money**

One interviewee defines sustainable tourism as managing the resources but at the same time make money. The same interviewee commented that he/she didn't have a decent definition.

### **Benefits of sustainable tourism**

This part of findings includes what the interviewees perceive as benefits of sustainable tourism.

If one develop tourism in a sustainable matter one may be in business forever. That must be the objective. Solutions in a short –term perspective will disappear and products that are not viable will disappear. One need to have a long – term perspective (dm 1).

Hmm...it seems like there is only benefits, if you manage to preserve the local community and the culture, their values, and to be conscious around those elements. Maybe that is our strength – to offer real genuine products that are viable. This is important for the future. Regarding the economy it is an assumption. Regarding the environment..It's difficult.. To separate between the terms- they blend into each other...() It's crucial that we focus on preserving the nature and use it in a way that future generations may use it. Sustainable tourism is the right path to go...and everyone should have that in mind in product development and development of today's products (dm 2).

More consciousness. Higher revenue per guest but reduced volume. More long –term and more planning for the future (dm 3).

It's a good question. Well regarding people: if tourists visits make the local community flourish instead of it consuming the local society as consuming goods. Sustainable tourism should contribute to pride

and that the destination develops...Regarding the planet it has to be that there will be a minimum of damage both visual or emissions in the fjord, pollution or unjustifiable pollution. It's not interesting if there is no growth and money into the local community (dm 4).

The fact that you may run the tourism in a proper manner and in a long-term. If not- the local community will not have an positive attitude towards tourism (dm 5),

Benefits will be efficient operation and that one actually can save money. Further regarding socio-culture – it is the allocation of the workforce. On the one side there are concrete benefits for the business level while on the other side one may get higher quality on the products, short travel food, locally produced and traditional products, handicrafts and attractive solutions. The third level is to accommodate national regulations and policies (dm 6).

I think what we may accomplish and the benefits with is the long term perspective. And that it is not focus on consuming but rather development. Also the fact that the products will be improved and taken care of so they will last for a long time. The second point is that we have to feel that we preserve the nature in a good way...emotional. That thing lasts...() I don't know..I am not good at this...() (dm 7)

I think our biggest challenge for the people on this planet is that we all have to contribute a little. Doesn't mean more for the tourism industry than others – on the contrary. Experiences is sustainable and the people in the tourism industry are not able to do something with the large perspective. It should be more expensive to fly. We have to take our responsibility of international challenges and that is very important! We are not conscious enough. Let's hope we will become more conscious..() (dm 8)

I think the benefits are the fact that you may plan in a long- term, and you should not wear down, you should have the balance between your resources. In this way you will get a more harmonic tourism industry which will be able to give more to the local community (dm 9).

### **Summary of main findings**

This section will provide one with the main findings of what is perceived as benefits of sustainable tourism.

### **Long term perspective**

Five of the nine interviewees stated the long term perspective in something that matters. They talk about products and destinations should last forever, that one will have a more long term thinking, long term perspective and planning for a long term.

### **Local community**

Five of the nine interviewees also include local community on their benefit list, but in different views though.

They see it as a benefit to offer genuine and real products in the local community or as part of the local community. Further it's stated that if the local community flourish it will be good.

Another state that the attitudes towards tourism in the local community will not be good if the type of tourism is not proper. Another points out that some sociocultural benefits will be to allocate the workforce. The last interviewees state that one benefit is to give to the local community.

### **Economical benefits**

Some of the above would also belong to this category but one chooses to present it like this anyway. However it should be considered and noticed during the discussion part.

One states that economical sustainability is an assumption. Another state that benefits will be growth and money into the local community. A third states that one benefit of sustainable tourism is efficient operation and that the businesses save money.



**Environmental focus**

Four of the interviewees state something about the environment being a benefit. One responds that it's crucial to focus on preserving the nature, and another states that it's a benefit to minimize damage on the planet. Others state that the importance of preservation of products and not to wear out your resources.

**Politics**

Two of the interviewees mentioned politics particularly. One stated that a benefit of sustainable tourism will be to accommodate national regulations and policies. The second stated that everybody needs to take some responsibility internationally and that the tourism industry cannot make a difference in the large picture.

**Consciousness**

Two of the interviewees mentioned that a benefit will contribute to more consciousness and one specifically stated pride. One stated that we as a nation are not conscious enough and this will therefore also be presented in the summary of findings of barriers.

**Destination development & quality**

Four of the interviewees stated that some of the benefits will be destination development, product development in a long term and high quality on the products.

**Barriers of sustainable tourism**

This part of the findings includes what the interviewees perceive as barriers of sustainable tourism.

Many of the businesses do not have the opportunity or ability to think and act in a long – term perspective. It's more about survival from day to day or from season to season. Because of this the focus might change...()Then everything will be on a minimum. That is one of the first barriers. I heard you speaking in Oslo yesterday about how you might work but I keep thinking how to manage this? If it's hard to survive from day to day – and everyone wants a piece of you- then its hard to focus on sustainable tourism. I think that the human being is more like we focus on what is important today but we are not able to look ahead in the long –term perspective (dm 1).

Many find it demanding, for instance this work with a certification or the gras logo from Innovation Norway. They think it's so beurocratic and demanding. And for some hotels which are part of a chain they will a criteria and rules to follow and they are not able to do what they want. Also the fact to turn their thinking and change some of their attitude...to make them think in a long-term perspective instead of rushing into short term solutions. I don't know.. maybe it's more expensive...()Some people will find this as a barrier when working with sustainable tourism is more expensive (dm 2).

The balance between demands, expectations and needs for volume growth in order to have economic growth. I am talking of the balance there and to preserve and maintain the nature in some geographical areas. And it's usually the most attractive areas that will be damaged first. It's difficult to have a balance there...() (dm 3).

One barrier is that it is an image problem in Norway. People think of simple accommodation and local food in regard of sustainable tourism. Like a “back packer”. If a business conduct environmental measures it will improve their economy and maybe we have promote this better. Also the fact that sustainable tourism will develop local communities – this might be a selling point. The image of today is that is supposed to be very simple; like not drive a car, simple accommodation etc (dm 4).

“I can't see any barriers of sustainable tourism “(dm 5).

There are not so many barriers. It has been a challenge to motivate and inform businesses about what is included in sustainable tourism and how they might work with it. But I think that has changed a lot the last five years. One of the challenges regarding sustainable tourism has been to communicate the benefits of it (dm 6).

I really don't have any. Maybe I see this too easy...() Energy saving and preservation of nature and climate – that's issues in my everyday worklife and I find it positive to work with this. But I think one barrier might be a common understanding and definition of what is included in the term sustainable tourism. For instance certifications is good. To use things that are re-newable . Maybe another barrier is the fact that we are too "lazy" in the destinations and that we are not putting an effort into this work (dm 7).

I think its things that we are not able to do something about – for instance at national political level. It's madness that one can buy an airline ticket and fly around Europe for NOK 300 ! This is also in competition with our tourism sector – I mean it's too easy to get out of Norway. The government should implement restrictions on this. Because as long as it cheep to fly people will continue to do it (dm 8).

I can't really see any barriers, only in short – term maybe...i.e. limitations. The tourism industry has to see to it so they don't "strangle themselves", i.e. it's important not to "drown in volume of people". It might easily be too much pressure. Sustainable tourism may help us in planning and development. We have requirements from the UNESCO, and visitor management is part of the sustainable tourism thinking (dm 9).

## **Summary of main findings**

### **Long term perspective**

Also regarding barriers the term “long term” is mentioned. Two of the interviewees mentioned that it is hard to focus on a long term operation when it might be a survival struggle from day to day. Another also mentioned this as a challenge and difficulty.

### **Definition of sustainable tourism**

Two of the interviewees mentioned that it is a challenge to motivate and inform about what is included and defined as sustainable tourism. A common understanding might be a barrier. A third interviewer mentioned that sustainable tourism have an “image problem” and claimed that people associate sustainable tourism with “back-packers”.

### **Economical factors**

One interviewer mentioned that sustainable tourism is expensive to implement. Another mentioned that it is hard to balance between preservation and economical growth. A third mentioned that the tourism industry should be aware of volume growth may be a barrier and that one should be careful so the tourism industry don't “strangle themselves”.

### **Politics**

One interviewer mentioned that one are not able to do anything with barriers of sustainable tourism and that it rests on politicians on a national level. In addition it is stated that politicians has to regulate the airline industry and that a barrier to sustainable tourism is the cheap airline tickets.

### **Demanding**

One interviewer mentioned that the environmental certifications are too demanding and bureaucratic. Another mentioned that the destination might be too lazy and that they don't put enough effort into the work of sustainable tourism.

### **No barriers**

One interviewer said it was no barriers to sustainable tourism.

### **Measures of sustainable tourism**

In this section one will present the findings of what kind of measures the interviewees do of sustainable tourism today, and what they think of as practical measures at destination level and if they have done any practical measures of sustainable tourism the last five years.

The questions may give the same answer (s) so they are all presented together.

Our destination organization participates in the county group which works with sustainable tourism. But we don't have concrete plans i.e. to work for and receive the brand for sustainable tourism from Innovation Norway. But we should take the role as a long-term planner for our area. Some of our businesses have a short term perspective. When it comes to special interest tourism we have done especially one project of facilitating a hiking trail. It is funded by the state and many stakeholders have med involved. That's what we have done...()The hiking trail was needed as erosion and new trails came all the time. An example of practical measures of sustainable tourism is the project of facilitating the hiking trail mentioned above...() This will promote sustainable tourism I think – because its practical visitor management in a gentle way. We are not able to close down the mountain so this project must be a best practice thing...()(dm 1 )

Please see above which is a practical example of what we have been working with within product development. Sure we could have been more active to promote that businesses should

do an eco light house certification, but we don't have the capacity for it. But we have been good at promoting the good examples through newsletters etc. But maybe we should have shown guidance on this – maybe that would have been a good way to do it (dm 1).

I refer to the hiking trail project again – that is what we have been doing the last five year. But then we are back to what is the definition of sustainable tourism? I really hope that most of our activities will be within the definition of sustainable tourism. I.e. our destination company is run in a way that is sustainable – we hope it will last for the future because we had focus on economical sustainability and good management. Our destination management organization has been around for fifteen years...() (dm 1).

We have had a great coast- heritage project which is about cleaning in the shoreline, cleaning garbage, cultural landscape and wild sheep – important to have those in the landscape to keep it from growing. Other practical measures...lets see...we are in dialog with our members to highlight the importance of sustainable tourism, focus on local values for our guests, local history is important, pride of our products, conscious building, then we have X Food and they are really conscious about this. Yes..we have many other which offers local food and drinks. But practical measures in our destination company...well we have some work left to do there...(dm 2)

Practical again...() back to the wild sheep again...() culture landscape...()locally produced food. Another example would be short travel food...() Other are offers of eco light house certification and others so that the destination may get the brand from Innovation Norway to show what businesses that are certified. I can't think of more...for the hotels you have the classical eco light house certification which make them save water, their use of towels etc (dm 2)

Like I said about the coast heritage project and wild sheep...() But we have also marked many trails. Made them access able. We have cleaned a lot of garbage and we encourage the businesses to use local food but it is the businesses themselves who starts and implement measures, like X Food , they are kind of slow food and they started on their own but we have been on some of their meetings. But its not thanks to us- they have done the work themselves (dm 2) .

The development within the fjord area and island, preservations of birds. We always bear in mind that the local community should be involved and that we listen to them (dm 3).

I would like to take a look at the growth in the cruise segment that has been here in the city for the last years, an huge increase, and I would like to focus on quality rather than volume by time. Should be considered into a national plan, how we as a nation meet with the cruise operators...() National plan will prevent people pollution and our city is small compared to the large cruise operators and that is why it is so important with national guidelines (dm 3).

No we haven't done anything other than what I have mentioned above. We didn't include it in the marketing either. We feel that we are doing small measures but we have chosen not to market or promote those measures in our marketing campaigns (dm 3).

We as an organization haven't done anything else than what Innovation Norway is doing in regard of i.e. certification. At business level we now have a several which are certified either as eco light house or other types. But not many. Some are required to do it via their hotelchain and a few do it on their own. Usually they don't se the point and this might be a barrier (dm 4).

Regarding practical measures there are different levels. On the business level we have different certifications. This give real changes. On a regional/national level one must think marketing or management. We defined ourselves as a marketing organization- and not a destination management organization. Therefore we can't do much other than support our regional company "Fjord Norway" or Innovation Norway (dm 4).

No we haven't have done anything...() (dm 4).

We have only attended to the courses offered by Innovation Norway in order to learn more about it. It is a case for all businesses and it is their responsibility to make sure they are up to date on the subject (dm 5).

