

CONTRADICTIONS OF SEASONALITY NEED TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE ARCTIC

To tackle the issues of seasonality of tourism in Arctic Europe, we need to address community perspectives and employment issues, and to care for the environment.

The seasonal nature of tourism is increasingly receiving the attention of various actors: tourism destination planners and economic development strategists at all levels, tour operators and the diverse businesses that significantly depend on tourism, and the host communities who negotiate tourism's potential to have both positive and negative impacts.

The research report at hand identifies and discusses four main perspectives on the issues of seasonal tourism in the Arctic: local community perspectives; employment and workforce issues; the Arctification of northern tourism; and global environmental change. These themes form the key issues around which the challenges and opportunities related to seasonality of tourism can be placed and worked with.

According to the research group authoring the report, seasonality can be seen as a problem, when it leads to burnout among local people and when environments need to encounter the pressures of peak season. Seasonality also negatively impacts on the image of tourism as a sector that can offer rewarding long-term jobs and strengthens the image of tourism employment as precarious and low-skilled. On the other hand, for small-sized, lifestyle and indigenous entrepreneurs tourism seasonality can be a necessity – when tourism is based on the annual life cycles and rhythms of places, communities and environments. Seasonality also enables local communities “to take a break” from tourists.

The report outlines recommendations related to developing a thriving and sustainable tourism sector in Arctic Europe. The researchers suggest, for example, adopting community-first planning, enhancing local business and tourism resources ownership, creating strategies to reduce labour precarity associated with tourism, educating travellers about sustainable Arctic ways of living, and committing to sustainable transportation.

The research report is an outcome of a three-year project Partnership for Sustainability: Arctic Tourism in Times of Change, which develops sustainability of Arctic tourism. The project is funded from the Nordic Council of Ministers' Arctic Co-operation Programme 2018-2021.

Report:

Rantala et al. 2019. Arctic tourism in times of change: Seasonality. TemaNord 2019:528. Nordic Council of Ministers.

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More information:

www.ulapland.fi/ArcticTourism

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