VISITORS TO THE BALTIC SEA ARCHIPELAGO ECONOMIC VALUES AND SOCIETAL BENEFITS OF THE FOURISM INDUSTRY

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VISITORS TO THE BALTIC SEA ARCHIPELAGO ECONOMIC VALUES AND SOCIETAL BENEFITS OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Part 1. Introduction



Introduction

The tourism industry is an important source of jobs in the Baltic Sea archipelagos. Visitors also help to broaden the range of local services – seasonally as well as all year round. The importance of the tourism industry for living archipelagos contributes to the great interest in mapping and describing its societal significance. This includes accommodation statistics and local and regional economic analyses.

In recent years, both the Nordic Archipelago Cooperation (Nordiska skärgårdssamarbetet, NSS) and several of the NSS member and partner organisations have produced knowledge bases with a bearing on mobile data analysis and societal benefits linked to archipelago visitors. These include:

- The Archipelago Barometer, a collaboration between the Archipelago Foundation, Region Stockholm and the Stockholm County Administrative Board
- Visitors to the Åboland Archipelagos by the Nordic Archipelago Cooperation
- Hinterland Analysis of the Nämdö Archipelago by Värmdö Municipality and the Stockholm County Administrative Board
- Effects of Seasonal Extension, Stockholm Archipelago

The very large seasonal variations in visitor numbers mean that archipelago life in many places can be described as two parallel realities with totally different conditions for business, services and jobs during the summer and the rest of the year. Several projects are underway to extend or lengthen the peak season in the archipelagos – both to increase the sustainability of the tourism industry by reducing seasonal variations to some extent, and to increase local opportunities for services and jobs outside the summer months.

Combining visitor statistics from mobile data with already established socioeconomic models for calculating benefits enables more comprehensive benefit analyses than was possible just a few years ago. The purpose of this project is therefore twofold:

- 1. Firstly, to use mobile data to investigate the number of archipelago visitors in the entire NSS geography (in total and by region) for the first time.
- 2. Secondly, to estimate and describe the economic effects and societal benefits linked to these archipelago visitors. This is done by combining the visitor estimates in step 1 with established socio-economic models for calculating benefits.

Finally, an extended peak season scenario is also examined. The link between visitor numbers and economic benefits makes it possible to estimate the increased societal benefits in terms of jobs and tax revenues if "September becomes the new August".

About mobile positioning data

A relatively new technique for analysing visitor patterns is the use of mobile positioning data. All mobile operators continuously collect data on the position of mobile phones in the mobile network in relation to the coverage areas of radio masts. The possible precision depends on the size of the coverage areas in the geographical area in question. Data collection is also subject to extensive confidentiality and anonymisation to avoid revealing the identities and activities of individuals.

Information on the geographical location of mobile phones is useful for analysing movement patterns. What makes mobile data analysis really useful for social studies is that the number of mobile phones can be extrapolated with good precision up to a total population through the customer knowledge and market share of the telecommunications operators. In this step, the number of observed mobile phones in a given operator's network is extrapolated up to a statistical estimate of the total number of people regardless of the operator. The result is therefore a precise estimate of the number of visits based on actual observations.

Four years of mobile data (2019–2022) were used in the analyses. Due to major network maintenance, data is missing for parts of 2019 and 2020 in parts of Finland. Visitor estimates and calculations of economic impacts and societal benefits are therefore based on an average of the years 2021 and 2022.

The visitor figures presented in the following sections refer to domestic visitors – Finnish visitors in Finland and Swedish visitors in Sweden. This is because foreign visits are handled separately by the mobile data operators.

Visitors or visits

Visitors are defined as people who make short or long term visits to the area. Visitors also include people who visit the area in the course of their work, whether on a regular or occasional basis. The visitor is counted if the stay in the area is longer than 20 minutes.

Each visitor can be counted once per day. It is possible to visit several local sub-areas during that day. The person is then counted several times if the time spent in each sub-area is longer than 20 minutes. However, if a person returns to a sub-area during the day, it is not counted as a new visit.

If a visitor spends several days in the archipelago area, each day is counted. Strictly speaking, therefore, it is the number of visiting days that is analysed and not the number of visiting individuals. For this reason, the rest of the report will refer to a number of visits rather than visitors.

An overnight stay means that the person concluded his/her day in the survey area. The opposite is a non-overnight stay, which means that the person visited the area during the day but left before the last call signal from the mobile phone in the evening.