I think it should be training. For instance should Innovation Norway travel around to the detiantions and train them within sustainable tourism (dm 5).

Only participated in the course of sutainable tourism from Innovation Norway (dm 5).

It is the businesses themselves who work – like for instance with certifications. That is what is done in a larger scale here. Though hotel – chains or by themselves. Some has been motivated on their own while others through the national processes on an national level (dm 6)

Regarding practical measures I think that certifications are the most important you may do. Further you may focus on newsletters, either via Norwegian Centre of Expertise Tourism Fjord Norway or just ”Fjord Norway”. And one should have a conscious attitude regarding sustainable tourism and inform about it and make tools access able so the businesses get in touch with the right persons or right tools in order to become more sustainable (dm 6).

We have only inform about projects or tools available in Innovation Norway or NCE tourism (dm 6).

I don't know if we do anything special . In our region we have the sustainable tourism pilot Lærdal. We should transfer experiences from Lærdal to the rest of the area and destination. I.e. to have a seminar where the other municipalities could learn from the work done in Lærdal. That is the best thing we can do. We should as a destination management organization contribute to achieve the objectives in our tourism destination plan (dm 7).

Practical measures would be... maybe to make sure that all our attractions and activites that we are selling have good information of how to behave, everything from what a destination company should – practical measures with regard to our guests and members of what we can do (dm 7).

No (dm 7).

None. It's a huge challenge! We need measurement and parameters. Maybe we could have qualified as an eco light house, it's easy to re-cycle -but it will be small amounts in the large picture! We need measurement parameters – to have a goal. The hotel industry has many measurement parameters now. And Innovation Norway has done some work with that with the four pilots. Lets hope the rest of us can learn something from that. But one has to prioritize. We should have done something that means something in the long term (dm8)



It all about what kind of activities we offer and make available. For instance we don't offer motorized activities but some of our activities require transportation in order to execute them. (dm 8).

No we haven't done that (dm 8).

We have a project now which is called X Fjord and it's a cooperation between the tourism sector, the agricultural sector, the municipalities, the UNESCO foundation which are managing most of our destination. We have many measures and we would like to achieve the brand from Innovation Norway. At the same time we would like to plan for more environmental friendly transportation here. We have a lot of bus transportation here because of the large amount of cruiseships here, actually more than two hundred arrivals and all the excursions demand buses. We are testing electricity and Enova have looked into some possibilities for us regarding electricity and gas. On both shore and off shore transportation. We also look into measurement for businesses within solar power and we re-cycle waste. We have an environmental zone before entering the destination where the "worst" buses may be parked. We will use revenue from an environment fund to do more environmental friendly measurement (dm 9).

Like I mentioned above. We are now doing visitor management. We just started - to figure out traffic flows, what area has largest damage and how we can reduce this (dm 9).

Yes – like the project I mentioned above. The last measurement was that we bought twenty two e-scooters in order to reduce internal transportation so that the local community shouldn't be bothered by the emissions and we have so many steep hills here so it will be heavy to cycle.

With regard to cruise we are substituting the tender boats with the sea walk – so then we reduce those emissions as well (dm 9).

### **Summary of main findings (measures I)**

In this section one will present the main findings on the question of what (if any) kind of measure they do of sustainable tourism today at their destinations. The three questions in the measure chapter of the interview guide were very similar with a purpose and an intention to

force the interviewee in different ways to speak of measurements of sustainable tourism. The overall goal with that was to find the answer of how the destination managers define sustainable tourism. Second to find out what sustainable tourism meant on an operational level at their destination.

### **Nature based projects**

Four of the nine interviewees said they were currently working on a nature based project .Either fjord, hiking trail or other similar projects and this was at destination level.

### **Certifications**

Two of the nine interviewees said they were not doing anything at destination level, and that work within sustainable tourism are kept on business level with for instance different eco – certifications.

### **Knowledge**

One interviewee said they had attended to courses held by Innovation Norway as a measure at destination level, but specified that it's the businesses responsibility to be updated on this.

### **National pilot of sustainable tourism**

One interviewee said they weren't doing anything at destination level, and referred to Laerdal as one of the national pilot destinations in Innovation Norway's sustainable tourism program.

Another interviewee misunderstood the question. However he/she also referred to Laerdal at one of the national pilot destinations in Innovation Norway's sustainable tourism program.

## **Summary of main findings (measures II)**

In this section one will present the main findings of what the interviewees think are practical measures of sustainable tourism at destination level.

### **Nature based projects**

Three of the interviewees referred to the nature projects from the previous question about measures. And of the three suggested visitor management projects and referred to what they are doing at their destination.

### **Knowledge**

One mentioned that training and implementation of knowledge as a measure. He/she further stated that Innovation Norway should be responsible for this. Another listed measure from Norwegian Centre of Expertise and "Fjord Norway" as important. And one said that to inform about available tools will be an important measure at destination level.

### **Certifications**

Two of the interviewees listed certifications as measures, and one specified that this is the most important measure to do. One mentioned the Brand from Innovation Norway (for destinations) as an important measure.

### **National pilot of sustainable tourism**

One interviewee suggested workshop with references to what has been done in the national pilot Lærdal.

**No motorized activities**

One interviewee stated that their measure at their destination was that they don't offer motorized activities except where it's needed in order to get to the activities.

**No measures**

One interviewee stated that their organization is purely a marketing organization and therefore no measures within sustainable tourism.

**Summary of findings (measures III)**

In this section one will present the main findings of if the interviewees have done any practical measures of sustainable tourism the last five years.

**Nature based projects**

Four of the interviewees referred to their nature based projects as practical measures of sustainable tourism the last five years.

**Locally produced food**

One stated that they have been encouraging businesses to use locally produced food.

**Economical sustainability**

One referred to their destination management organization and the fact that it had been in operation for fifteen years shows economical sustainability.

**Measures to reduce emission**

One destination manger stated that they have bought twenty two electric scooters for internal transportation on the destination. Further they have implemented "sea walks" on the fjord.

## **No measures**

Three of the interviewees stated that they haven't been doing any practical measures of sustainable tourism the last five years.

## **Whose responsibility (stakeholder I)**

In this section one will present the finding about who should have the prime responsibility for implementing sustainable tourism practices and why. Further, who should be included in the sustainable development process. Both answers are presented together as they relate to each other .

It's a difficult question. On the one side I think each business has to be responsible. Its only the businesses themselves who may take responsibility for their own development. And the economy. The barriers we talked of earlier will not disappear. But on the other side when you think of climate and environment I think someone should make a system and that we have to feel its worth it. It has to be an overall system – at least if businesses should spend time and resources on it. They need to feel that its worth the effort. It's divided I think (dm 1).

All the stakeholders in the tourism industry, both destination company, but also in the municipality and the research institutes for those who have access to such in their local community (dm 1).

It should be in the governments strategy but also towards destination level, maybe even on municipality level. At least in co-operation between municipality and destination. In order to get a more profound thinking of sustainable tourism. But at least on destination level...() The businesses cannot afford to do projects like this. Destination organizations may cooperate with the municipality. In our destination company we have always had focus on daily operation – and therefore one hasn't been able to see clearly what is important. However its important that the business managers wants sustainable tourism and that they are included in the process.

There should be a promoter of sustainable tourism – but it all depends on the businesses themselves in order to get good results (dm 2).

It has to be the businesses themselves, depends on how large the destination is, so everyone should be involved a comprehensive focus and thought around it. Sustainable tourism has so many elements in its definition... nature, culture, social, economy and environment- and therefore so many involved. It's important that the businesses themselves are included in the process and have a clear role so they will feel part of it and ownership to it. Compliance between the public and the private sector. Depends on how deep you want to go. It's a difference between rural destinations and cities. In a small town everyone will be involved (dm2).

Innovation Norway. Because it has to be on a overall and national level. They should send the responsibility down to the regions. ...() because we should promote a uniform image. And appear united and have the same competitive conditions. It should be included in the national tourism strategy yes (dm 3)

I think the municipalities, the counties, the dmo's, and tourism businesses and other stakeholders in the area should be included in the process (dm 3).

I think it's a national responsibility. If you want large changes then it's a national task, for the government or the different sections of the government. And its been done very much, i.e. physical environment – Norway is in a good position.. people don't let the sewage straight out...Enova provides funding. Regarding imposition – there hasn't been any dramatic measures yet. No demands in the transportation business either...not in bus, air or cruise. If one talk about energy reduction one should take national responsibility. Also when it comes to marketing I thin k Innovation Norway should be required to promote those destinations that are sustainable (dm 4).

Everyone. Businesses. Local politicians. Local dmos. Regional dmo's. Political administration etc (dm 4).

I think every tourism stakeholder and tourist should make sure the principles of sustainable tourism will be fulfilled (dm 5).

It's a hygiene factor and therefore its all of the stakeholders which are involved in tourism and they need to stick to the ten principles (dm 5).

Its many. Innovation Norway should be a promoter. Also I think trough NCE and Arena projects. Promote tools and make them accessible both national and regional level. Its important to get destinations and businesses started and to provide them with help. Especially businesses. And especially regarding the environment (dm 6).

Like all other destination development in Norway one should include volunteer organizations and businesses. Accommodation, attractions, other stakeholders like development companies, trekking associations etc. Vertical and horizontal integration – not only tourism businesses but also other interest. Especially those who work with nature (dm 6).

In the way we are organized I think it should be municipality, destination companies, and if we are to be successful I think the imitative should come from those with competence on it. Those who want that may arrange courses. A destination organization may be involved, municipalities, counties, guests – all of them...(). Lack of competence may be the largest barrier. Its so many stakeholders who are important in destination development...and the municipalities and counties should follow up with funding (dm 7).

Destination management organizations, tourism businesses, municipalities, counties and regional tourism management organizations (dm 7).

I think it has to come from the authorities, because each one of us are not able to do something by ourselves. But the businesses themselves may do measures that improve their revenue and a consequence of that will be that they become more motivated. But for those who cant see it in their numbers – I think the authorities must come around (dm 8).

It s the municipality, all the businesses, the local community. Our town is a good place to live and then it will be a good place to visit. I.e. attitudes toward re-cycling – it shows in the entire local community (dm 8).

The tourism industry, the destination management organization are in a common company. We have established cooperation because when you are to do implementations – it will affect many stakeholders – and we want that all of them should have an opportunity to be included and tell their opinion. Its not always the first ideas that are the best – one need interdisciplinary discussions in order to find the most efficient measurements in both- long term and short term. And that's important. After all – its their living . DMO's and the tourism industry themselves need to active and the tourism industry must not "shit in their own nest". Its their living and it should matter (dm 9).

Like the previous. For our sake here it's the entire local community with those businesses and environmental authorities there. For our sake it's the municipality, agriculture, tourism, county, etc. I think its important with a broad representation (dm 9).

### **Summary of main findings (stakeholders I)**

In this section one will present the main findings of who the interviewees think should have the prime responsibility of initiating sustainable tourism practices and why.



### **Businesses**

Two of the interviewees said that this is the businesses responsibility, to implement sustainable tourism themselves. In addition three other interviewees stated that even if the government or authorities should take the main responsibility it should come down to the businesses or the business are each responsible for their outcome.

### **Government**

Two of the interviewees specified that it should be a government strategy or authorities who take the main responsibility of initiating sustainable tourism. One of the two even stated that it's only the authorities who are able to do something and that businesses are only able to do something in regard of their revenues.

### **Innovation Norway**

Three of the interviewees said the responsibility should lie at Innovation Norway and that should include it in the national tourism strategy. One of the three specifies that Innovation Norway should have the prime responsibility of promoting those destinations who are sustainable. And one of the three specifies that Innovation Norway should promote tools available for destinations and businesses in order to become or work with sustainable tourism.

### **Interdisciplinary projects**

One interviewee said that at their destination they actually have an interdisciplinary project now working with their X fjord project and this includes all possible stakeholders such as the tourism industry, municipality, politicians, inhabitants and destination management organization.

Another interviewee responded that it should be cooperation between the municipality and the destination management organization, counties and the guests. It was also stated that the municipalities and counties should follow up with funding.

### **Summary of main findings (who should be included)**

In this section one will present the main findings of who the interviewees think should be included in the sustainable tourism development process.

#### **All stakeholders**

Seven of the nine interviewees responded that they think all stakeholders as within “normal” tourism development should be included, as destination management organizations, tourism businesses, municipalities, local communities, and some even mentioned the guests.

#### **All stakeholders but inhabitants**

Two of the nine interviewees responded all the stakeholders as above except the local community.

