



# Observatory PASCAL

*Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions*

---

*PURE Regional Visit Report (RVR1)*

*JAMTLAND, SWEDEN*

*30<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2009*

*Steve Garlick, Fumi Kitagawa, Kate Sankey and Anders Olsson*

## *1. Review background*

The evaluation team visit to the Jämtland region in mid-Sweden took place on 30 to 31 March 2009. The evaluation team comprised: Professor Steve Garlick from Australia (lead reviewer), Dr Fumi Kitagawa from Japan and Ms Kate Sankey from Scotland. Mr Anders Olsson from *Region Värmland*, Sweden provided country assistance. Through an agreement between the Pascal administration and the regional coordinator, the review for Jämtland emphasised tourism development.

## *2. Regional description*

The Jämtland region with a population of 127,000 occupies the area of central Sweden and comprises eight municipalities (Berg, Bräck, Krokoms, Härjedalen, Ragunda, Strömsund, Åre and Östersund). Östersund is the largest municipality with a population of 58, 200. The next largest municipality is Krokoms with around 14, 000 people and then Strömsund with a population of around 12, 000. Jämtland region covers an area of 49, 343 [square kilometers](#), [12 per cent](#) of Sweden's total area and is the third largest province in Sweden. Jämtland stretches 400 kilometers in its north-south direction and 250 kilometers in its east-west direction and is equal in size with Denmark. Generally however the region is sparsely populated with extensive forest areas and mountains on the Norwegian border to the west. In the east, small scale agriculture (eg. cattle) is carried out with other activities such as small scale tourism and local food production. Wind power farms are also being developed in this part of the region and aquaculture in the northern part is a possibility.

Population growth has been slow with depopulation of the rural areas and increased urban concentration in the largest urban centres of Östersund, Strömsund and Sveg. In addition to the depopulation other demographic issues include an increasing preponderance of males, the loss of young people, particularly females, from the region and a generally ageing population. Population issues are regarded as a significant determinant for the region's future. Recent years has seen the closure of four regiments and military schools and the Ericsson-Flextronic manufacturing plant, one of the largest employers. One of the single largest private employers in the region today in tourism is the Ski Star ski lift company operating out of Åre that supports a growing winter sports industry and in particular downhill skiing. Åre is one of the most visited skiing resorts in Sweden.

In Jämtland, agriculture accounts for 5 percent of employment, industry 14 percent, public sector 41 percent, tourism 10 percent and other services 30 percent.

Recently the national government has been considering the amalgamation of regions throughout Sweden with the prospect that Jämtland and the nearby eastern region of Västernorrland centred on Sundsvall might amalgamate. The Mid-Sweden University has campuses in Östersund and Sundsvall as well as in Härnösand, also in Västernorrland.

### 3. Key stakeholders and roles and responsibilities in the regional development process

The regional development process in the Swedish context is the responsibility of various agencies, viz: the National Government, the County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen), the regionally elected County Council (Landstinget) and the eight locally elected municipal councils. Jämtland region has a Regional Council for Regional Development that meets every two months and comprises the leaders of these groups as well as the Pro Vice-Rector of the University campus to try and bring some coordination. The Review Team noted in its review visit to the Värmland region that an intermediary coordinating organisation, that provides a daily capacity to consult widely, compile regional strategy advice, bring agencies together with a common focus, and initiate regional projects of benefit to the whole region, appears to work well. The Review Team understands there are a number of Swedish regions with a *Region Värmland* type coordinating organisation that is directly elected and governed which it takes over some of the regional development role from the County Administrative Board, the County Council and the municipalities. The Team also understands that this model of regional development coordination has been attempted several times in Jämtland.

### 4. Higher Education

The Mid-Sweden University, as a new university, is the only university servicing the region. The University was formed in 2005. The University has three campuses, Östersund, Sundsvall and Hämösand and a total of 15,000 students and 64 professors. Around 48 percent of students study via distance learning. The three campuses have their own specialisations. Teacher education, humanities and behavioural sciences are given at Hämösand, while at Sundsvall, also in the nearby Västernorrland region, the natural sciences, technology, social sciences, IT, nursing and media studies are taught. The Östersund campus of the University provides studies in social sciences including in social work, human resource management, economics and tourism as well as sport, ITC, natural sciences and technology, particularly eco-technology and building technology, and nursing.

