Integrating Activities for Advanced Communities

M2.24- Evaluation of tourism potential at INTERACT Stations

Project No. 871120 – INTERACT

H2020-INFRAIA-2019-1

Start date of project: 2020/01/01

Duration: 48 months

Due date of milestone:2020/12/31 (M2.24)

Actual Submission date: 2020/12/15

Lead partner for milestone: UKCEH

Author: Jan Dick, Elmer Topp-Jorgensen

	Dissemination Level	
PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the Consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the Consortium (including the Commission Services)	

Publishable Executive Summary

In order to understand the breadth and depth required of a best practices guide for handling the impact of tourism at research stations an understanding of the role of tourism at INTERACT III stations was sought by two consultations with station managers.

1. During the first annual meeting, station managers were invited to indicate the context of tourism at their station and in the area surrounding their station. A simple two-dimensional matrix approach was employed (INTEREST e.g. a research topic, a source of income and INFRASTRUCTURE for tourism e.g. accommodation). The results of this exercise revealed that across 30 stations there was a wide range in the interest in tourism and some station managers considered they were well equipped and keen to accommodate tourists (30%) while other were the polar opposite (50%).

2. A further opportunity arose when invited by WP9 to include questions related to tourism potential in survey introduced at the second Station Managers' Forum. Two questions were included in the joint WP2.6 and WP9.2 survey (i) Is it possible for tourists to access the station area? (ii) Are tourists encouraged to visit the station area? The results of the 32 responses revealed that 37% reported their station allowed access and encouraged tourists; 44% allowed access but did not encourage tourists and 19% neither allowed nor encouraged tourists.

The result of these consultations reveals that the deliverables i.e. pocket guides must consider both the benefits and challenges of tourism in an around research station

1.   Introduction

This milestone report related to Subtask 2.6.1 i.e. *consult with station managers to determine actual and potential opportunity for tourism at their sites in order to develop sustainable tourism at INTERACT research stations.*

This work is a stepping stone to deliverables D2.12 *Pocket guide on how to handle effects of tourism at research stations and in adjacent local communities* (Month 30 – June 2022) and D2.13 *Pocket guide for tourist on how to behave around research station, incl. their study areas and local communities* (Month 30 – June 2022).

In order to write the pocket guides it is necessary to understand the context of tourism in and around the stations.

2.   Consultation at first Station Managers Forum

A simple participatory matrix tool was employed at the first Station Managers' Forum which allowed station managers to identify the context of tourism at their station along two axis (Fig 1). The vertical axis captured the interest of the station management in tourism and the horizontal axis the infrastructure of the station to service tourists. Those attending the meeting placed a sticky label with the number of their station

according the 2020 INTERACT Station Catalogue. They were also invited to answer for other stations they knew well. By organizing stations along these two dimensions, a better idea was gained of the extents to which tourism may influence research at INTERACT stations. It is recognised that the information provided is subjective and the exact location in each quadrant imprecise depending on the personal perception of the individual participating. Consequently, for analysis a simple four quadrant approach was adopted with stations (or surrounding areas) located in each quadrant (Fig 1). The four quadrants where classified

• Q1 station favourable to tourists and with tourist enabled infrastructure;

• Q2 station interested in tourism, but without tourism supporting infrastructure;

• Q3 station has tourism infrastructure but is not keen to interact with the full range of tourists, primarily only educational or scientific tourism, no relevant tourism research focus, and

• Q4 has neither infrastructure nor interest in tourism and may in fact be rather hostile towards them as the presence of unexpected tourists can impact station and science operations at remote stations.

Not all station managers were present at the meeting but this was considered sufficient to determine that the best practices guides for handling the impact of tourism at research stations must consider all points on the gradients of interest and infrastructure (Fig 2).