#### **Stakeholders**

In this section one will present the findings about attitudes regarding the different stakeholders. The questions asked were how does sustainable tourism affect the guests, the business owners, the local politicians and the inhabitants. The answers are presented together to get a total overview. The goal with these questions was to force the interviewees to talk and discuss more practical and concrete the different stakeholders within sustainable tourism.

Many guests will notice if an accommodation has some kind of certification. I think this will have a positive influence in the mind of the guest, he/she will get a good impression. Other

measures like for instance hiking trail projects will give the guest a better experience and he/she will see that we are preserving our nature. Its difficult to answer when I haven't thought about the answers...() (dm 1)

Sustainable tourism is a perspective they should have in all their work. Economical sustainability will also be of interest of the owner. On the other hand it might be short of resources and therefore everyday life may be more of a survival...()But I never heard some business regret that they got certified and I think it's all about to motivate businesses to get started... () (dm1).

I don't know. Sustainable tourism is not in their agenda is it? But it isn't only in tourism its all over...() I can't answer this one...() (dm 1).

The inhabitants..Hmm...Many of those measure's we are doing for the tourism will be beneficial for the local population as well. And in many small areas and towns a hotel is more like a "community house". I don't know...() What do you want? Are you looking for something special? It's difficult – I think the questions and answers all mix together...() (dm1).

I think it will provide them with good experiences. Especially products with local characteristics – like architecture or experiences overall. And if you connect them with environmental friendly experiences – I think the guest will have a positive impression – a better experience and the tourism industry will have a better consciousness if they provide to energy reduction...() (dm2).

I think for the tourism businesses they will be able to get improved products, more unique selling points, more culture, more consciousness...()They will get a more conscious role in a bigger picture, and hopefully it will improve their economy, the environment and everything. They will get improved products and it will affect their image and that might be good for the future...() (dm2)

I think it will give a greater consciousness around tourism and maybe they will discover “more” of the local products, the local culture, maybe they will be more involved with tourism, maybe they will feel more pride of their own area and destination. Not everywhere that the local politicians and municipality that are involved, so to get them to come to a meeting regarding sustainability, to increase their knowledge so that they will promote the products in their county. And of course because they are eco – light house certified. ...() Economy is important as well – to be economical sustainable (dm 2).

Improve the quality of life on the destination. It’s difficult to explain this. Builds on their identity, history, culture, positive for all of them to have this consciousness. Should be a good place to live and good place to visit...() that is my understanding of it. Positive in regard of local revenues but also the regarding the environment – to preserve and to focus on local values (dm 2).

I think it varies from place to place. Some get growth and some get stagnation. In the long run I think it will provide with a better image and potential to make more money but with less volume. But its not negative to have reduced volume (dm 3).

I think the businesses will get more conscious about the environment and preservation of our nature. Not only focus on volume but on quality as well...() (dm3)

Hopefully we will get a more uniform and controlled development. And that they will see tourism together with other development in the municipality, region and destination. But also as a quality control for the inhabitants (dm 3).

Consciousness. Hopefully with a long term pride but it might also lead to short term frustration and that the local inhabitants will not accept only volume growth and commercial thinking (dm 3).

I think it will give them better consciousness. It might lead to greater joy in the interaction between the locals and the guests. And maybe it will make them more happy to see that the local community is growing (dm 4).

The business owners will get more conscious about their role in the local community and it will provide them with more customers (dm 4).

The politicians – they are central..it will provide them with more knowledge... ()That is our challenge that the knowledge is missing. And its important to get a greater understanding for tourism in general (dm 4).

Good questions. It's the same. People are not very involved or have the knowledge about tourism. But maybe its good in a way so they don't interfere.... People in the tourism industry know about it. But in general more consciousness will increase the level of knowledge (dm 4).

More and more guests will appreciate sustainable tourism and most of the tourist arriving in Norway has an environmental consciousness (dm 5).

Sometimes the business owners see it as an expense. But if the operation in the businesses makes good routines it will not give more expenses. And at the same time it will give a good image which in return will give better revenue (dm 5).

I don't have an good answer to that. I don't think they are involved in sustainable tourism. And not tourism in general either. I don't think they know about the challenge (dm 5)

Sustainable tourism is so very much. Its common to think that we should leave the nature the way we found it. But sustainable tourism is so much more. If for instance tourism is a problem for the inhabitants they will get at negative attitude toward it. But its also the other way around – if the guest is no burden for the local community the local inhabitants will get more positive to tourism in general (dm 5).

Its attractive to the guests to show a responsible attitude. Regarding the products the quality will be different (dm 6).

They will have benefits working with sustainable tourism. They will save money and increase their goodwill. It should be promoted those benefits in order to motivate the businesses (dm 6).

It should be national and international guidelines. In a national and global setting. To fulfill national and international guidelines . Should be their objectives (dm 6).

Its difficult. It may be local pride. And that they will become more environmental conscious than if they weren't to work with it. Regarding the sociocultural aspect it will improve local goodwill in the tourism sector and how to include the workforce. And maybe also include the guests in tourism planning and development. Also pride around local food and other locally produced products (dm 6).

Sustainable tourism is environment. Sustainable tourism is a competitive advantage. The customers will see for themselves that its good preservation at the destination. And people care about those things. It will affect the guests in a good and positive manner. Its good to be on a holiday in such a destination. Also because the guest will feel that he/she contributes to the destination or the business in a sustainable manner and help them. An example is the test with the information leaflet in a hotel room where they stated that all the guests in this rooms history have been the best in turning off the lights and re-using their towels. New guests in the room had a great desire to act the same way! To be part of something in a larger picture means a lot to many people (dm 7).

This will be a competitive advantage in the future. Those businesses who are best practice will get the guests that means something to. I think that this is an issue and concern for richer people and they are willing to pay for it. And that in return will give positive effect, PR, image, economy, volume and more people in the future (dm 7).

Well I think it will be exciting to see. The level of knowledge is rather low I think. And knowledge about this is of great importance. But how it will affect...() I think if they have knowledge they will take the right decisions – so they don't harm the nature. To influence the politicians like that will be good (dm 7).

The inhabitants? The same as I answered regarding the politicians. From micro to macro level. To show that we preserve nature, businesses, local communities – it will be of great importance and hopefully no one perceives it as a threat to further development (dm 7).

We don't have a great deal of knowledge about this, and for those who expect sustainability they will perceive measures with appreciation. The demand for this is not very much...it's long way to go (dm 8).

Some of the businesses has it. If you look at the profitability perspective its easier to get a grip of it. But not all the businesses see the point with sustainable tourism either way (dm 8).

It's the administration in our municipality which is a leader and do some best practices. They are eco-light house certified and they encourage the businesses to do so as well. And this makes the politicians positive and encourage them to take the right decisions and think of sustainable tourism (dm 8).

I am not sure our inhabitants have a relationship with sustainable tourism. That's the kind of tourism we have but I am not sure they can see that. Its not a public subject. But the inhabitants are concerned by nature preservation though. And that's what we in the tourism industry are selling too! At least the consciousness around it (dm 8).

We have had a survey about that and it seems like our guests are conscious about the environment and that they think its good that we try to protect our nature. When it comes to number of people or people pollution – they don't have the same perception about that as for instance the local inhabitants. People on cruise or from the city are quite used to crowding and therefore they do not react. Not even when it comes to emission on days with high visitor

numbers – they don't perceive it as a problem. However the tour operators might think the cruise traffic with the large amount of guests are too crowded (dm 9).

In many cases it will provide help for the business owner, at times – better operation, better use of their resources. We will try to get many more businesses eco – light house certified. Other measure will be to try to limit number of cruise arrivals, or for instance a limited number of people per day on shore excursions – and in the long run most of the businesses will benefit from this (dm 9).

At our destination they are part of our project and because we are a UNESCO destination I think it part of the natural thinking here and common sense. They see that the project is not possible without focus on this (dm 9).

It depends... its all about what kind of measures one do...() I think the inhabitants are positive as long as one try to avoid people pollution. They react when there is people everywhere, i.e. in gardens, on private properties etc. So visitor management is important – and that kind of measure will be positive (dm 9).

## **Summary of main findings (stakeholders II)**

In this sections it will be presented the main findings perceptions of how sustainable tourism will affect the guests, the business owners, the local politicians and the inhabitants.

### **Guests**

#### **Better experiences**

Three of the nine interviewees said sustainable tourism will affect the guests in a way with better experiences. One interviewee said it will provide the guests with different quality.



**Consciousness**

Four of the nine interviewees said that it will affect the guests with better consciousness or that the guests that are coming to Norway are environmental conscious. One even specified that it is attractive to be responsible.

**Better image**

Two of the nine interviewees said it would improve the destination's image and this will affect the guests.

**More interaction**

One interviewee specified that it will improve the interaction between the local community and the guests and specified that "it may be a joy to see growth in the local community" by the guests.

**No demand from the guests**

One interviewee said that they didn't have a great deal of demand after sustainable products.

**Business Owners****Economical benefits**

Eight of the nine interviewees said that sustainable tourism may affect the business owners in a way of economical benefits in form of good revenue, potential to earn more money, save money and the better usage of resources. One of them specified that in addition to improved economy it will give larger volume.

### **Consciousness**

Three of the interviewees said that the business owners will get more consciousness.

One of the three specified it to be about preservation and another specified it as the business owners will get more conscious about their role in the local community.

### **Improved products and image**

Three of the interviewees said the business owners will get improved image, while one other said the business owners will get improved goodwill and the fourth said it will affect them to focus on quality.

### **A struggle or no knowledge**

One interviewee said that it might be hard to focus on sustainable tourism as a business owner if one struggle from day to day.

Another emphasized that not all the business owners get a grip of what is defined as sustainable tourism and what is included in that.

## **Local politicians**

### **Consciousness of tourism**

Three of the interviewees said it might lead to more consciousness about tourism, or that tourism may get integrated with other development and to have a controlled development, and further that sustainable tourism will give the politicians greater understanding for tourism in general.

**Low knowledge**

Two of the interviewees responded that the local politicians have low level of knowledge within sustainable tourism or no knowledge about it.

**Important to get knowledge**

Two of the interviewees stressed the importance to increase the level of knowledge at the local politicians regarding sustainable tourism.

**National guidelines**

One interviewee specified that there should be national and international guidelines to fulfill national/international objectives on this subject.

**Local municipality set a good example**

One interviewee specified that their local administration in their municipality showed best practice in certifying the administration within eco-light house and this affect the politicians so they got positive attitudes towards sustainable tourism.

**Interdisciplinary project**

One interviewee informed about their X fjord project which included the local politicians as well. He/she further stated that the politicians understood that sustainable tourism was a natural part of their X fjord project and that it was not possible without this focus.

**Difficult**

One interviewee said the question was too difficult and could not answer how sustainable tourism may affect the local politicians.

**Inhabitants****Improved products**

One interviewee said that tourism infrastructure as i.e. a hotel in small town also function as a meeting place for the local community and therefore it will affect the inhabitants in a good way. Another interviewee said that sustainable tourism may improve quality of life on the destination.

**Consciousness**

Three of the interviewees responded that consciousness will be an affect of sustainable tourism. One of the three specified that this consciousness will be around their own history, culture and identity. Another of the three specified that consciousness will increase the knowledge of tourism in general.

**People pollution**

Three of the interviewees said that if the development is short termed focused and on volume growth the local inhabitants will not be happy with the tourism industry at the destination. And opposite way – if it planned and on the inhabitants term and include them in the tourism planning – they will look at it positively.

**Pride**

Two of the interviewee's responded that an affect of sustainable tourism on the local inhabitants would be local and long term pride.

### **No knowledge**

One interviewee doubted if the local inhabitants had the knowledge about sustainable tourism but specified that they were concerned with nature preservation. Another interviewee also responded that the local inhabitants probably lack the knowledge but stressed the importance of achieving it.

### **Motivation & product development**

In this part one will present findings regarding motivation to implement practices of sustainable tourism. One will also present findings of what the interviewees consider as important factors in product development.

The question about the product development is to see whether they consider element of sustainability important.

The statements from the interviews are presented together while the main findings are presented separately.

Its all about getting resources to do the work. We as a destination management organization is very vulnerable of time and economy, and of course if somebody said to me – here – please have the money and staff for such a position - then we would have started today working with sustainable tourism. I have to be that hones. So easy but at the same so time so difficult (dm 1).

Our job as a destination management organization is to create attention and more people to our region. When working with product development our goal is that these new products will create attention and make people stay longer in our destination. That's our focus. And we are trying to have a long term focus when developing new products so they will last. Hopefully forever...() (dm 1).

I think its positive with the certifications we have today. That is motivation itself. Further I think financial funding, as in projects, so one may be able to conduct larger measures – as an overall theme in all the destination work. Other things would be to arrange seminars, motivation seminar for inhabitants

and businesses, to get some kick off. I think its also important to have a bottom up approach and not top down (dm 2).