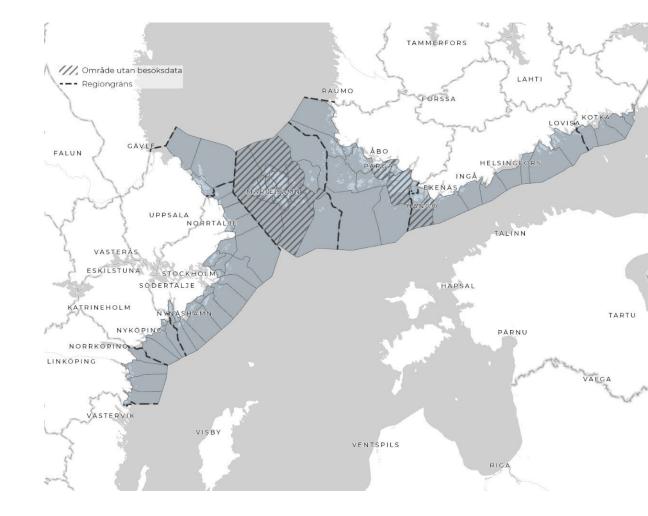
About survey areas

An important part of mobile data analyses is the delineation of geographical measurement areas. Which areas can be surveyed is determined by the location of the radio masts and coverage areas as well as confidentiality rules. Overall, therefore, there is a metrological advantage in archipelago environments not to use too small measurement areas.

In dialogue with both the Nordic Archipelago Cooperation and Telia, different versions of measurement areas have been tested and evaluated in order to increase the reliability of the data. The Baltic Sea archipelagos have finally been divided into 77 local measuring areas.

In the mobile data analysis, several neighbouring local areas on mainland Åland have proved difficult to measure, as well as individual local areas south of Turku. Common to these areas is a large flow of everyday movements in the form of commuting to and from neighbouring cities. These everyday movements produce a large amount of "noise" that makes visitor estimation with mobile data difficult.

Because of this, Kimitoön, mainland Pargas, Hanko and mainland Åland including neighbouring islands are excluded from the visitation estimates. The map shows excluded local areas with shading. In the case of Åland, however, the region is included in estimates of economic benefits – based on ÅSUB's visitation statistics instead of mobile data.



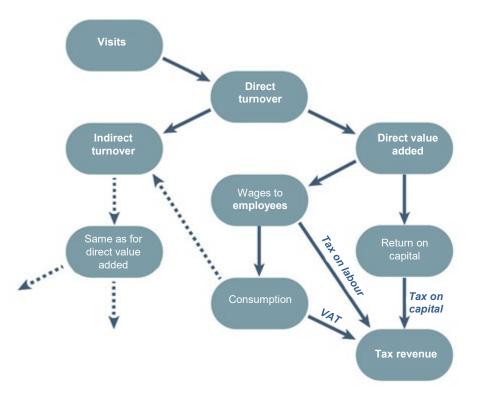
Socio-economic effects

The main objective of the study is to map the economic importance of the tourism industry for the archipelagos. The starting point is the consumption in the form of accommodation, restaurant visits, etc., that visitors are responsible for. That consumption is then translated into effects on value added, employment, taxes, etc.

Visitor consumption has both direct and indirect effects on the local economy. The direct effects arise in the businesses that sell goods and services to visitors. The indirect effects consist mainly of the economic activity arising at local subcontractors of the directly affected companies, but also to some extent of the additional consumption generated when wages and profits generated in the first stage are partly consumed and invested locally in a second stage.