In research the Mid-Sweden University focuses on the following: digital communities, cultural heritage, democracy and enterprise, learning and education; the forest as a resource, tourism, sports science and adventure technology, and the challenges of the welfare state. Research at Östersund is undertaken in tourism, health and social sciences. In particular at Östersund, Tourism, Sports Science and Adventure Technology are undertaken through the Peak of Tech Adventure – an emerging regional innovation system, funded by Vinnova, tied to developing products in the tourism, adventure technology and sports sciences fields.

### 5. Key opportunities for regional development

A number of regional development opportunities were raised with the evaluation team during its various discussions.

Winter sports tourism, particularly skiing, has been a growing industry in the region with the expansion of the Ski Star company operations at Åre. Ski Star is one of the largest alpine skiing companies in Europe. Swedes make up nearly 75 percent of the 350,000 guests to Åre in the winter season. The remaining visitors are from Russia and the Baltic States (7.3%), Norway (6.7%) and Finland (5.1%). Eighty five percent of Ski Star's beds are booked from the 20<sup>th</sup> of December until the end of April. During winter season they have 500 staff. Most of the staff are from the southern parts of Sweden. The goal of the company is to make Åre the best European all year round resort with an expansion in summer activities, expanding international guests, linking into more flight origins (eg Moscow, St Petersburg, Stansted,

# Observatory PASCAL

*Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions*

---

and Netherlands), adding to their bed capacity, linking the Åre brand to other well known brands and investments in slopes, ski lifts, hotels and restaurants.

A second opportunity in tourism relates to the elite sports performance testing laboratory centre at the Östersund campus. The centre works with elite skiers and companies seeking to assess the performance of athletes or the products and equipment they use such as shoes. A product with potential could be testing the cross country skier before competitions such as the Vasaloppet (cross country ski competition over 90 km) with 35,000 participants. The objective of the University with other regional actors is to build an innovation system within sports equipment. For the moment, the main task is to get the companies interested in the facility.

A third tourism opportunity relates to the Peak of Tech Adventure experience. With funding from Vinnova's Vinnväxt program, a regional innovation system is proposed that brings together research expertise in the areas of destination tourism, sports science and adventure technology to develop business enterprises and products, including tourism products, in these areas. The objective of the initiative is to mobilise regional capability to create international business opportunities for Jämtland in these products.

A fourth tourism related opportunity is concerned with packaging smaller rural opportunities on to the main skiing market at Åre. These might include such visits as the Jamtli Museum, small rural ventures such as indigenous food, the "Moose Garden", and small rural accommodation experiences. The Jamtli Museum attracts around 180,000 visitors a year with 20,000 of these alone visiting over the three day Christmas market period. Jamtli has been winning prizes as Sweden's premier children's indoor and outdoor museum. The Moose Garden is an example of a small rural pursuit that has become a successful tourist venture outside of the winter sports/ recreation period. The proprietors rescue moose that have been injured on the roads around Östersund. They provide the 40,000 visitors to their centre the opportunity to view the moose close-up, receive a talk about the animal and then purchase various associated products. In the peak summer period, the Moose Garden can employ up to 12 people.

Outside of tourism several other economic development opportunities are being progressed. The forest industry is big business in Jämtland with one of Sweden's largest supply of forest. The county is one of the leading producers of wood products. Several small towns or villages have large sawmills, factories producing wood chips and particleboard, and other wood refining companies. The region mostly comprises export of sawn logs and large planks to other regions and countries. An opportunity exists to enable a greater local perspective in manufactured timber products.

Jämtland has 17,000 lakes with a total area of 4,500 km<sup>2</sup>. The natural production of fish is estimated at 3,000 tons per year. The region has an emerging aquaculture industry, particularly in the growing of char. Other species like salmon, trout, grayling and whitefish can also be farmed but are at present not commercially ready. The Institute for Rural Development at the County Council in partnership with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) are investigating the possibility of expanding this industry and linking it into tourism. The region already attracts 120,000 visitors for amateur angling.

In the municipality of Strömsund, business interests are developing the CleanTech wind power industry. More than 400 wind power plants will be built in this part of the region and SK16 billion will be invested in this project over the next ten years.

Finally, there are discussions at the municipal level and within the County Administrative Board are being held about establishing an east/ west coast to coast economic and transport corridor (Trondheim - Östersund - Sundsvall) as a main chain in what is called the northern green belt (which also normally includes part of Finland on the other side of the Baltic Ocean). There are 800 000 people living in the corridor from coast to coast.