Its important to have the experience in focus, but at the same time focus on econmy and to figure out the demand in the market and sustainability. Focus on all three aspects at the – like in sustainable tourism – then it will good products (dm 2).

I think an incentive would be to have access to the right customers. Because that will stimulate the businesses and the local community and it might provide economical benefits in it and than sustainable tourism is just not a “buzz” word. The fact that the customers are interested in sustainable tourism. But I think it should be appointed in national plans first an overall, then it has to be moved into the regions and down to a destination level. It has to be a top-down approach and not bottop up, that would be too fragmented (dm 3).

When it comes to product development I mentioned our X fjord project. And there we have focus on local suppliers, local workforce, local food, local culture, our characteristics. Det real genuine around us... () (dm 3).

Its tempting to answer money. This because it demands work time or resources. In addition to that it has to be overall guidelines. That one are doing it as part of a larger system and on a national scale and not for fun (dm 4).

Regarding product development we focus on security, profit, uniqness. Not necessarily sustainable other than with focus on the profit and that one should stick to the laws and regulations. Should also be something that is wanted by the inhabitants and local tourism businesses? I.e. the physical affect on the environment is not explicit but implicit in order to stick to laws and regulations. Its not definitive ifs environmental friendly or not (dm 4)

Every stakeholder should take responsibility for this. Not a purpose for the destination to push this. However if we receive a feedback that some of our businesses are not sustainable – then we should be the ones that tell them and recommend them to implement sustainable tourism (dm 5).

We have focus on profit! But if there is activities in the nature – “one shall leave it like one found “ (dm 5).

One don't need more incentives to work with sustainable tourism. It 's all about information and to get the information out to the industry. That is the most important incentive. To show the benefits. Either in businesses or at destination level. The last is more to show what sort of benefits there are with sustainable tourism and to motivate . Create a tool package to show what is the benefits and make this easily accessible (dm 6)

Like always, to find the resources at the local destination and to match those with targeted segments. More to optimize profitability. To benefit from the resources. To add products to the offers already at the destination in order to become more attractive. Economy – to attract those target groups one wish for. Volume or not (dm 6).

First of all I think its important with knowledge. As long as one don't know for sure how to define sustainable tourism it might mean trouble. Like for instance we cannot have more cruise ships here. And I think there are many out there that thinks sustainable tourism means the same thing as prohibition. I think knowledge will motivate most and best. To show best practices - what it has meant for the destinations and businesses where they have succeeded with sustainable tourism. Will have a positive effect - both at the politicians, local community, PR, on volume and guests...() To show potential – what's in it? The possibilities and opportunities this will give us (dm 7).

Regarding product development its been said that all the products in our county should be developed in a sustainable way. In our tourism strategy for the county we have defined sustainable tourism too vague. I don't know their absolute definition of this...(). When I think of sustainable tourism I think of profit and to me sustainable tourism is all year business og profitability. Then you have all the other factors like pollution, climate etc (dm ).

A good action plan on the national level but also politicians who take responsibility for this. A recepie. A short note because I don't know what is the outcome from the projects in Innovation Norway and the four pilot destinations. It's the rights thing to do and we will have to see the benefits from that work (dm 8).

It depends on type and its all in our overall strategy. We have sustainability as one of our four strategies. So for us and the future development this is very important (dm 8).

What motivates us and encourages us is that we would very much like to show the rest of the country that even a destination like ours, a tourism icon, with a large cruise industry and cars and traffic at our roads here, and with visitors between five hundred thousand to seven hundred thousand in a summer; it's possible to focus on sustainable development! And by showing this via new technology, to be innovative, to expand the season, and even if we have to reduce visitors in the main season we will be able to make more money, and develop other types of tourism products that are more environmental friendly than those today (dm 9).

We are trying in a way, for instance towards cruise to set demands, that they will use at least one environmental friendly product. And to reduce transportation. And if they choose transportation it should be with renewable energy and that one promote hiking, cycling, kayak, and similar. At the same time try to develop or at least have the most environmental friendly engines (dm 9).

### **Summary of main findings (motivation)**

#### **Financial funding**

Three of the interviewees responded that they would be motivated by getting additional resources as working with sustainable tourism practices requires time and staff. One of the three specified financial funding as into projects.

#### **Information seminars**

Two of the interviewees said that they think information seminar would be good in order to motivate and inform businesses and inhabitants. Also to show the benefits of sustainable tourism by for instance creating a tool package. A third interviewee stated knowledge would be a great motivator as it's difficult to define sustainable tourism and to find common ground on this.



### **National plan**

Two of the interviewees said that they would like overall guidelines from a national level or an action plan where for instance the politicians take their responsibility on this issue.

### **Responsibility themselves**

One interviewee said that the businesses themselves should take responsibility of implementing sustainable tourism practices.

### **Best practices**

Two of the interviewees said that best practices would motivate them to implement more practices of sustainable tourism. One of the two referred to the national pilot work being done in Lærdal and wants this to be a showcase for the rest of the county, while the other wants to show the world by doing best practices at their destination. He/she wants to show that it's possible to implement sustainable tourism even though if the volume of tourist is high. He/she further responded that this should be done with environmental friendly transportation, technology and innovative tools.

### **Summary of main findings (product development)**

Here one will present the main findings of what the interviewees consider as important factor in product development.

#### **Quality**

Three of the interviewees points out the importance of quality and focus on the experience. Further that the products should make the guests stay longer.

**Attractiveness**

Three of the interviewees focused on the attractiveness and that the product development should improve their attractiveness.

**Profit**

Four of the interviewees pointed out the importance of profit when doing product development. One of the three even responded that hers/his definition of sustainable tourism was synonymous with profit.

**Social, environmental and economical sustainability**

Three of the interviewees mentioned the three element of sustainable tourism in addition to other important factors. One of the three stressed that if they planned activities in the nature they should “leave the nature as they found it”. A second of the three emphasized the importance to use local suppliers, local workforce, local culture etc.

**Criteria**

One interviewee responded that at their destination they are setting criteria toward the cruise-operators, that they should use at least one environmental friendly product. The same destination manger stressed the importance with environmental friendly transportation at their destination with for instance renewable energy.

**Future planning**

This section will present the findings regarding if the interviewees are including sustainable tourism in their future planning. This will indicate how important they find sustainable tourism. The question asked were how sustainable tourism will be part of your destination planning in the future.

We didn't make a plan of this. But we will focus on it. As I said we are represented in the group that is working with sustainable tourism on county level and we will continue with this. I guess there will be a pressure from the county, the municipality and our board and members to try to achieve the Brand (footnote) from innovation Norway. The progress and speed in this will depend on time and resources available (dm 1)

In many ways its part of the destination planning now, and we have the tourism strategy on the county level which includes sustainable tourism and the same way on the local level. We are very aware of this and we would like to show practical cases. So that we get a sustainable destination (dm 2)

It should be a natural part of the destination planning and something that we shouldn't need speaking of. An implisitt part of what we are doing. This is how we do it here in Norway... Our customers perceive us as "natural green", responsible and sustainable. That is also why we haven't used it actively in our marketing. Our guests feels it anyway. We don't have to excaruage. I hope it will be a natural part of our everyday work (dm 3)

It depends on what choice Norway as a nation will do. Two reasons today that we have sustainable tourism and the three aspects of sustainable tourism – is already part of the thinking in the tourism industry – and very much so, not everyshere. And the other side – like marketing – its no tour operator that asks for green products - they will find those products they find amusing. It might be tour operators who market fjords and sustainable tourism but they will find those areas with sustainable aspects no matter what. I.e. hiking tourism. The tour operators may find hotels as corner stone businesses in the local community, and hiking tourism is not destructive, they will find farms which offers locally produced food and drinks, shops, museums which tell their story to the local community, they will get close to the local population and get a real taste of the X fjord area, the local businesses which are not McDonald. Its real and genuine with no foreign investors or owners which may milk the local community (dm 4).

Sustainable tourism has been part of our everyday work life as long as I can remember and it will be in the future as well (dm 5).

The profitability perspective is main focus but I think the ten principles of sustainable tourism has reached the same level now. Everyone should have a plan for sustainable tourism XXX Also for the overseas markets sustainable tourism is not on the top of their list (dm 6)

But what is sustainable tourism really? I have a hard time defining that...()Back to what has been done in Lærdal- we have people that have knowledge about this. And we have our university college and research institute as well – so we should be able to do this better than most (dm 7).

Yes – its already part of the plan. Like measures of hiking and cycle trails, more use of public transportation, bio fuel etc (dm 8).

All the planning should have sustainability as the core. We would like to inform all our touroperators and we would like to turn to those segments. Its beginning to be more or less demand from the operators now to include sustainability and plan green packages. We will choose our co-operators from this. At the same time we are now in the process with a new brand where sustainability will be a central point. This has to do with the UNESCO and the fact that our destination is part of it. They are required to evaluate every five years. And we are also co-operating with Great Barrier Reef because of the UNESCO co-operation...() dm 9

## **Summary of main findings**

In this section one will present the main findings of how sustainable tourism will be part of their destination planning in the future.

### **Included today**

Six of the interviewees responded that sustainable tourism is included in their strategy of today. One emphasized that they would like to become a showcase of sustainable practices. Another emphasized that they are doing measures like hiking trails, cycling trails, encouraging using bio-fuel etc. One destination manager stressed that this have always been included and will always be included in their work while another destination manager said

that they will no start to demand this from their co-operators and tour –operators that they are working with sustainable tourism. The same manger informed that they are now building a new brand at their destination where sustainable tourism is a part it.

### **Not included**

One destination manager said they had no plans at the moment but maybe they will be implementing the Brand from Innovation Norway regarding sustainable tourism. However the same manager stressed that they have a representative on the county level working with sustainable tourism issues from the county strategy. A second destination manager said it will depend on what choice Norway as a nation will do. A third of the interviewees answered the question by asking what the definition of sustainable tourism is. However this last manager referred to the national pilot program and said they should be learning from those cases since they have one within their destination management organization.

### **How to approach sustainable tourism to get a successful outcome**

Here one will present the findings of the destination mangers view on how tourism mangers should approach sustainable tourism to get a successful outcome.

Good questions. You should give the answer on that – you know! I would like to know. At least it's about including. To get as many as possible included. Good information and great guidance and good help and best practice. Exchange experiences. Things like that (dm 1).

It has to be implemented in all the strategy work you are doing and you will have to communicate to all the stakeholders in tourism so they will perceive it as a good thing. Not only to get everyone along but I think its important to get people included. Its important to work with them and see what we may do together...() (dm2)

I think one should be conscious about it. That we should focus on this in our product development. To us that is important, i.e. the work we are doing in NCE tourism (dm 3)

Managers, networking and coordinated effort. By that I mean that if a manager does something by himself, alone in a fjord area - it will not affect the tourism industry in Norway. So if one wish to make changes it should be on a national level. It has to include commitment, something tempting and something that will be perceived as something positive (dm 4).

I think everyone should focus on the ten principles of sustainable tourism defined by Innovation Norway (dm 5)

Back to what I said; collect information – how the businesses can act sustainable. Promote and show what the benefits for the businesses will be. Integrate sustainable tourism in all plans (dm 6).

I think the first thing one should to is to get knowledge. Present it in a way so it means possibilities. I think that should be the strategy from the government as well and "Fjord Norway". And that we should learn from each other. I think there is a great deal of willingness to do sustainable practices as long as we know what to do (dm 7).

One has to put it on the agenda and include in the planning. Further to try to influence the stakeholders, and support projects regarding this and just be a motivator for others (dm 8).

I think – it depends on whats the challenge. Its different challenges around at the destinations some think they have too little traffic and they focus on getting more volume and profit in their area. However – I think one should include sustainable tourism from day one, long term, what should the destination be like in five to ten years, how to stimulate the local community (dm 9).

### **Summary of main findings**

Here one will present the main findings of what the interviewees think of how one should approach sustainable tourism to get a successful outcome.

**Information**

Four of the interviewees said that destination managers should provide with good information, guidance and help. Further some of the four specified the importance to provide with knowledge and to promote and show benefits to the businesses. One should also try to be a motivator for others.

**Inclusion**

Two of the interviewees stressed the importance of including all the stakeholders in a sustainable tourism process.

**Principles from Innovation Norway**

One stressed the importance of focusing on the ten principles of sustainable tourism defined by Innovation Norway.

**Inclusion of sustainable tourism**

Three interviewees stressed the importance of including sustainable tourism in the tourism development from day one and in the long term planning. One of the two specified that it should be included in all product development and referred to their work with Norwegian Centre of Expertise Tourism "Fjord Norway".