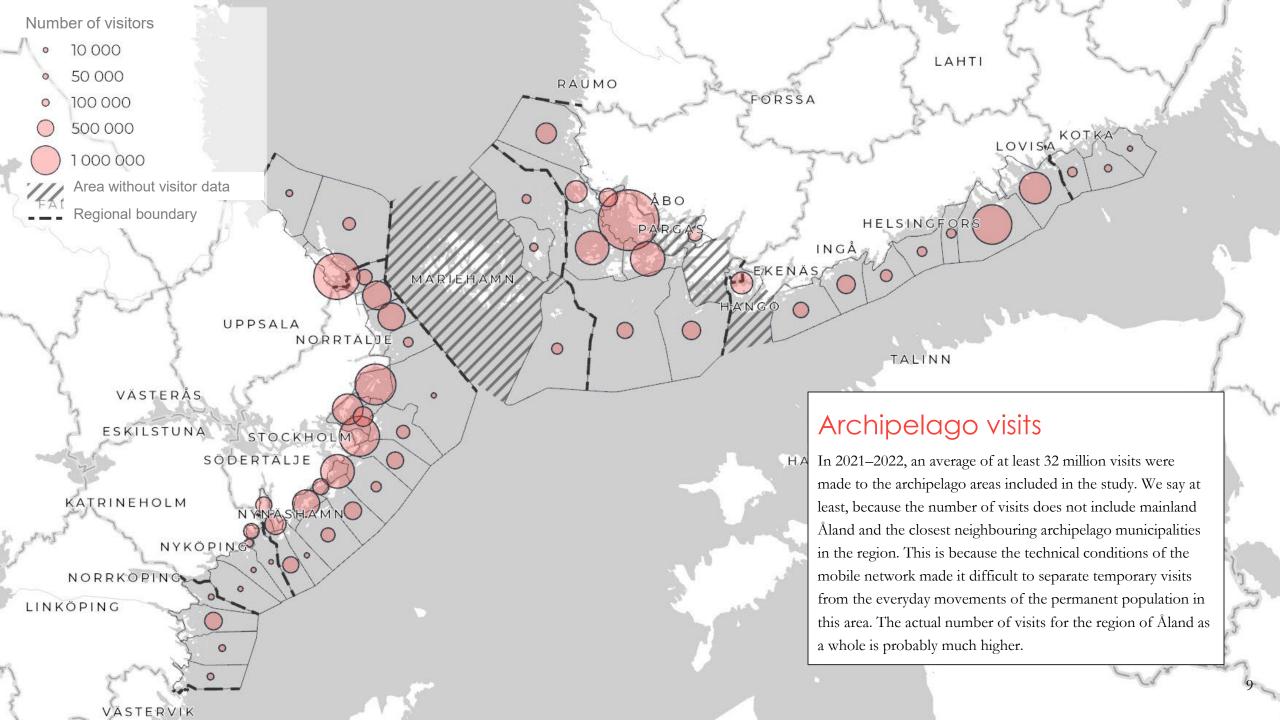
Part of the turnover will consist of value added, i.e., the economic value that companies in the archipelago add to the economy through the tourism industry. In simple terms, value added is the sum of the direct turnover, i.e., the consumption of visitors, minus the cost of inputs imported from outside the archipelago. Value added, in turn, is what pays the wages of the labour force and profits to the business owners (return on capital). Some of it will then go to taxes on labour and taxes on capital. VAT is then calculated on the basis of consumption, which is assumed to constitute a certain proportion of the wage amount. VAT together with taxes on labour and capital make up the total tax revenue. The figure shows the relationships between economic measurements and societal benefits.

The methodology for estimating the socio-economic effects of visitors is explained in further detail in the project's final report, available via the NSS.



Part 2. Results

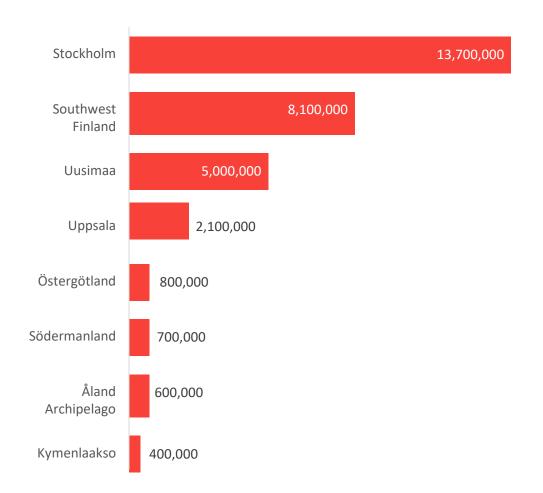




Archipelago visits by region

Of the regions surveyed with mobile data, three stand out as having significantly higher numbers of visits than the others: Stockholm County, Southwest Finland and Uusimaa. These regions are also the most metropolitan archipelago areas, making them available for both commercial and non-commercial visits.