Station keen on tourists e.g. financial benefit or research focus
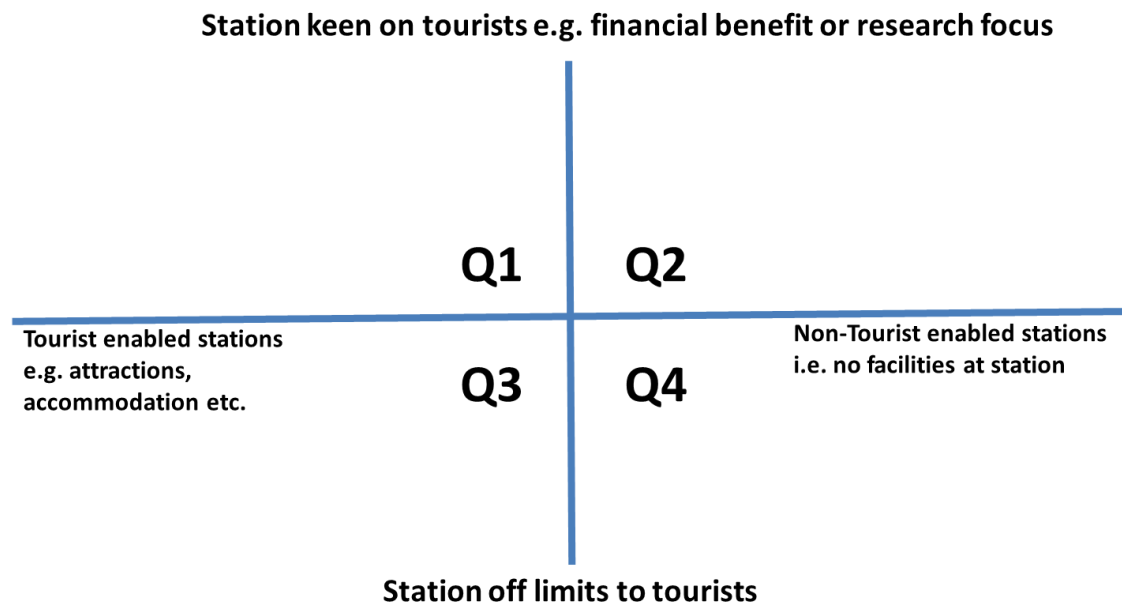
Fig 1. Two-dimensional matrix used to capture station managers' perception of the tourist infrastructure (horizontal axis) and interest (vertical axis). Q1 – Q4 refer to the quadrants of the matrix.
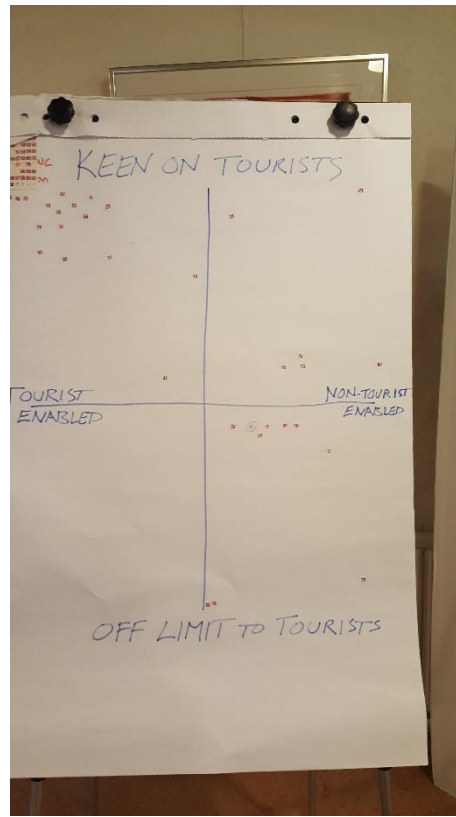
(a)   (b)

Figure 2 Distribution of INTERACT III stations on a two-dimensional matrix. The vertical axis captured the interest of the station management in tourism and the horizontal axis the infrastructure of the station to service tourists (a) at the research station and (b) in the area surrounding the station.

Overall, 30 stations reported for their station and 50% selected quadrant 4 i.e. not keen on tourism and with limited infrastructure, while 30% selected the diagonally opposite quadrant 1 and 10% selected each of quadrants 2 and 3.

In total 34 stations were marked on the equivalent matrix for tourism surrounding the station (station managers were encouraged to contribute if they knew the area although not sure of the situation at the research station). Over half the stations (53%) were located in areas which were keen on tourism and had infrastructure (i.e. quadrant 1); 18% quadrant 2; 0% quadrant 3 and 29% quadrant 4.

3.   Analysis of joint survey with WP9

A survey joint with WP9 was introduced at the second Station Managers' Forum and is fully reported in WP9. Two of the questions are reported here:

Q3 Is it possible for tourists to access the station area?

Q5 Are tourists encouraged to visit the station area?

Table 1. Station manager's responses to two question in the joint WP2.6/WP9.2 survey. Q3 Is it possible for tourists to access the station area? Q5 Are tourists encouraged to visit the station area?

Station	Q3 Tourists have access	Q5 Tourists encouraged
Oulanka Research Station	Yes	Yes
Kevo Subarctic Research Station	Yes	Yes
Lammin-Suo Peatland Station	Yes	Yes
Adam Mickiewicz University Polar Station – Petuniabukta	Yes	Yes
ECN Cairngorms	Yes	Yes
Skálanes Nature and Heritage Center	Yes	Yes
Sudurnes Science and Learning Center	Yes	Yes
Kluane Lake Research Station	Yes	Yes
Sonnblick Observatory	Yes	Yes
Greenland Institute of Natural Resources	Yes	Yes
Abisko Scientific Research Station	Yes	Yes
International Ecological Educational Center "Istomino"	Yes	Yes
Nicolaus Copernicus University Polar Station	Yes	No
Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Laboratory	Yes	No
Sermilik Research Station	Yes	No
DMI Geophysical Observatory – Qaanaaq	Yes	No
Finse Alpine Research Centre	Yes	No
CNR Arctic Station "Dirigibile Italia"	Yes	No
Arctic Station	Yes	No
Pallas-Sodankylä Stations	Yes	No
Research Station Samoylov Island	Yes	No
Kilpisjärvi Biological Station	Yes	No
Mukhrino Field Station	Yes	No
Station Hintereis	Yes	No
Czech Arctic Research Station of Josef Svoboda	Yes	No
Litla-Skard	Yes	No
Villum Research Station	No	No
Kolari Research Unit	No	No
Tarfala Research Station	No	No
Zackenberg Research Station	No	No
M&M Kłapa Research Station	No	No
Polish Polar Station, Hornsund	No	No

In total 32 stations responded between 1-21/10/2020 (Table 1). As in the response of station managers to the participatory matrix (section 2) some stations reported that tourists had access (26/32 stations) and in others tourists are encouraged (12/32). From the sample of 32 stations responding to the survey 37%

reported their station allowed access and encouraged tourists; 44% allowed access but did not encourage tourists and 19% neither allowed nor encouraged tourists.

The results of this survey are similar to the first and confirm that the pocket guides must consider both the benefits and challenges of tourism in an around research stations.