**National level**

One interviewee specifies that one should do this on a national level otherwise it will not be of any effect in the Norwegian tourism industry. And this should include commitment and be something tempting and positive.

### **Most important aspect**

Here one will present the findings of what the interviewees considered as the most important aspect of sustainable tourism. This question came in the end of the interview but will be discussed together with the definition of sustainable tourism in the discussion section. However one chose to ask this in the end because one would see if the definition or understanding of sustainable tourism had changed during the interview.

Aspect? I don't know if I can answer that. My definition is mainly two folded; environment and economy. And one can't manage without neither. So to rule out one of them will be wrong (dm 1) .

Aspect? Oh this is really difficult! To preserve the nature, culture and environment – but all of it is important. Economy is the most important factor because if its not economical sustainable they will not even be in business. That part is very important... () But its also important to protect and preserve local and special products. And this we haven't been good at for a period of time. We, the people in Norway have the beautiful nature, empowered by nature, but that is not enough! Well – this is difficult – it all blends together (dm 2)

The most important aspect is ...()... the real and genuine experience in nature together with local revenue (dm 3)

Aspect – good question. Depends on where you are in the world. If reductions in the local community, pollution and the community get destroyed- if locally there is no profit associated – it will not work. Regarding pollution, both visual and by sound – its fairly good regulated by Norwegian law. The third aspect regarding local community and tourism contribution - that is probably the biggest challenge today – given the fact that it is beneficial (dm 4)

The most important aspect is that the result is a good cooperation between the travelers, the local community and the tourism businesses (dm 5).

Aspect is divided into three categories like the definition; regarding the environment is important to preserve the nature . Regarding the socio cultural aspect it's important to keep up the goodwill. It's not



always that the entire local community is pro tourism. And regarding the economical aspect it's important to contribute to the global trade and have systems for buying (dm 6).

Regarding aspect I think economical sustainability and profit is the most important (dm 7).

That's a dilemma - hm...() Environment is probably the most important aspect...But economical sustainability is also important. Especially for us in the local communities. But then again as long as sky diving is part of our destination and image we will continue doing this – even if the plane means pollution. So even if the plane use fossil fuel – but now its possible with plane types with less noise, less fosil fuel even if the plane uses a lot fossil fuel. In addition we got this wind simulator which is a energy reducing measure and this way people don't need to go by planes and do the real sky diving (dm 8).

Hmm. .. I think the most important aspect is that the profit and money should be kept in the local community. Further that the development in the local community should be on the locals premises and that the stakeholders in the area should be locals, not external businesses that comes into the community and take the profit (dm 9)

## **Summary of findings**

Here one will present a summary of the main findings around the question of what the interviewees think of as the most important aspect of sustainable tourism.

### **Economical aspect**

Eight of the nine interviewees stated the economical aspect as the most important in sustainable tourism. However only one of the eight responded the economical aspect as the only important aspect.

Seven of the interviewees stated other aspects such as environment and socio cultural aspects as important as well. Many emphasized how difficult it was to stress only one aspect and many underlined the fact that it is impossible to rule out one or the other.

## Co- operation

One interviewee stated that the most important aspect in sustainable tourism is the co-operation between tourists, local community and tourism businesses. The economical aspects

## Sustainable tourism and marketing

In this section one will present the findings of how the interviewees think sustainable tourism should be marketed.

Marketing – what do you have in mind? A theme? Or businesses or destinations that have been working with that? Or certifications? I think when we are speaking of destination level and one have for instance achieved that Brand (from Innovation Norway), then it should show in most of our marketing materials. Most of it is on web now. Probably the most important is to show it there. I haven't really thought about it...() But there are many that know that Lærdal have been working with it...()And most of the people also know that Lærdal have achieved the Brand from Innovation Norway. But maybe it will be more difficult when many more have achieved the brand – then maybe it will not be so attractive Important to build a famous brand. Something that will give some extra positive feelings to the destination(dm 1).

Should be a natural thing...() sustainable tourism should be included as a foundation.

Marketing?Hmmm...() you may use a label, like a common certification which shows that this product is part of this brand. Or you may have different. Has to be a brand hooked to this, has to be something extra...() or else there will be no effect. Maybe some sort of quality proof? And you may do it via social media, blogging should be important. Have to have something to associate this with...(dm 2)

I am not sure its necessary that each destination market themselves with as a sustainable tourism destination. Rather is should be a national marketing task or image and brand building of our country and regions and regional destination organizations. ...() Not necessarily what should be first in all our brochures for smaller destinations (dm 3).

It's a difficult question. I.e Africa - they way they market it with lodging in the bush and that the owners spend some of their surplus to develop the local community. That's one way. Another way is carbon neutral and least possible emissions. I.e. Africa example in Norway – it wouldn't work because we don't

hire poor people. But its activities in a larger system like employer tax which contributes to the development of Norwegian communities (dm 4).

Marketing to more and different stakeholders and customers. And I think Innovation Norway should have a training program for general businesses and tourism businesses. This should be the responsibility of Innovation Norway.. On the other hand is the guest- and the industry shall do marketing to. Maybe it should be a stamp or brand (as approval) for those that are into sustainable tourism, like for instance Svanemerke (dm 5).

Regarding marketing one should show what measures are done. Market the grass logo from Innovation Norway – to show who are working with sustainable tourism. And then what is special at our destination compare to our competitors. And what is the objective of the destination. For instance Werfenveng go all the way with a concept really deep. But when it comes to branding with certifications it will not be so attractive when many more businesses will achieve them (dm 6)

I think that if you expect development in the market – you need a classification system. Need measurement and units that are measurable, profit, all year tourism. And easy access to knowledge. Divide it on different levels. And make the guest be part of something big or just something (dm 7).

We have been very conscious about this – we don't tell the world about our sustainable work. I find that a little bit scary. I think the day we can document that we are sustainable. I don't think Norway is good at this. Especially on the environmental side. And we should be careful to tell the world about it as long as we don't have any measuring (dm 8).

I am a little worried that it should be too much of a "buzz" word without any meaning and that its more trendy without any content. Innovation Norway has those pilot destinations and they are going to market them, and they get measured in criteria and they are being promoted. This might be a solution – we don't know the content of that "branding" yet and maybe this ought to be discussed in a public debate. My advice anyway is that all the destinations should consider what they want with their tourism development and that they should consider and include sustainability in their plans. To correct for mistakes afterwards is worse... (dm 9).

### **Summary of main findings (marketing)**

In this section one will present the main findings of how the interviewees thought sustainable tourism should be marketed.

#### **The “Brand” from Innovation Norway**

Four of the interviewees refers to the “Brand” from Innovation Norway and the national pilots and the work they have been doing in order to achieve their “Brand” as a sustainable pilot .

#### **Quality proof/logo**

Four of the interviewees responded that some sort of quality proof would be a way to market sustainable tourism like for instance the way one has logos for eco certifications. One of them mentioned the “Grass” logo from Innovation Norway

#### **No marketing of sustainability**

One interviewee specified that it seemed too scary to market oneself as a sustainable destination especially as long as there exists no system of measurement.

#### **Experience**

In this section one will present the findings of how many years the interviewees had been working with sustainable tourism.

I have been working with this as long as my career in tourism, about 1,5 year. It’s not been the main focus but its been there as an underlying factor all the time (dm 1)

Also a difficult question....() We have been working with local product development for a long time with an emphasize on sustainable tourism. But the consciousness has come the last five years. So I have been working with it all the time but maybe not focused on all the principles all the time (dm 2).

We haven't defined that we are working with sustainable tourism but it's the way we have chosen to work, our fjord project - so if I count that it will be around five years (dm 3)

I don't know in years. I may answer short or long time – it's a question of definition, I am not sure what to say...()I think that on the one side the way we define sustainable tourism is part of Norwegian tourism but on the other side, on the formal side, we haven't done any measures and projects that are called sustainable tourism. So the answer is nine or ten years (dm 4)

Always! As long I as been working (dm 5)

I have been working with this since 2006/2007 when we started with a project about sustainable tourism (dm 6).

0 years really (dm 7).

I don't know how long I have been working with this, but I have had a conscious attitude to it the last ten years (dm 8).

Its hard to say – I have had sustainable focus all the time because of my background.

But its after 2005 when we got the UNESCO status it has been put on the agenda. This has given us the funding to work with issues within this and our local X project started in 2009 (dm 9).

## **Summary of findings**

### **1-10 years or more**

Eight of the nine interviewees have experience of 1,5 year to 10 years of experience working with sustainable tourism. Two of the stated they haven't been working with it but have had a consciousness about it though. Several commented it was difficult to answer. Two defined experience as how long they had been working with concrete projects.

### **0 years**

One interviewee stated no experience working with sustainable tourism.

## **Discussion**

### **Definition of sustainable tourism**

According to Inskip (1998, p.19) “sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems”.

According to Lozano, Blancas, Gonzales & Caballero (2011, p.659) sustainable tourism is “not a specific form of tourism but more an approach that can be used to make all types of tourism more environmentally, socially and economically beneficial”.

Hobson & Essex (2001, p.140) states that in regard of the understanding of the concept and the term “sustainable development”, no operator interpreted the term in its environmental context”. Further, 28 percent had no understanding of the term and the largest group of responses (36 percent) found the term synonymous with the maintain ace of the customer base. But on the other side they point out the fact that it is not so important for the businesses to define the terminology than the general attitudes of sustainable tourism. And the survey showed “a strong awareness of the importance of the environmental resource base to the tourism industry (Hobson & Essex, 2001, p.140)

Goodall’s study (1997, cited in Hobson & Essex, 2001) of the hospitality sector on Guernsey amply demonstrated the disposition of businesses to sustainable tourist; “Hoteliers possessed a general knowledge of environmental problems but had limited or no understanding of tourism-environmental interactions. Only 18 percent of the respondents were aware of, and could explain “sustainable tourism”

In this research one interviewee thinks of sustainable tourism as climate and environment, economy and profit and long term thinking. Seven out of the nine interviewees mentioned the three folded definition of sustainable tourism including environment, people or socio – cultural sustainability, and economical sustainability/profit. Three of them stressed the importance of interaction between these three factors.

One interviewee emphasize that there is a two folded definition of sustainable tourism today; on the one side there is the socio-cultural, environmental and economical factors while on the other side there is the “new sustainable tourism”. This “new sustainable tourism” means a larger environmental global responsibility. One interviewee defines sustainable tourism as managing the resources but at the same time make money. The same interviewee commented that he/she didn’t have a decent definition.

These results show the level of knowledge regarding the definition of three main categories in sustainable tourism seems to be high among the destination managers. Thus it seems like the destination managers almost have a common ground of the definition. This is also different compared to what Hobson & Essex (2001) found in their study where there were no such understandings of how to define sustainable tourism. On the other hand how do they define sustainable tourism when asked about the practical measures? The findings show that four of the nine interviewees said they were currently working on a nature based project .Either fjord, hiking trail or other similar projects and this was at destination level. This shows that almost fifty percent of the interviewees consider sustainable tourism as nature based tourism projects and are currently working on the destination level.

Two of the nine interviewees said they were not doing anything at destination level, and that work within sustainable tourism are kept on business level with for instance different eco – certifications. These findings show that it’s a discussion of levels when one define sustainable tourism and the most comprehensive definition and measure on business level seems to be

certifications. One interviewee said they had attended to courses held by Innovation Norway as a measure at destination level, but specified that it's the businesses responsibility to be updated on this.

One interviewee said they weren't doing anything at destination level, and referred to Laerdal as one of the national pilot destinations in Innovation Norway's sustainable tourism program.

Another interviewee misunderstood the question. However he/she also referred to Laerdal at one of the national pilot destinations in Innovation Norway's sustainable tourism program.

Since two of the interviewees referred to the national pilot program within sustainable tourism it shows that best practice and promotion of that may do some influence in the industry.

Further the interviewees answered almost the same on the next question regarding what they consider as measures of sustainable tourism at destination level. However on this question three of them referred to nature bases projects while three of them mentioned measures of knowledge. Thus it seems like it's important for the destination managers to get knowledge about the subject, and to be disposed for available tools and "how to do" sustainable tourism measures. Also the fact that one of the destination mangers refers to the work they are doing in Norwegian Centre of Expertise Tourism Fjord Norway shows the awareness of sustainability. Another different aspect compared to the first measure questions was that one of the interviewees responded that a measure on destination level would be what they are doing, hence they don't offer motorized activities with the exception if the tourists need to get transported to the starting point of their activities. I.e. parachute jumping.