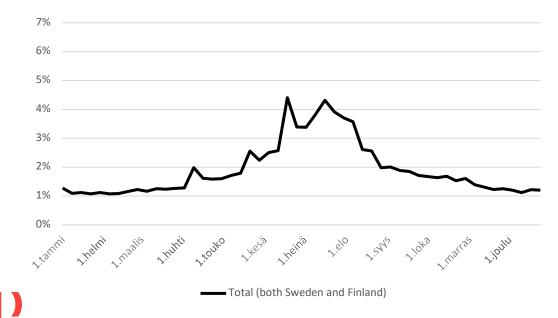
Archipelago visits, average 2021–2022

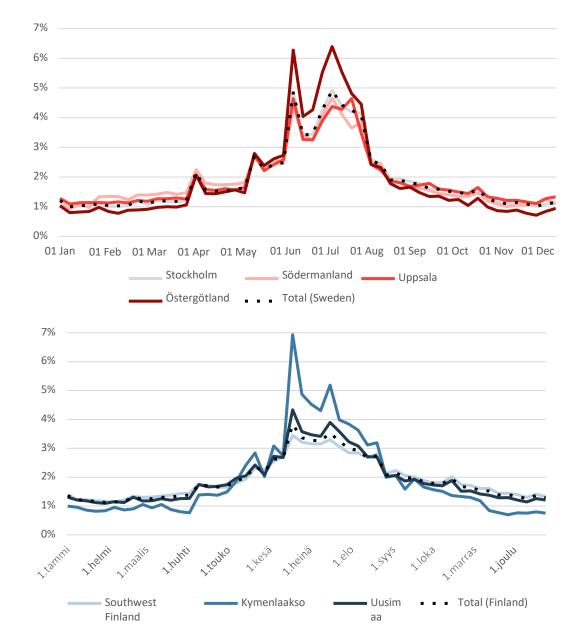


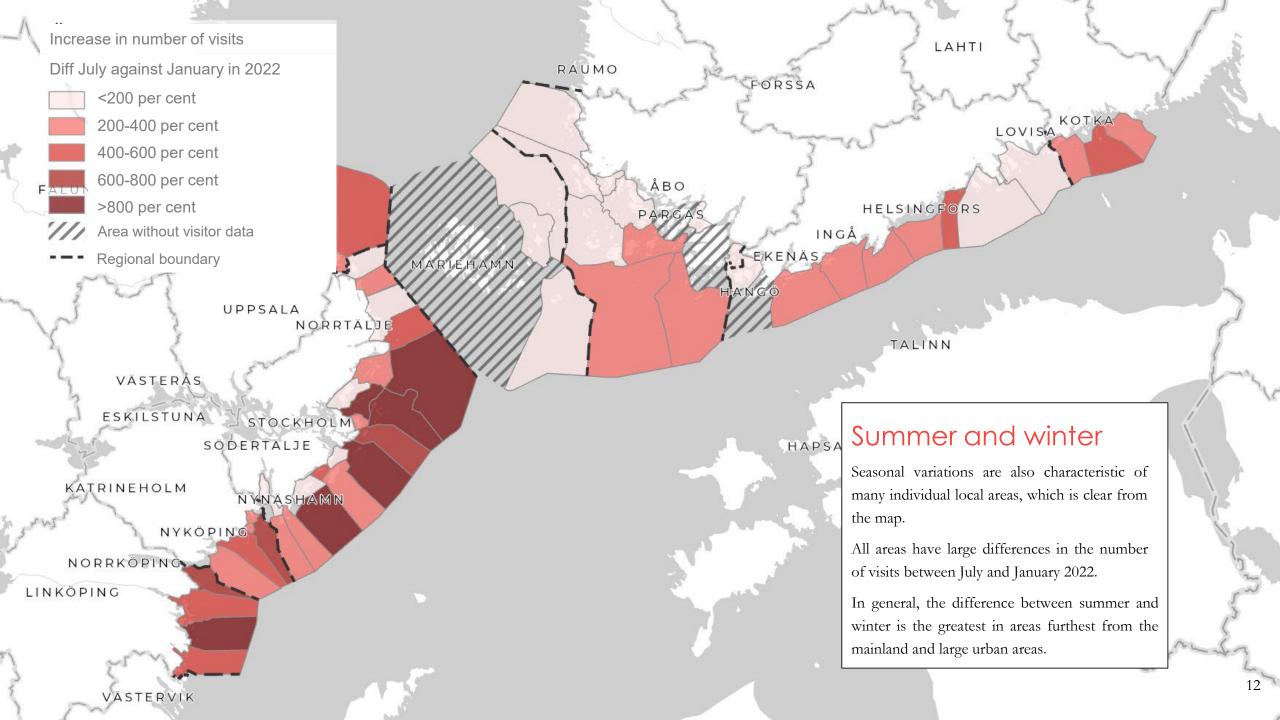
Large seasonal variations

Over the course of the year, a large proportion of visits to the archipelago took place during the summer holidays. The large differences between the seasons recur in all the regions surveyed – both in Sweden and Finland, as shown in the charts on the right, showing the proportion of visits (out of the total for the year) during each week.

One difference between the countries is that the peak season for visits appears to have been slightly longer in August 2022 in Finland than in Sweden.







Overnight stays

Overnight visitors can be divided into commercial and non-commercial. Commercial overnight stays account for 41% of the total number of overnight stays. However, commercial guests account for 63% of consumption by overnight guests during the peak season and 68% in the low season.

In this context, a commercial overnight stay means purchasing a temporary overnight stay from a business. Non-commercial stays include stays in one's own cottage, visits to relatives and friends, and renting a cottage from an individual.

2,218,000 Stockholm 1,541,000 1,155,000 Southwest 802,000 Finland 749,000 Uusimaa 521,000 369,000 Uppsala 257,000 154,000 Östergötland 107,000 118,000 Södermanland 82,000 82,000 Åland 57,000 Archipelago 73,000 Kymenlaakso 51,000

Overnight stays

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Societal benefits of visitors

The economic effects and societal benefits of commercial archipelago visits can be measured using several socio-economic measurements. This section focuses on four measurements – turnover, value added, employment and tax revenue. Although three of the four measurements can be expressed in monetary terms, they cannot be directly summarised to produce a total benefit. They partly overlap, and each measurement describes a different dimension of economic effects and benefits.