6. *Issues concerning the region's development*

The following issues were raised with the review team during its visit:

- **Demographic:** The ageing, and low and declining population growth in the region, and the rural-urban population drift is a concern if the region is to provide the skills for the new areas of development that are either planned or underway – particularly where higher level strategic, creative and enterprising capabilities are required. It raises a further concern as it means that fewer and fewer employed people are supporting larger numbers of older and unemployed persons. The region accounts for 12 percent of the total Swedish land area but only 1.5 percent of the total population. The population density is only 2.6 people per square kilometre. According to Swedish official statistics there were 63, 400 males and 63, 497 females in Jämtland region in 2008 and the proportion of the population over the age of 60 is 26 percent. The region's population has fallen from 135,726 in 1990 to 127,028 in 2005 and 126,897 in 2008. Earlier than this, between 1950 and 1975 the population of the region declined by 15 percent, while between 1975 and 1994 it remained stationary. Almost half of the region's total population reside in Östersund. The only three municipalities where the population remained constant were Östersund, Krokomb and Åre, all taking in population from the rural villages but losing some of their best to the larger cities to the south and east.
- The Review Team were told that education attainment is generally quite low in Jämtland by Swedish standards. There are several issues here. First, those that relate to higher education participation and the distinction between competencies to meet the skill shortages of today and the creative and enterprising knowledge to meet the new directions for tomorrow. The Swedish education system comprises nine years, viz: Compulsory, Upper Secondary and Higher Education (university and university college). Only 27 percent of the students at the Mid-Sweden University come from the Jämtland and Västernorrland regions. The Review Team also understands that 42 percent of the people in the two regions who have attended a University or University College started their education at the Mid-Sweden University. The second relates to the region's 'brain drain' where the brightest school leavers move to the larger cities to the south east where there are better employment opportunities.
- Ecological sustainable development was raised by the reviewers however it was generally thought that the Jämtland environment was already clean and that was one of the marketing tools being used to attract visitors. There are no aspirations to attract polluting industries to the region.
- As with the Karlstad University in Värmland (the other Swedish region in the PURE Review program), current National policy on R&D funding (through Vinnova) represents an emerging difficulty for smaller and new universities like Mid-Sweden. Funding through the KK Foundation is still a good option for the Mid-Sweden University and the Jämtland region. As with the Värmland region and the Karlstad University, it may be strategically necessary for Mid-Sweden University and the Jämtland region to partner with other universities and their regions using resident international companies (eg Ski Star) as their host if the University is to play an integral role in the emerging regional development opportunities that the Review Team were told about.

- **Transport, health and education infrastructure.** These were all raised as difficulties with the review team however more information needs to be obtained and discussions held in relation to these.

## 7. *Role of higher education*

### 7.1 *The issues*

**The University specifically states in carrying out its teaching and learning and research activities it wants to:**

**“...increase students’ contacts with working life while they pursue their education, to give them qualified job experiences” (p3) and “...the aim is to carry out research with high quality and international competitiveness. An important starting-point is that results should be of interest for the region in which the university is situated” (p6). However we see a number of issues that impact on the extent to which these engagement objectives are currently being achieved.**

**First, the University is a confederation of three previous university colleges with two being in the nearby Västernorrland region. In the first ten years there was considerable competition for resources from the three college campuses which took energy away from regional engagement objectives, however now with campus discipline specialisation this is apparently less of a concern according to the pro vice-rector in Östersund. It is however also the understanding of the University that the concentration of the activities to three campuses, in order to get the strength necessary for being granted university status, did in fact have the side effect that some older functioning regional collaborations were abandoned.**

**Second, only 27 percent of the students at the University come from the Jämtland and Västernorrland regions. The remainder is made up of 48 percent distance learners from various places around the world and 25 percent from other regions in Sweden and international. Unfortunately, while the trend is for an increasing number of students at the university the number coming from the local region is actually declining. The students at Mid-Sweden are generally a little older than the Sweden average reflecting the distance learning component. The general demographic of the region (declining and ageing population) are working against local student growth and hence engagement with the local area.**

**Third, the education system in the region comprises compulsory, senior secondary, university and adult education. Few males go beyond the vocational stream at secondary level and females tend to leave the region for further study where they can also find employment in the services sectors in the larger cities to the south. There is an informal social acceptance of the non-productive lifestyle in the region, particularly by males.**