On the last question in the measure section they were to answer what practical measures they have done the last five years. As mentioned earlier nature based projects came high on the list with four of the interviewees answering that. But different measures from question one and two were that one stated that they have been encouraging businesses to use locally produced



food, and one referred to their destination management organization and the fact that they had been in operation for fifteen years showed their economical sustainability. And last one mentioned that they had bought twenty two electrical scooters to reduce emission on their destination. This shows that locally produced food, measures of increasing knowledge, certifications, economical sustainability, concrete measures to reduce emission and nature based projects are all part of their definition of sustainable tourism.

Comparing these elements with the theory presented earlier this shows that sustainable tourism is persevering cultural heritage, maintaining traditional values and providing authentic experiences for tourists (Liu, 2010).

Further one asked the destination managers of what they considered as the most important aspect of sustainable tourism, thus to see what they felt should be the core value of sustainable tourism. One may argue that this question was wrong because the fact that sustainable tourism includes several aspects, at least the three main aspects of environmental, economical and social sustainability. On the other side this was done to force them prioritize and thus see what their first and foremost value is in sustainable tourism.

Eight of the nine interviewees stated the economical aspect as the most important in sustainable tourism. However only one of the eight responded the economical aspect as the only important aspect. Seven of the interviewees stated other aspects such as environment and socio cultural aspects as important as well. Many emphasized how difficult it was to stress only one aspect and many underlined the fact that it is impossible to rule out one or the other.

This shows that the destination managers prioritize economical and environmental sustainability almost at the same level, with the economical aspect in the lead. How does this affect their definition of sustainable tourism? Does it necessarily have an effect? One may conclude this section of the destination manager's perception of sustainable tourism in way

that they see the economical aspect as the most important but not in isolation from the environmental aspect. Giving examples of environmental measures as reducing emission, nature based projects and visitor management, certifications and emphasize on locally produced food they define sustainable tourism in a way with all the elements of theoretical definitions. At the same time they express the importance of being in business, and run the operational in an economical manner will be the leading star for all sustainable tourism.

Or Butlers (1999) definition of sustainable tourism “tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such scale that it remains viable over an infinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well being of other activities and processes “

### **Benefits of sustainable tourism**

In the research of Hobson & Essex (2001, p.142) of accommodation businesses in Plymouth results showed “that perceived benefits were related to non-economic factors”. “Further about 69% recognized the contribution to environmental protection, while 50% referred to the potential improvements in customer perceptions. 42% saw the benefits of expenders’ savings, 42% recognized the improved image, 43% improved business prospects and only 20% recognized the generation of new clientele and markets.

Bramwell & Alletorp (2001, p. 101) found that some of the “benefits identified with sustainable tourism was marketing advantage and cost savings”. In the findings of this research two of the nine interviewees said it would improve the destinations image and this will affect the guests in a positive way. Further, as with cost savings one stated that economical sustainability is an assumption. Another stated that benefits will be growth and

money into the local community. A third stated that one benefit of sustainable tourism is efficient operation and that the businesses save money.

Bramwell & Alletorp (2001, p.96) found “that 20 of the 47 respondents identified increasing customer awareness of environmental issues and the emergence of green consumerism as a main incentive behind the adoption of sustainable practices. The next most frequently mentioned incentives were the potential cost savings to business and also the ethical beliefs of people in tourism organizations”. In this research one found nothing like Bramwell & Alletorp regarding that the destination managers mentioning customer awareness as a benefit. However the research showed similar results with the fact of cost savings. That was perceived as a benefit. But over fifty percent or five of the nine interviewees stated the long term perspective in something that matters. They talk about products and destinations should last forever, that one will have a more long term thinking, long term perspective and planning for a long term. Five of the nine interviewees also include local community on their benefit list, but in different views though. They see it as a benefit to offer genuine and real products in the local community or as part of the local community. Further it's stated that if the local community flourish it will be good. Another state that the attitudes towards tourism in the local community will not be good if the type of tourism is not proper. Another points out that some socio cultural benefits will be to allocate the workforce. The last interviewees state that one benefit is to give to the local community. One states that economical sustainability is an assumption. Another state that benefits will be growth and money into the local community. A third states that one benefit of sustainable tourism is efficient operation and that the businesses save money. Four of the interviewees state something aspect around the environment being a benefit. One responds that it's crucial to focus on preserving the nature, and another states that it's a benefit to minimize damage on the planet. Other state that the importance of preservation of products and not to wear out your resources.

Two of the interviewees mentioned politics particularly. One stated that a benefit of sustainable tourism will be to accommodate national regulations and policies. . Two of the interviewees mentioned that a benefit will contribute to more consciousness and one specifically stated pride. Four of the interviewees stated that some of the benefits will be destination development, product development in a long term and high quality on the products.

This research has therefore revealed that the destination managers perceive the long term perspective with long lasting products and destinations as a benefit; they perceive economical benefits both in the local community but also as cost savings for the businesses. Further they also perceive it as a benefit to focus on preservation of the nature, high quality on the products and destination development as benefits, and last but not least, sustainable tourism will contribute to pride and consciousness.

### **Barriers of sustainable tourism**

Hobson & Essex (2001, p.142) found in their research of accommodation businesses in Plymouth: “the most common responses highlighted the importance of interest, time and cost as barriers to implementation”. Further, two thirds of respondents stated that they did not have the time or energy to spend in the introduction of such practices, with 59% per cent stressing their concerns over initial financial costs. Staff and customer opposition together with external restrictions were not significant issues.

The findings in this research show similar results as the research of Hobson & Essex. The destination managers pointed out how difficult it is to have a long term planning perspective when focus is on daily operation and often a struggle of how to survive. Regarding economical factors one stated that its expensive to implement sustainable tourism.

Another mentioned that is hard to balance between preservation and economical growth. A third mentioned that the tourism industry should be aware of volume growth may be a barrier and that one should be careful so the tourism industry don't "strangle themselves".

Findings in the research of Bramwell & Alletorp (2001, p.101) suggest that the industry concern is the high investment costs that may be involved in introducing sustainable tourism measures and also about perceived constraints on the industry's ability of fund the necessary investment owing to its unfavorable tax position. This correlates to the findings in this research where one interviewer mentioned that sustainable tourism is expensive to implement.

Another mentioned that is hard to balance between preservation and economical growth.

Another barrier , is according to Hobson & Essex (2001, p.134)"the highly fragmented nature of the tourism industry, involving accommodation, transportation, destinations, attractions as well as the public sector, as a barrier to the common interpretation and widespread acceptance and adoption of the concepts of sustainability.

In this research one chose only to look at the attitudes of the destination managers, hence therefore only that perceptive. However the difficulty to talk about sustainable tourism in a common defined way was absolutely there. Many of the interviewees stated during the interview "oh – this is difficult", "I don't know how to define, " I don't know how to answer". Or they responded "it all depends on what level you are talking about, business level or designation level". This is common to bring into the discussions about sustainable tourism as it all depends on what level one are talking about.

However this research showed that the main barriers perceived from the destination managers are some of the same aspects as they perceive as benefits. First it's the long term perspective in a busy everyday life that might be a challenge .Further, it's the definition of sustainable tourism – how to define it and how to communicate the benefits of it. This relates back to the question regarding definition of sustainable tourism and the theory were Butler & Wheeler

(1993) argues that there is so many interpretations of the term and that all of them are appropriate or accepted. Further this research shows that economical factors in order to implement sustainable practices are seen as barriers and demanding and bureaucratic certifications are seen as barriers.

### **Sustainable tourism on an operational level**

In the research of Hobson & Essex (2001, p.141) regarding the case in Plymouth they found that the adoption of sustainable practices within the accommodation sector could not be assumed despite some favorable and sympathetic attitudes. Hence, the reduction of energy consumption was the most widely integrated activity (86 percent) even though the motivation were more cost-cutting rather than environmental protection. According to Hobson & Essex (2001, p. 141) “other popular sustainable practices adopted by the businesses were buying food from local suppliers (75%), using low energy light bulbs (67%), encouraging the use of public transport (59%), buying recycled products (52%) and recycling glass (52%). On the other side: “the least popular activities were donating to environmental groups, buying organic produce, monitoring waste production and eliminating the use of disposable packaging” (Hobson & Essex, 2001, p. 141).

According to Butler (1999, p.20) there is a “disturbing tendency, in the desire to promote sustainable tourism, to claim that any small -scale , environmentally or culturally focused form of tourism is sustainable, particularly where it is developed by or for local residents”.

In the findings of this research some of the interviewees stated that some of their practical implementations of sustainable tourism the last five years were to promote locally produced food and encourage the businesses to use that. If one look at Butlers statement, is this then wrong? Do the interviewees consider themselves more “sustainable” than they are?

The Western Norway Research Institute have in their note from 2011 (Ekstrøm, Engeset & Brandshaug, p.14, my translation) concluded that even though their sample was too small and therefore probably not representative, their project showed that for businesses the easiest and most concrete things to do is the eco-certifications. Two of the interviewees in this research also responded that certification is the most important measure to do.

Note the discussion of measures in this research under the section above called “definition of sustainable tourism”.

### **Stakeholders part I**

In this part I of the section stakeholders one will discuss who should have the prime responsibility of initiating sustainable tourism practices and why. In addition who should be included in the sustainable tourism development process?

Butler (1999, p.20) states “that if the public sector is not willing to educate and if necessary, enforce sustainable policies and actions of, then few are unlikely to follow them”.

In the findings of who is responsible for initiating sustainable tourism four of the interviewees stated authorities on a national level, two specified that the government should have the responsibility and two specified that it should be Innovation Norway. This relates to Butlers statement of the responsibility of the public sector to educate and enforce sustainable policies and actions.

Butler (1999, p 20) states “that if local residents cannot see the short-term as well as long-term benefits, to themselves of sustainable policies, they will subvert or ignore them “.

According to the findings under benefits some of the sub categories which came up were the long term perspective and the benefits for the local community. Some of the interviewees stated that the local residents would be positive to tourism as long as it was some sort of

“proper” tourism. Further, five of the nine interviewees responded that the long term perceptive is a benefit.

Butler (1999, p.20) states that “if the tourists themselves do not enjoy anticipate satisfaction sustainable forms of tourism, they will not participate and not visit destinations geared to offer this type of tourism”.

Bramwell & Alletorp (2001, p. 100) did a research on attitudes in the Danish Tourism Industry to the roles of business and government in sustainable tourism. They concluded “that the senior managers in the Danish tourist industry considered that the prime responsibility rests with the industry or else with the industry working alongside the government”.

In this research one found that four of the interviewee wanted the responsibility on the national level while two appointed it to the businesses. In addition three other interviewees stated that even if the government or authorities should take the main responsibility it should come down to the businesses or the business are each responsible for their outcome.

This result is therefore similar to what Bramwell & Alletorp (2001) found in their research.

Forsyth (1995,1996, 1997, cited in Bramwell & Alletorp, 2001, p.100) “examined the attitudes in the tourism industry to who should be responsible for implementing sustainable tourism .The result was that as many as 63,8% considered that responsibility lies with government, 30,4% with tourism operators and also host governments, and only 5,8% with tourism operators (including trade associations)”.

However, in this research one found the same tendency with seven of the nine interviewees who considered the main responsibility should lie at the national level; government or Innovation Norway. On the other hand, this research also revealed that the destination



mangers specified that the businesses themselves were responsible for their own outcome and thus also sustainability.

One of the measures in this research that almost showed consensus was on the question on who should be included in the sustainable tourism process. Seven of the nine interviewees responded that they think all stakeholders as within “normal” tourism development should be included, as destination management organizations, tourism businesses, municipalities, local communities, and some even mentioned the guests. Two of the nine interviewees responded all the stakeholders as above except the local community. This shows a good understanding for whom to include in the sustainable tourism development process and that the destination managers find this important. It should also be noted that one of the destination managers responded on the question of the most important aspect in sustainable tourism – he/she said that this is co-operation between the stakeholders.

### **Stakeholders part II**

In this sections called stakeholders II, it will be discussed the main findings regarding perceptions of how sustainable tourism will affect the guests, the business owners, the local politicians and the inhabitants.

According to Budeanu (2007, p. 501)...() “half of Dutch and German tourists expect their destination to have good environmental quality....”(). Further, (CREM, 2000, cited in Budeanu, 2007, p.501) “inquiries over tourists willingness to pay for environmental protection and the well –being of local communities show Dutch tourists to be uninterested, but (Martin, 2001, cited in Budeanu, 2007, p.501) points out that “over 80% of British tourists being willing to pay up to 3% of the value of their holiday....()for environmental quality in their holiday. Budeanu (2007, p.502) also states that “despite optimistic views generated by studies of tourist preferences, research indicates that while 70 – 80% of tourists state their

high concerns for eco-social components for holidays, only about 10% convert this concern to purchasing decisions (Chafe, 2005, cited in Budeanu, 2007, p.502), and in reality, the majority are reluctant to change their own behavior in support of sustainability goals (CREM, 2000, Grankvist 2002; Yan et.al, 2006, cited in Budeanu, 2007, p.502). It should also be noticed that (Budeanu, 2007, p.502) “one reason for the differences between stated environmental attitudes and actual behavior may be the social desirability bias , which entice people to answer positively to questions related to concerns about sensitive subjects such as environmental protection “(Chung and Monroe, 2003, cited in Budeanu, 2007, p.502).