The economic results are calculated from the total number of visits using the mobile data analyses of the previous chapter. The calculation is based on an average for the years 2021–2022. A separate calculation model is used to also include known numbers of visits to the region of Åland in the results. This section is thus based on all eight regions of the NSS geography, including Åland.

The benefits are calculated in part on the basis of a direct effect – the economic activity generated in the direct industry where consumption takes place. To this is added an indirect effect – the economic activity generated in the form of spillover effects to the regional economy. The direct plus indirect effect together constitute the total effect.

The economic model used in the estimates is described in further detail in the project's final report.

Fact box: Social benefits and economic measurements

Turnover

The direct turnover generated by the tourism industry in the archipelago businesses is equal to the sum of the consumption by visitors. There is also subcontracting turnover equal to the value of the inputs used. Total turnover is the sum of direct and indirect turnover

Value added

Value added is the value generated by the actual production of a good or service. GDP, or the regional equivalent GRP, is a measure of the value added within a country or region. It can be calculated as turnover (the total value of the good or service) minus the value of inputs. Value added is then distributed between return on capital and wages.

Employment

Employment generated locally by the tourism industry is calculated based on the value added, wage share and wage totals in each sector. The number of people employed depends on how much of consumption can ultimately be allocated to labour compensation. Employment is expressed in full-year equivalents, where one full year equivalent corresponds to one full-time job for one year.

Tax revenues

Tax revenue from the tourism industry is calculated based on the local value generated by visits to the archipelago. Revenue is calculated based on the total value added of the tourism industry.

Turnover

The turnover linked to archipelago visits amounted to just over EUR 1.7 billion annually in 2021–2022, or SEK 20 billion at the current exchange rate (Oct 2023). Over 80% of this is turnover linked to the direct tourism industry in the archipelagos. The last part is indirect turnover through spillover effects to the rest of the regional economy.

An estimated 41% of the total turnover for the years arose in the three summer months of June, July and August. The proportion of visits during this period was 42%.

Peak season overnight stays, €351,000,000 Peak season not overnight, €461,000,000

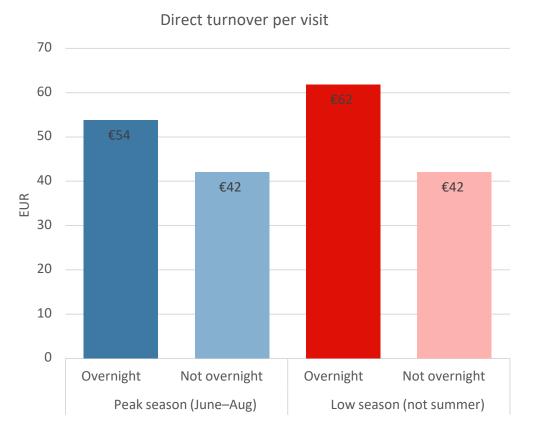
EUR 1,700 million in turnover per year

Turnover per visit

The average turnover per day of visitation was EUR 47, or SEK 555. This includes all types of visits, both day visits and overnight stays regardless of the type of accommodation (hotels, camping, cottages, boats in guest harbours and natural harbours, etc.). The measurement is direct consumption per visit.

There is also a difference by season, with overnight visits generating a higher average turnover in the low season than in the high season.

During the low season, a higher proportion of overnight stays are in hotels and other accommodation with higher prices than camping and guest harbours. To some extent, this evens out the difference between seasons in terms of number of visits.



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Turnover by region

Four fifths of the total turnover of EUR 1,700 million are estimated to be linked to the three most visitintensive regions of Stockholm County, Southwest Finland and Uusimaa. However, there are some uncertainties to the regional breakdown, as it is not possible to say with certainty what proportion of consumption or production in different supply chains takes place where. For example, a visitor staying in one area may have bought food in another area, which in turn was produced in a third area, and so on. Turnover by region should therefore be interpreted as a measure of where the conditions for turnover are created, i.e., where the actual visit takes place.

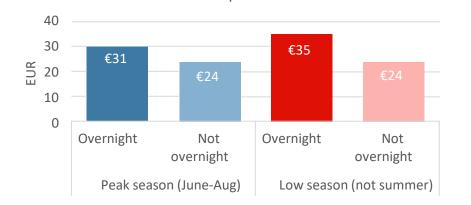
Stockholm €772,000,000 Southwest €452,000,000 Finland Uusimaa €281,000,000 Åland €121,000,000 €121,000,000 Uppsala Östergötland €47,000,000 Södermanland €41,000,000 Kymenlaakso €23,000,000