**Fourth, research is concentrated in several specific areas (eg tourism and sports performance) that are yet to build a wide and deep connection locally although there is an emerging opportunity for this through the Peak of Tech Adventure regional innovation system project. Tourism research is primarily carried out through ETOUR.**

**Fifth, the cross-disciplinary approach to research and education by ETOUR and other areas of the University is not consistent with the emerging discipline-specific and research/ teaching dichotomy approach to research and innovation funding by the central Government.**

## 7.2 Some challenges for Higher Education

Some regional entities are not satisfied with the contribution the university is currently providing and are making arrangements either by building partnerships with other universities or by establishing other education and research centres in the region. For example, the County Council have established the Institute for Rural Development and Training (JiLu). JiLu is involved in forestry and agriculture education and applied research and has a staff of 130. It works in partnership with Mid-Sweden University as well as other universities such as Umeå University; SLU in Uppsala, HINT in Steinkjer and NTNU in Trondheim.

While it is appreciated the University cannot respond to all the region's needs it can probably do more by addressing some regional and institutional impediments. Some suggestions for the region and the university might include:

For the region:

- The development of a human capital development plan for the whole of the region that embraces the whole of the education system (Compulsory to Adult) with unambiguous pathways between education sectors and with strong links to business and the community within the region at each education sector level. Through this it is likely that there will be higher levels of participation in the higher education levels giving rise to a culture of lifelong learning and with a strengthening connectedness to achieving regional outcomes.
- The region has a high dependence on micro and small businesses. It is therefore necessary to foster a culture of enterprise throughout the education system to ensure graduates become 'job makers' locally rather than be discouraged 'job seekers' who then leave the region for employment in the larger cities to the south and east.
- The sparse population settlement outside of Östersund, Krokoms, Strömsund and other small communities in Jämtland suggest there needs to be a different focus to knowledge accumulation and its enterprising focus. Distance learning is one solution, but communities need to have access to the full academe if they are to survive in a global environment. One suggestion is to build a collaborative arrangement among compulsory, secondary and higher education, business, the public sector and other interests focussed on a key subject/ action that is crucial to a particular community's future in a number of rural centres throughout the region.

For the University:

- **Management**  
The review committee suggests a number of management mechanisms that might assist the Mid-Sweden University strengthen its partnership connections with the Jämtland regional community. These include:
  - (a) That a vision, mission and strategy be adopted by the University that not only explicitly refers to *particular* regional community partnership areas, but cross references the region's strategy plans.
  - (b) Regional targets based on partnership arrangements be included in the performance tasks of rectors, deans and administrative managers
  - (c) Recruitment policies seek to attract staff to the University that has skills and experience in regional community engagement.

- (d) Staff promotion is based on the three criteria of publications, teaching and community engagement. Performance assessment might be made on a selection of two of these three criteria by the staff concerned.
  - (e) An institutional benchmarking regime be implemented that seeks to monitor 'good practice' performance in this area of regional engagement.
  - (f) Consider whether there should be a separate budget line item to cover the University 'reach out' to the community.
  - (g) Establish a one-stop shop entry point to the university, where regional inquiries may be made and which can play the role of a broker between region needs and university expertise. An example worth considering is the Leslie Harris Centre for Regional Policy and Development at Memorial University in New Foundland, Canada.
- **Teaching and learning**
    - (a) Promote and support work integrated learning type partnerships between the University and business and institutions to ensure practical skills become part of the undergraduate learning requirements and a local connection between student and enterprise is fostered. In Åre for example, the skiing brand name might be used to attract students into tourism studies.
  - **Research**
    - (a) Consider establishing a small internal research grants program within the University to encourage new researchers to undertake research of immediate benefit to the region in partnership with key actors in the region.
    - (b) Encourage more of a 'reach-out' culture among researchers to partner with key actors in large funded projects of benefit to the region
  - **Support for innovation**
    - (a) Consider student innovation and entrepreneurship as compulsory core elements in the teaching and learning programs being offered.
    - (b) Consider a mechanism for university idea incubation and commercialisation along the lines of the Key Actors initiative being implemented with Vinnova funding at the University of Karlstad.

## 8. Tourism

Based on agreement with the PURE Secretariat, tourism was identified as a key element in the Jämtland review. Section 5 identified a range of tourism related opportunities for the region. From a University perspective the key interest is through the ETour (European Tourism Research Institute) organisation.

