

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC REGION

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The Nature

The North Atlantic Region:

- covers a wide area
- conditions in the countries around it are similar
- often very sparsely populated
- large tracts of unpopulated wilderness
- very small nations
- outstanding natural beauty
- vulnerable nature
- distances are great
- rich in natural resources, both at sea and on land
- not always easy to harness
- the climate is cold



The Communities

The North Atlantic Region:

- widespread negative population trend
- population growth in the capitals and larger cities
- in other areas a major fall in population
- birth rates have fallen so the average age of residents is rapidly increasing
- significant cuts in public- and private-sector services
- people must travel farther to access services
- reduced quality of life



Planning for Development

For societies to grow and prosper :

- transport infrastructure
- transport costs
- transport system
- telecommunications infrastructure
- basic services in place in the immediate community
- acceptable travel times for accessing basic services
- easing of the costs of accessing services
- telemedicine
- social changes: a review of public-sector services
- important that residents are kept informed
- transport planning: account of health planning
- all public-sector policymaking:



Supporting the Development

For societies to grow and prosper :

- importance of cultural activity
- self-image of residents and communities
- stronger and more resilient communities
- basis for a wide variety of employment opportunities
- innovation in all areas requires support
- training facilities and institutions of higher education
- collaboration between educational institutions, industry and the public sector
- remarkable results of such collaboration: the exploitation of raw materials, previously waste
- providing jobs for well-educated people



Sustainable Development

Natural resources need to be used sustainably for the benefit of their local areas

- different attitudes of the residents in larger urban centres and people in more rural areas
- recent massive increase in tourism
- spectacular landscapes, unspoiled nature, northern lights, unique fauna and vast open spaces
- some places - due to the number of tourists reaching a tolerance limit on exploitation
- the expansion of tourist services has led to creation of large numbers of jobs throughout the country
- in contrast to 'mobile' jobs, jobs in tourism, are tied to the natural wonders



Challenges

- growing trend in Iceland to buy up land in rural areas
- undermines the social underpinning of the local community
- in stead of a natural increase in population there is now a natural decrease some places
- in most parts of the country there is net outmigration of Icelanders, set against a positive in migration of foreign nationals
- in some villages foreigners now account up to 40% of the population



Takk!!



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