Turnover by region

Value added

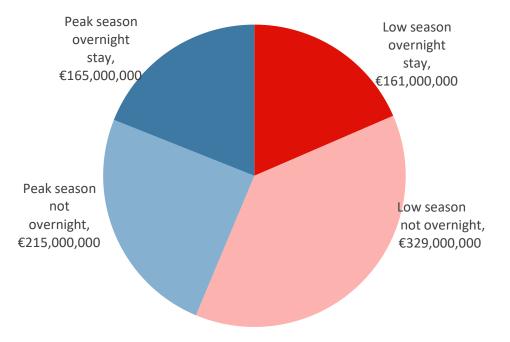
The value added for archipelago visits totalled more than EUR 860 million annually. Like turnover, most of this is directly linked to the tourism industry, and a smaller part to indirect spillover effects in the regional economy. Value added is the measure that corresponds to GDP, and is thus the best measure of the value that the tourism industry adds to the local economy in the archipelago.

On average, each visit generated around EUR 27 in value added. About 80% of it is created in the direct industry where the consumption takes place, while the rest is made up of the indirect effects in other industries.



Value added per visit





Value added by region

As with turnover, value added is calculated for the archipelago as a whole. The regional breakdown is based on where the visit takes place. The figures should therefore be interpreted as where value added is generated, not necessarily where it is produced.

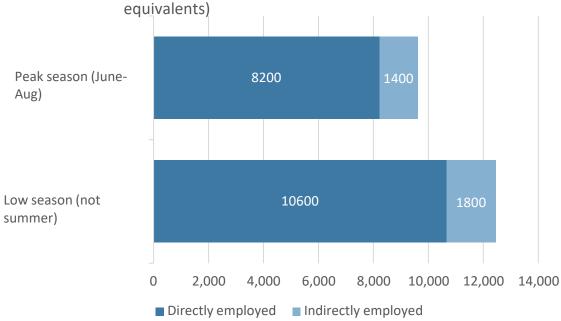
Value added by region and year



Employment

The local employment effect of the tourism industry in the archipelago is about 22,000 full-year equivalents per year. However, the number of *people* employed is much higher, as a large proportion of them are seasonal workers during the summer.

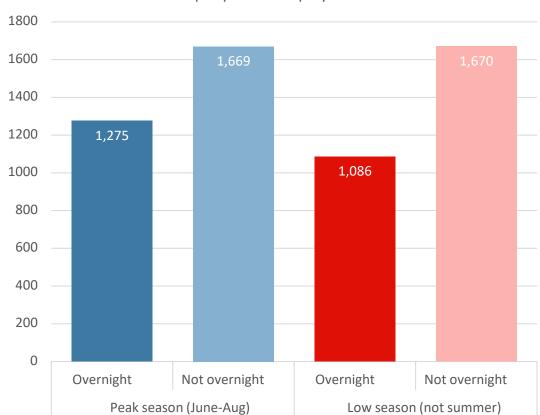
The employment effect includes both employment in the direct industry and with local subcontractors. Almost half are in hotels and restaurants, while just over a tenth are in trade and food production. The remainder is distributed among other sectors.



22,000 people employed per year (full-year equivalents)

Visits per person employed

On average, there are about 1,500 visits per employed person (full-year equivalent). Averaged out over the year, this means that each employed person on average handles the consumption of approximately 6 average visitors per working day. A large proportion of them are non-commercial visitors (own cottage) and day visitors who only consume food, transport and other activities. For hotel guests, there are fewer visits per person employed. This difference is shown in the adjacent figure, where the number of visits per employed person is lowest for overnight visits in the low season. The difference is due to the fact that the share of overnight stays in hotels during that period is higher than in the low season.



Visits per person employed

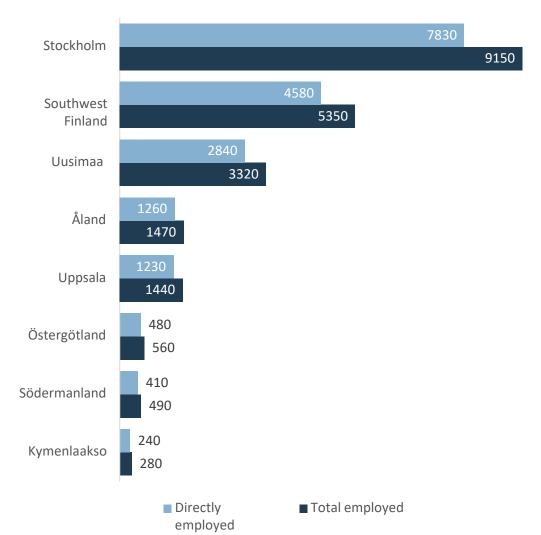
Employment by region

As with the number of visitors, the majority of employment linked to the tourism industry of the archipelago consists of jobs in the regions of Southwest Finland and Uusimaa and Stockholm County. These three regions account for 65% of employment based on the number of visits. The chart below shows both direct employment by region and total employment, both expressed in full-year equivalents. In addition to direct employment in the tourism industry itself, total employment also includes indirect employment, i.e., employment effects in the tourism industry's supply chain and those created by other economic spillover effects.