ETour was established in 1997 to assist the tourism industry become knowledge driven and focuses its activities in three areas: (a) developing tourist destinations; (b) a focus on nature and culture based tourism; and (c) customer centred tourism and events. ETour has a strategic association with the Jämtland regional tourism association whereby it can assist member organisations in their tourism goals. ETour is involved in two major regional research projects: (a) Outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism; and (b) the Peak of Tech Adventure where visitor behaviour in adventure destinations is examined.

The review team believe there could be greater *partnership-based* projects between ETour and individual tourism development projects in the region to enable a process of mutual learning.

# Observatory PASCAL

*Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions*

---

## 9. Identifying and measuring key achievements

We have included this section as the review team felt there appeared to be a shortage of results-based information from the initiatives that have and are being undertaken. In relation to tourism, the Ski Star Company have provided data for Åre and visitor numbers were obtained for the Moose Garden and for the Jamtli Museum, however a compendium of region-wide statistics for tourism performance, perhaps broken down by municipality, would be important if this industry is to be one of the main development directions for the region. This might be a task in which ETour and the Jämtland tourism association might collaborate.

The team would also suggest that a set of economic, social and environmental performance measures for Jämtland be prepared on a regular time series basis to ensure that the various plans being prepared and put in place by the County Administration, the County Council and the various Municipalities achieve their desired outcomes.

Finally we would suggest the Region and the University consider the PURE project benchmarking tools as a means for assessing current engagement practice between them.

## 10. Summary of findings

This review was a shortened version of the other regional reviews through prior arrangement between the Regional Coordination Group and the PURE Administration. A number of key messages flow from the Review. These were:

- Regional development constraints brought about by a relatively small and declining regional population, an ageing population, 'brain drain' and significant rural-urban drift.
- There could be a question about the effectiveness of the current regional development coordination arrangements and this matter should perhaps be explored further through Regional Action Plan where various options are considered.
- Tourism is seen as a key directional focus for the region. The region sees a broadening of tourism to both enhance winter sports and summer nature-based activities, including building on small scale rural tourism as an adjunct to traditional farming practices
- Greater engaged connectivity between the University and emerging regional opportunity, particularly including tourism, but also other non-tourism-based activity, and the need to access R&D funding and enterprise commercialisation support to build sustainable businesses in these areas.
- Implementation of a range of management processes and research and teaching incentives to strengthen university knowledge-based connectivity with the regional community.

## 11. Annexure

### 11.1 Matters for consideration in Vancouver

- Swedish policy with regard to innovation funding and the role of the new university.
- Population growth, ageing, rural-urban drift, 'brain drain.
- Emerging Central Government pressure for regional amalgamation.
- Internationalising regional opportunity and university engagement through global partnership built on corporate presence.
- Regional coordination among the various agencies involved in the regional development process.
- Performance monitoring for the region, and in particular of its tourism performance.
- Practical tools to assist university management and planning.





# Observatory PASCAL

*Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions*

---

## 11.2 Benchmarking

This review was a shortened version of the other reviews that have been undertaken through prior arrangement with PURE Administration. There were few opportunities to talk with university personnel in this particular review and so the benchmarking tool was not explicitly discussed. We therefore do not know whether they have an interest in being part of a trial of this tool. We have been advised that the regional community benchmarking tool will be trialled, although we are not certain this will occur prior to the Vancouver meeting.

## 11.3 Program of Visits

### ▪ Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March

- 08.30 Departure for Åre, you will be picked up at the Hotel
- 10.00 Meeting with Ewa Jerlinder (Skistar)
- 12.00 Lunch
- 13.00 Departure for Östersund
- 14.30 Meeting with Hans Halvarsson (Jämtland County Administrative Board)
- 16.00 Meeting with Håkan Viklund (Mid Sweden University)
- 19.00 Dinner at restaurant *Innefickan*

### ▪ Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March

- 09.00 Meeting with Tomas Hägg (Jämtland County Council) (in Henrik Zipsane's office, Jamtli)
- 10.30 Departure for Orrviken
- 11.00 Meeting with Sune Häggmark (Moose Garden)
- 12.30 Departure for Jamtli
- 13.00 Lunch at restaurant *Hov*
- 14.00 Meeting (at Jamtli) with Mats Forslund (Jämtland-Härjedalen Tourism) and Robert Pettersson (Mid Sweden University – ETOUR)
- 16.00 Debriefing with Anna Hansen and Henrik Zipsane (Jamtli).