

# Data Collection on Tourism Flows – from Fragmentation to Harmonisation? The Case of Norway

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## INTRODUCTION – what's discussed in this paper

Measuring visitor flows is important part of long distance travel research **in a tourism context**

Long distance travel research also important in other contexts:

- Transport infrastructure planning (roads, airports, rail)
- Regional economic development
- Public transport planning and policy
- Environment and sustainable mobility / transport

→ All these research contexts, as well as national data collection programs, appear at the Institute of Transport Economics

*Have we experienced mutual links / synergies that may contribute to improvements in methodology and data collection on visitor flows ?  
Or, must improvements come from other directions?*

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## Focus: visitor flows on regional levels

### Identification of trips described by

- Purpose of trip
- Type of accommodation (incl. VFR, Second homes etc)
- Length of stay
- Mode of transport
- Type of activities /tourism product
- Region visited / place of residence (origin/destination pattern)

(variables essential in for instance regional economic impact studies)

## Visitor flow measurement – the Norwegian case:

### Basic tourism context data sources:

- Accommodation data (statistics Norway)
- The Domestic Tourism survey (Statistics Norway)
- The Norwegian Foreign visitor survey (TØI)

### Other long distance travel data sources

#### National Travel Survey (Ministry of Transport – performed by TØI):

- long distance travel module,
- second home trip module

#### National Air Travel Survey (Aviation Authorities / TØI):

- Domestic trip module
- International trips module

## "The case of Norway" – Domestic visitor flows

| Institution        | Statistics Norway       | Institute of Transport Economics             |  |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| name               | Domestic Tourism Survey | National Travel Survey                       | National Air Travel Survey                     |
| sample             | 5 000 per year          | 12 000                                       | 35 000   |
| collection         | Household (CATI)        | Household (CATI)                             | On site  |
| purpose            | Tourism CD 95/57/EC     | Map everyday travel & mobility in population | Map air travel demand structures & development |
| frequency          | quarterly               | Every 4th year                               | Every 2nd year                                 |
| Day visitors       | no                      | yes  | Yes  |
| Accommod.          | yes                     | no   | No   |
| Regional breakdown | NUTS II                 | NUTS III                                     | NUTS III                                       |

## ”The case of Norway” – Inbound visitor flows

|                    | Institute of Transport Economics                                  |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| name               | Foreign Visitor Survey  | National Air Travel Survey                     |
| sample             | 12 000  | 24 000   |
| collection         | On site (border crossings)  | On site (departure gates)                      |
| purpose            | Monitor volumes and structures and development in inbound tourism | Map air travel demand structures & development |
| frequency          | Annual  | Every 2nd year                                 |
| Day visitors       | yes   | Yes  |
| Accommod.          | yes   | No   |
| Regional Breakdown | NUTS II   | NUTSIII  |

## Concluding comments (I)

1. The MAIN PROBLEM is that the basic survey sample sizes are too small for
  - Regional destination breakdown (NUTS III)
  - Origin / destination breakdown other than country level
2. Advantages of cooperation between different long distance travel research approaches are mainly "scientific competence synergies";
  - First hand insight in survey design, research questions, data collection procedures, reliability issues etc
  - Easy access to data files and researcher competence

## Concluding comments (II)

- Fragmentation of visitor flow data is due to:  
Different purpose of survey → different research questions  
→ different variables /different variable specification →
- Harmonisation difficult because :  
Different authorities paying, limited budgets, limited size of questionnaire, etc. Improvements focus own research questions
- Best short term harmonisation issues:
  - Domestic Tourism Survey and National Travel Survey (long distance module) into one survey.
  - National air travel survey variables harmonised with Foreign Visitor Survey and Domestic Tourism Survey variables