As with other benefits, the regional breakdown reflects the actual condition for employment – that is, where the visit has taken place.

However, the majority of the direct employment effect will be created in the same location as the visit.

Employment by region and year (full-year equivalents)



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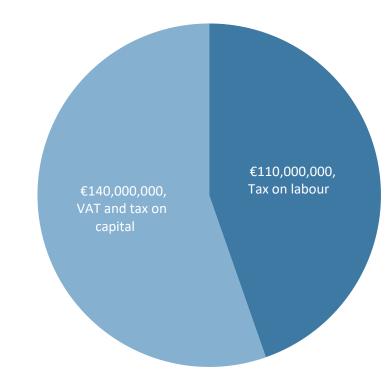
Tax revenues

In addition to jobs, visits to the archipelago also generate tax revenue at both a local and national level. In total, the revenue amounts to an annual average of €250 million in 2021–2022. Of this, just under half (44%) are taxes on labour linked to the direct and indirect jobs described in the previous section. The remainder consists of VAT and taxes on capital.

Up to the state tax threshold, labour income is taxed at the municipal and regional level, which means that tax revenue from labour largely stays within the municipality and region. VAT and tax on capital are both state taxes whose revenue is instead collected at a national level.

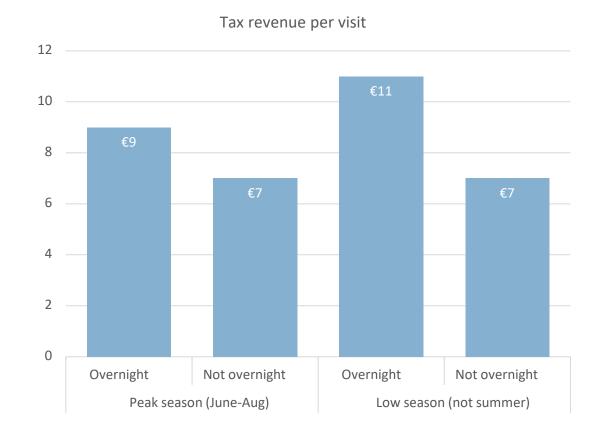
A more detailed explanation of how tax revenues are calculated can be found in the report.

EUR 250 million in tax revenue per year



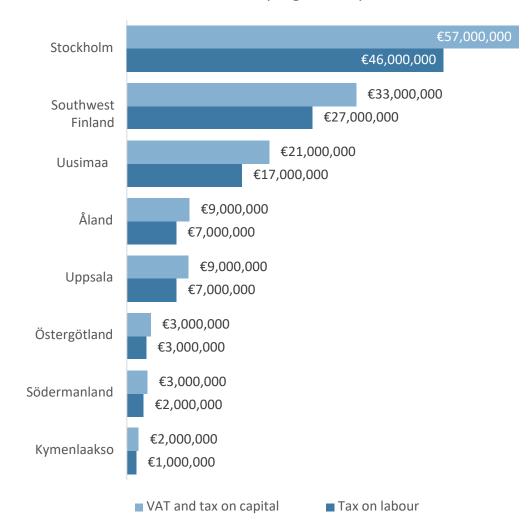
Tax revenue per visit

On average, each archipelago visit is estimated to generate tax revenue of EUR 8, or 13% of the turnover per visit. Overnight visits generate more tax revenue than day visits. The difference in tax revenue per season for overnight visits is linked to the range of accommodation facilities available during the summer and the rest of the year, respectively.



Tax revenue by region

The regional breakdown of tax revenue is based on the regional distribution of visits, and thus shows where the revenue is generated. It is not necessarily the same as where they are paid, or where they are ultimately spent. However, in the case of tax on labour, the largest share will be both paid and spent in roughly the same region where it was generated, since a larger share is accounted for by municipal taxes. VAT and capital tax, on the other hand, are state taxes, with a certain amount coming back to the region in the form of government grants and subsidies.



Tax revenue by region and year

If September becomes the new

And Gould happen if the archipelago season were to be extended by a couple of weeks in August and September? This potential in the hospitality industry is calculated by creating a scenario where visitor numbers in September are assumed to be the same as in August. The difference between the current situation and the scenario is then assumed to be the effect of a seasonal extension.

In many local areas, the first half of August is the real peak season, after which the number of visits slows down. Currently, the second half of August has more in common with September than with the first half of August – which mitigates the differences between the months. In 2022, for example, there were 3.9 million archipelago visits in August and 2.6 million in September for the mainland regions of Sweden and Finland.