Budeanu (2007, p.504) states that some tools to steer the tourist behavior may be “decreasing the cost of environmentally destructive behavior”, provide education to make people aware and also show how they can contribute, giving feedback to people about the consequences of their behavior, rationalizing available resources for a better distribution, etc”.

### **Guests**

Four of the interviews think the guests will be affected with better consciousness, while three of the interviewees mean it will provide the guests with better experiences. Two of the interviewees said it would improve the destinations image and one specified that it will improve the interaction and relationship with the local community. One interviewee said that they didn't have a great deal of demand after sustainable products.

Looking at the theory presented above one and the results in this research one need to point out that this need further investigation and research in order to get more information about the customers of the destinations in the region of Fjord Norway.

## **Business Owners**

Eight of the nine interviewees said that sustainable tourism may affect the business owners in a way of economical benefits in form of good revenue, potential to earn more money, save money and the better usage of resources. One of them specified that the in addition to improved economy it will give larger volume. Three of the interviewees said that the business owners will get more consciousness. One of the three specified it to be about preservation and another specified it as the business owners will get more conscious about their role in the local community.

Three of the interviewees said the business owners will get improved image, while one other said the business owners will get improved goodwill and the fourth said it will affect them to focus on quality. One interviewee said that it might be hard to focus on sustainable tourism as a business owner if one struggle from day to day.

Another emphasized that not all the business owners get a grip of what is defined as sustainable tourism and what is included in that.

The results in this section should be compared with the general findings in benefits and barriers of this research as they show similar results. However it should be noted the high percentage (88%) responding that it will have economical gains as an affect should be a reason by itself of implementing sustainable tourism.

## **Local politicians**

Three of the interviewees said it might lead to more consciousness about tourism, or that tourism may get integrated with other development and to have a controlled development, and further that sustainable tourism will give the politicians greater understanding for tourism in general. Two of the interviewees responded that the local

politicians have low level of knowledge within sustainable tourism or no knowledge about it. Two of the interviewees stressed the importance to increase the level of knowledge at the local politicians regarding sustainable tourism.

One interviewee specified that there should be national and international guidelines to fulfill national/international objectives on this subject.

One interviewee specified that their local administration in their municipality showed best practice in certifying the administration within eco-light house and this affect the politicians so they got positive attitudes towards sustainable tourism.

One interviewee informed about their X fjord project which included the local politicians as well. He/she further stated that the politicians understood that sustainable tourism was a natural part of their X fjord project and that it was not possible without this focus. One interviewee said the question was too difficult and could not answer how sustainable tourism may affect the local politicians.

It seems like the overall picture in this research show that sustainable tourism will affect the local politicians in a way with knowledge, consciousness and more understanding for tourism.

## **Inhabitants**

One interviewee said that tourism infrastructure as i.e. a hotel in small town also function as a meeting place for the local community and therefore it will affect the inhabitants in a good way. Another interviewee said that sustainable tourism may improve quality of life on the destination. Three of the interviewees responded that consciousness will be an affect of sustainable tourism. One of the three specified that this consciousness will be around their own history, culture and identity. Another of

the three specified that consciousness will increase the knowledge of tourism in general. Three of the interviewees said that if the development is short termed focused and on volume growth the local inhabitants will not be happy with the tourism industry at the destination. And opposite way – if it planned and on the inhabitants term and include them in the tourism planning – they will look at it positively.

Two of the interviewee's responded that an affect of sustainable tourism on the local inhabitants would be local and long term pride. One interviewee doubted if the local inhabitants had the knowledge about sustainable tourism but specified that they were concerned with nature preservation. Another interviewee also responded that the local inhabitants probably lack the knowledge but stressed the importance of achieving it.

According to Choi & Murray (2010, p.589) states that “long-term planning as a key element of success of sustainable community tourism can both mitigate negative impacts and reinforce positive ones. To build a better community, local governments need to involve residents and stakeholder groups in the planning process”

In this research one might get the impression that the destination managers underestimate the involvement and level of knowledge by the residents. On the other side it was only one that responded that. Three of them, 33,33% , states consciousness – in different ways though – will affect the local residents.

### **Motivation & product development**

In the findings of this research the interviewees consider quality and attractiveness as some of the important factors in product development. Three of the interviewees pointed out the importance of quality and focus on the experience. Further that the products should make the guests stay longer. Three of the interviewees focused on the attractiveness and that the product development should improve their attractiveness.

Bramwell & Alletorp (2001, p.102) point out that an “integrative, proactive partnership approach to environmental and community management in destinations may help to develop competitive advantage by maintaining destinations quality, and this quality can be marketed to differentiate destinations from their competitors (Gouldson, 1993, cited in Bramwell & Alletorp, 2001, p.102).

Bramwell & Alletorp (2001, p.97) found that “another encouragement mentioned by 13 respondents was financial support from public funds to compensate businesses for the extra costs often involved when introducing sustainable practices or to reward businesses that take the lead in these practices”.

The same can be said to be found in this research as three of the interviewees responded that they would be motivated by getting additional resources to work with sustainable tourism as it requires time and staff. One of the three specified financial funding as into projects.

Budeanu (2005, p.96) found that “given the lack of incentives for tour operators to undertake such actions, there are numerous questions related to the practical ways of pursuing such goals by proactive tour operators”. However, s Budeanu (2005) points out that the tour operators may influence their suppliers and customers so that they would become positive and get positive attitudes towards nature and the local communities when they provide holiday experiences for a large number of people every year. This also relates to the destination mangers as they can advocate responsibility to all of the tourism suppliers and even require this from the tour operator. In the findings in this research only one of the destination managers said that they are working with and setting demands to the cruise operators by for instance make them use at least one electrical transportation mode in their excursions.

The dominance of motivations in small family businesses are often non-economic such as “wish to get out the business”, retirement or other family reasons might implicate that they are not so receptive of sustainable initiatives (Hobson & Essex, 2001).

In this research there were no family run businesses and therefore no such finding regarding motivation. However the issue is highly relevant for the tourism industry and should be noted for further research regarding the business level.

Brown's (1994, cited in Hobson & Essex, 2001, p.136) “survey of 106 managers from large and medium-sized hotel groups in the UK indicated that the main reason for introducing environmental initiatives was on the basis of cost – savings rather than the benefits for the environment. However, in this research one found that four of the interviewees state something about the environment being a benefit. One responds that it's crucial to focus on preserving the nature, and another states that it's a benefit to minimize damage on the planet. Other state that the importance of preservation of products and not to wear out our resources.

This shows that about almost half of the sample regards environmental benefits in the discussion of sustainable tourism. What is different from the studies referred to above? It might be several reasons. One is that there are almost 20 years since that study was conducted and its reason to believe that knowledge and environmental focus has changed during these 20 years. Also the focus on sustainable tourism and to act “responsible” has become more of a global discussion. On the other hand it might show that the destination managers in Western Norway are more environmentally concerned than others? Some of the explanation of this might also be the fact that the almost fifty percent of the destination managers are doing measures within nature based tourism. Its reason to believe this influence their attitudes and environmental focus.

Summing up the factors which will motivate the destination managers to implement (more) sustainable tourism practices is financial funding, information seminars, plans on a national level. Only one responded that the businesses themselves should be responsible.

Regarding product development this research shows that quality and attractiveness are important aspects, but profit is the main purpose by doing product development. However, three of the interviewees mentioned the three aspect social, environmental and economical sustainability in addition to the previous mentioned factors. This shows that about 33 percent of the sample considers sustainable tourism in their product development.

### **Future planning**

Six of the interviewees responded that sustainable tourism is included in their strategy of today. One destination manager said they had no plans at the moment but maybe they will be implementing the Brand from Innovation Norway regarding sustainable tourism. A second destination manager said it will depend on what choice Norway as a nation will do. A third of the interviewees answered the question by asking what the definition of sustainable tourism is.

This shows that around 66 % of the interviewees responded that sustainable tourism is part of their strategy. But why is this? Is it included in their strategy without any real meaning and is it just a “buzz” word? Is it too easy to put in the tourism strategy without any meaning? On the other side, one of the interviewees, 11% of the sample, answers the question by asking what is the definition of sustainable tourism. This indicates that sustainable tourism is still not easy to define or comprehend and this should be noted. However it should be noted that by those who do not include sustainable tourism in their strategy today, two of the three, responded that they will maybe implement this.

In a research conducted in Portugal , (Simao & Partidario, 2012, p. 381) found that



the plans *speak* of sustainability , but few say what they mean by this. When they do ,they use a very generic approach following the definitions of international organizations and an implicit or explicit kind of weak sustainability is suggested. The lack of proper conceptual approaches illustrates the general lack of reflection and discussion about sustainability by the planners or between them and the local community.

According to Choi & Murray (2010, p.589) states that “long-term planning as a key element of success of sustainable community tourism can both mitigate negative impacts and reinforce positive ones. To build a better community, local governments need to involve residents and stakeholder groups in the planning process” . However, only one of the destination managers responded that they should include the local residents in their tourism planning.

Further as the findings in Simao & Partiadario (2012) shows that many tourism plans does not include sustainable principles and the process have reduced stakeholder participation, especially the environmental representatives and the local community. (Ibid, p. 382) “we continue to find plans that are dictated by professionals who ignore several interested parties and do not plan together with the people. In this research one haven’t looked into who and how the destination managers have made their plans. But as the Simao & Partiadario (Ibid, p. 382) states:

sustainability is mentioned at the level of broad objectives but is not always clearly articulated through more than operational objectives” ...() these elements leads us to believe that sustainable development is translated into tourism planning as a cliché , something that is automatically included in proposals without much reflection and with questionable practical impact.

### **Advise on approach & marketing**

In this last section one will discuss the main findings on the questions of “how should tourism managers approach sustainable tourism for a successful outcome” and “ how do you think sustainable tourism should be marketed”. In the first question the interviewee will be forced

to speak of an approach to others, meaning that they may add issues or measures which they are not doing themselves. Four of the interviewees said that destination managers should provide with good information, guidance and help. Further some of the four specified the importance to provide with knowledge and to promote and show benefits to the businesses. One should also try being a motivator for others. This means that the destination managers regard information in the work with sustainable tourism as fairly important. Further two of the interviewees stressed the importance of including all the stakeholders in a sustainable tourism process. One stressed the importance on focusing on the ten principles of sustainable tourism defined by Innovation Norway. Three interviewees stressed the importance of including sustainable tourism in the tourism development from day one and in the long term planning. One of the two specified that it should be included in all product development and referred to their work with Norwegian Centre of Expertise Tourism "Fjord Norway". One interviewee specifies that one should do this on a national level otherwise it will not be of any effect in the Norwegian tourism industry. And this should include commitment and be something tempting and positive.

These findings show that one third of the destination managers regard inclusion of sustainable tourism in the tourism planning as important and one may ask why not all of them? On the other side they seem fairly busy of informing and including the stakeholders and that is the right focus. In a research conducted in Portugal , (Simao & Partidario, 2012, p. 381) one found that

the plans *speak* of sustainability , but few say what they mean by this. When they do ,they use a very generic approach following the definitions of international organizations and an implicit or explicit kind of weak sustainability is suggested. The lack of proper conceptual approaches illustrates the general lack of reflection and discussion about sustainability by the planners or between them and the local community.

Looking at this it might be good that they are not too busy around tourism plans and maybe information will be the right path to go.

## **Experience**

In this section one will discuss the answers around the question of "how many years have you been working with sustainable tourism". This was also a way of defining sustainable tourism in the regard of how they look at themselves and their work.

Eight of the nine interviewees have experience of 1,5 year to 10 years of experience working with sustainable tourism. Two of the stated they haven't been working with it but have had a consciousness about it though. Several commented it was difficult to answer. Two defined experience as how long they had been working with concrete projects.

The fact that several said it was difficult to answer shows again that we have a vague and not common ground on the definition of sustainable tourism. Because either you have experience of working with it or not. This uncertainty has been throughout the whole research and it sure calls for a discussion on how to "simplify" sustainable tourism and practices around it for busy destination managers. Further, it might be reason to draw this conclusion to the rest of the tourism industry as well.

## **Conclusion**

Butler (1999) stated that there are over seventy different definitions of sustainable tourism and confusion and the lack of a common definition is a fact. Different researchers have done different research on attitudes from the stakeholder perspective but this research emphasizes the attitudes of the destination managers only. Destination managers are in a position to use their leadership towards all the stakeholder and they should therefore state an example within sustainable tourism.

This research started by looking at some general theory of tourism and tourism as a system. All too often one seem to forget the basis in what its all about; people travelling from their home area to a destination to have an touristic experience. It's a multidisciplinary field and its driven by demand and supply. And the supply factors, namely the destination, is founded of natural and cultural resources, the infra- and supra – structure as well. Further, as Gunn & Var (2002) points out – future development is dependent on the location and quality of these resources.

Tourism planning is a way of organizing the future to achieve certain objectives (Inskeep, 1991) and may manage some of the previous mentioned resources. However, one should not forget that the main purpose of tourism planning is to generate economic benefits (Inskeep, 1991), but on the other side tourism also may contribute to the conservation of environment and resources that otherwise might not be available, and socially by providing recreational, cultural, and commercial facilities and services that is available for both residents and tourists. On the other side, tourism may damage and detroy local communities and lead to environmental degradation and the challenge is therefore how to have a controlled and manageable development. If one look back on the supply side and the destination. Gunn (1979, p.71) states that because of the importance of attractions and the power they provide in the tourist system- “the lure to travel and the things to see and do- they must be foremost in all tourism planning” .

Further, Mac Cannel (1976) states that tourists are motivated by authentic experiences but they might not know how to differentia the experiences and if it was in fact authentic.

Back to the basic idea, the destination or supply side have a task in providing for these experiences to the tourists. However a destination goes trough different stages in the

destination life cycle and tourism planning is also a tool for controlling the life cycle in a way one wishes for.

One way of doing that is by sustainable tourism development. Bramwell and Lane (2000) states that sustainable tourism development is a process where one need to align the needs of the tourists, the tourists businesses, the host community and the need for environmental protection. Healey & Ilbery (1990) classified natural resources from ubiquities to uniquities and it should not be necessary to explain which class are the most attractive and therefore in most cases, also the most visited and challenged ones.

The region of Fjord Norway is defined and awarded by many as one of the most beautiful destinations in the world. The region has two fjords listed on the UNESCO world heritage list and have stunning nature attractions like the Pulpit Rock. Its natural to consider sustainable tourism as the main tool for all destination development and planning in this region. However in order to use sustainable development or sustainable tourism planning one need to know:

How do the destination managers define sustainable tourism?

What are the perceived benefits a of sustainable tourism?

What are the perceived barriers of sustainable tourism?

What does sustainable tourism mean on an operational level?

Who should have the prime responsibility of initiating sustainable tourism?

Those were the overall questions in this research with the overall purpose to explore how sustainable tourism is perceived among destination managers and their attitudes regarding sustainable tourism.

### **Definition of sustainable tourism and what does it mean on an operational level**

The research shows that the most of the destination managers have the central elements of economical, socio- cultural and environmental sustainability in their definitions and this fit with UNWTO conceptual definition of sustainable tourism and sustainability principles of environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development.

These results show the level of knowledge regarding the definition of three main categories in sustainable tourism seems to be high among the destination managers. Thus it seems like the destination managers almost have a common ground of the definition. This is also different compared to what Hobson & Essex (2001) found in their study where there were no such understandings of how to define sustainable tourism. On the other hand how do they define sustainable tourism when asked about the practical measures? The findings show that four of the nine interviewees said they were currently working on a nature based project .Either fjord, hiking trail or other similar projects and this was at destination level. This shows that almost fifty percent of the interviewees consider sustainable tourism as nature based tourism projects and are currently working on the destination level. One third of the interviewees responded that they didn't do anything on the destination level though, and this reflects s that it should be discussion of levels. In the last section where the destination managers were to give advice to other destination managers about how to approach sustainable tourism they answered information as one of the main things. Thus it seems like they can become promoters of information and knowledge in addition to leading nature based projects.

One of the interviewees responded that a measure on destination level would be what they are doing; hence they don't offer motorized activities with the exception if the tourists need to get transported to the starting point of their activities. I.e. parachute jumping. This one should be careful to promote this as Wall (Wall, 1996, cited in Butler, 1999) also points out that

sustainable tourism has “become a form of ideology, a political catch phrase and, depending on the context in which it is being used, a concept, a philosophy, a process or a product”.

Like Liu stated (2010, p.4729 “ there is an urgent need to develop policies and measures that are not only theoretically sound but also practically feasible. Without the development of effective means of translating ideals into action, sustainable tourism runs the risk of remaining irrelevant and inert as a feasible policy option for the real world of tourism development”.

Eight of the nine interviewees stated the economical aspect as the most important in sustainable tourism. However only one of the eight responded the economical aspect as the only important aspect. Seven of the interviewees stated other aspects such as environment and socio cultural aspects as important as well. Many emphasized how difficult it was to stress only one aspect and many underlined the fact that it is impossible to rule out one or the other.

This shows that economical sustainability is the steering factor in the destination managers definition and one should also add the results of their main motivation for implementing sustainable practices are mainly financial funding, with information seminars, national plans and best practices. On the other hand also within product development profit is the steering factor, with quality, attractiveness and social, environmental and economical sustainability following after . Six of them defines themselves as working currently with sustainable tourism but also in this section one got responses on “how difficult it is to define sustainable tourism”.

It also should be noted that image of sustainable tourism is confusing as one of the interviewees said it was more like “back packing” and simple standard, while another said it was high end and more luxury travel.

## **Benefits and Barriers**

Ironically this research shows that what seem to be benefits are also barriers. The long time perspective is good for long lasting products but its difficult in a busy everyday life when some struggle to survive. Cost savings are perceived as benefits while on the other hand it might be a barrier to invest in environmental friendly operation if the budget is tight. It should be noted the high response from the interviewees on regarding the involvement of the local community, the profit to local community and pride into the local community as a benefit.

Both, in the research of Hobson & Essex (2001) and Bramwell & Alletorp (2001) found benefits identified with sustainable tourism was marketing advantage and cost savings and environmentally cautiousness.

This research has revealed that the destination managers perceive the long term perspective with long lasting products and destinations as a benefit; they perceive economical benefits both in the local community but also as cost savings for the businesses. Further they also perceive it as a benefit to focus on preservation of the nature, high quality on the products and destination development as benefits, and last but not least, sustainable tourism will contribute to pr In this research one chose only to look at the attitudes of the destination managers, hence therefore only that perceptive. However the difficulty to talk about sustainable tourism in a common defined way was absolutely there. Many of the interviewees stated during the interview “oh – this is difficult”, “I don’t know how to define, “ I don’t know how to answer”. Or they responded “it all depends on what level you are talking about, business level or designation level”. This is common to bring into the discussions about sustainable tourism as it all depends on what level one are talking about.



## **Stakeholders I**

This research concludes that the half of destination managers think the main responsibility should rest at the national level; government and Innovation Norway. Some think it should be at business level and some refer to interdisciplinary projects and co-operation.

What they all seemed to agree upon was that all the stakeholders such as tourists, tourism businesses, politicians and inhabitants should be included in the development process.

## **Stakeholders II**

Looking at how sustainable tourism will affect the guests, the businesses, the politicians and inhabitants one word seemed to repeat itself – namely consciousness. They all referred to more consciousness, better image, pride, improved economy and improved products.

However – also here was it stated “how difficult” this is to talk about and to define.

## **Summing up**

To sum up one concludes that the destination managers all agree on a basic definition of sustainable tourism which included environmental, socio-cultural and economical sustainability. The main benefits are also the barriers including the long term perspective is good for the resources but difficult from a business perspective when it's a struggle to survive from day to day. Some benefits are cost savings, better image, consciousness, destination development and quality and the involvement, pride and economical gains to the local community. On the other side it seems like a pervasive issue the difficulties in defining and decide what's included in sustainable tourism. It's also mentioned the fact that it's too demanding to get those certifications. Further, the destination managers define nature based projects at sustainable tourism on an operational level and some mentioned eco-certifications, knowledge and the national pilots program of Innovation Norway. When it comes to who's

responsible for initiating sustainable tourism the most of the destination managers thinks it should be on a national level by the government or Innovation Norway and some thinks it should be at the business level or interdisciplinary projects.

### **Implications**

Implications to this research might be the difficulty of analyzing such material. Further when it comes to external validity for this research - whether this can be generalized to other destination managers in Norway. Therefore this external validity seems poor but one should note that this was the purpose though .On the other side – much of the findings are relevant to former findings by other researchers so this will strengthen the validity.

As mentioned earlier social bias is very common in ethical questions like for instance the environment and thus should be noted. Social bias seemed also to be the fact since many of the interviewees stated “you probably know this since you have been working with the national pilot program within sustainable tourism” or “I should ask you about this”.

Another limitation is the question guide and how one chose to approach this theme. Maybe the approach was too broad and one should not have had so many sub categories but rather asked questions and probes about he definitions and made the interviews embellish more around a few sub categories. However – this was the purpose in order to approach the theme from different angles and should therefore strengthen the validity.

### **Recommendations**

Kernel (2005,p.161) “created a model for sustainable tourism development, and the ambition for the project is to develop sustainable tourism in this region through integrated tourism planning based on vertical as well as horizontal partnerships between the stakeholders”. He further states “that the main purpose of the vertical partnership is to ensure development of

and co-operation between the three levels of horizontal networking; the tourism enterprise level, the community level and the regional level. “ (Ibid, p.161).

A stakeholder model like this for the different levels would be interesting to implement and do some more research on and a discussion of levels within sustainable tourism seems fair to rise. Also it is clear that all the destination managers have positive attitudes towards sustainable tourism , but they lack common ground on what to include in it. And this may task for the industry as soon as possible – what to include in the term sustainable tourism on a practical level for practical implementations.

Like Liu (2010, p.472) stated “our main task is not to limit growth but to manage growth in a way that is appropriate to the tourists, the destination environment and the host population”.

Destination managers should use their leadership roles to promote and implement sustainable tourism principles on all levels; at the business level, at the destination level and be a best practice and contribution to the global level.

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### Questions (appendix 1)

The aim of this study is to examine the level of interest, understanding and implementation of sustainable tourism practices at destination level.

The study will reveal the level of knowledge within sustainable tourism among the tourism industry in region of Fjord Norway and at the same time what does it mean in an operational manner. The study will also contribute to show who should the destination managers think should be responsible of initiation sustainable tourism practices.

#### *Research proposal:*

*A qualitative study exploring how sustainable tourism is perceived among destination managers and their attitudes regarding sustainable tourism.*

#### *Research questions:*

6. *How do they (destination managers) define sustainable tourism?*
7. *What are the perceived benefits of sustainable tourism?*
8. *What are the perceived barriers of sustainable tourism?*
9. *What does sustainable tourism mean on an operational level at their destination?*
10. *Who should have the prime responsibility of imitating sustainable tourism practices?*

## Interview guide

Introduction: Hello. My name is HM. The reason why I am here is because

Anonymity if requested.

### **Introduction**

1. Position? Work experience? Age? Education? Political side: left or right?
2. Can you please describe your destination in bed nights, arrivals, largest tourist attractions etc?

### **Definition of sustainable tourism**

3. Describe what your understanding is of and your definition of *sustainable tourism*?



### **Barriers & benefits**

4. What are your perceived benefits of sustainable tourism?
5. What are your perceived barriers of sustainable tourism?

### **Measures of sustainable tourism**

6. What (if any) kind of measure do you do of sustainable tourism today?
7. What is in *your opinion* practical implementations of sustainable tourism?
8. Have you done any practical implementations of sustainable tourism the last five years?

### **Stakeholders**

9. Who should have the prime responsibility for initiating sustainable tourism practices? Why?
10. Who should be included in the sustainable tourism development process?
11. How does sustainable tourism affect the guests?
12. How does sustainable tourism affect the tourist business owners?
13. How does sustainable tourism affect the local politicians?
14. How does sustainable tourism affect the inhabitants?

### **Motivation**

15. What would encourage (motivate) you to implement (more ) practices of sustainable tourism?
16. When you are planning for product development – what do you consider as important factors in your planning process?

### **Tourism planning & future outlook**

17. How will sustainable tourism be part of your destination planning in the future?
18. What is the most important aspect of sustainable tourism?
19. How many years have you been working with sustainable tourism?
20. How should tourism managers approach sustainable tourism for a successful outcome?

**Sustainable tourism & marketing**

21. How do you think sustainable tourism should be marketed?

23. Do you have any comment or anything to add regarding sustainable tourism?