The increase in September visits in the scenario is 50%, based on an average of the years 2021–2022. Over the whole year, this means an increase in the number of visits of just over 4 per cent. The direct turnover effect of the increase in visits is EUR 55 million, or just over 45% for September and 4% for the whole year. The increase in turnover differs between regions due to their respective differences in numbers of visits between August and September in both years. The regions with the highest percentage increase in turnover in the scenario are those that had the largest increases in visitor numbers between the two months.

Stockholm +€29 million (+53%)Southwest +€10 million Finland (+28%) Uusimaa +€7 million (+34%)Uppsala +€4.4 million (+53%) Östergötland +€2.2 million (+73%)Södermanland +€1.5 million (+61%)

+€1 million

Curren Scenario

situati on

(+64%)

Kymenlaakso

Change in direct turnover in September according to the scenario

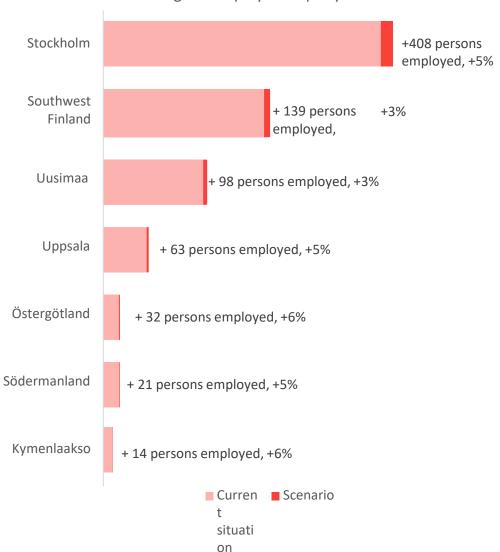
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Employment effects

A September in line with August would imply a need for an increase in labour input equivalent to 9300 full-time positions for one month – equivalent to 775 full-year equivalents of employment. On an annual basis, this represents an increase in employment of 4%.

The effect of a season extension is different for different local areas. The effects are generally the greatest in areas without a fixed link, which are also the areas with the lowest number of visits in relation to the whole. Mainland and fixed link areas – which have less seasonality than those without fixed links – thus reduce the overall impact.

The scenario result is based on the assumption that the pattern of visits in September is the same as in August, including the distribution of visits between different types of accommodation. The result is a cautious estimate of the effect, possibly underestimated, as summer-dependent cheaper forms of accommodation such as camping and guest harbours would probably account for a lower proportion of overnight stays in September than in August, even with a season extension. On the other hand, visitation numbers are assumed to be otherwise unchanged, which probably leads to some overestimation. Still, the overall assessment is that the result should be seen as a cautiously estimated floor level of the effect of a seasonal extension.



Change in employment per year

Part 3. Conclusions and takeaways

Summary conclusions, archipelago visits

In 2021 and 2022, an average of at least 32 million visits were made to the archipelago areas included in the study. This figure includes seven of the eight regions in the Nordic Archipelago Cooperation and three municipalities in the Åland archipelago. Of the seven regions, three have significantly higher amounts of visits than the others: Stockholm County, Southwest Finland and Uusimaa.

Over the course of the year, a large part of the visits to the archipelago took place during the summer holidays for both years. The large differences between seasons are present in all the regions analysed – both in Sweden and Finland. In general, the difference between summer and winter is the greatest in areas furthest from the mainland and large urban areas.

Summary conclusions, societal benefits of visitors

The economic effects and societal benefits of commercial archipelago visits can be measured through the metrics of turnover, value added, employment and tax revenue. The economic effects and societal benefits are based on all eight regions of the NSS geography. The region of Åland is included through a separate calculation model.

Turnover - The cash flow of the tourism industry

The direct turnover generated by the tourism industry in the archipelago businesses is equal to the sum of the consumption by visitors. There is also subcontracting turnover equal to the value of the inputs used. Total turnover is the sum of direct and indirect turnover.

• The turnover linked to archipelago visits totals EUR 1.7 billion annually for 2021–2022, or SEK 20 billion. Over 80% of turnover is linked to the direct tourism industry in the archipelagos. The last part is indirect turnover through spillover effects to the rest of the regional economy.

• An estimated 41% of the total turnover for the year arose in the three summer months of June, July and August each year.

• The average direct turnover per visit was EUR 47, or SEK 555. This includes all types of visits, both day visits and overnight stays, regardless of the type of accommodation.

• Most of the total turnover of EUR 1,700 million can be linked to visits to the three most visit-intensive regions of Stockholm County, Southwest Finland and Uusimaa.

Value added - Archipelago GDP

Value added is the value generated by the actual production of a good or service. GDP, or the regional equivalent GRP, is a measure of the value added within a country or region, and is the best measure of the value that the tourism industry adds to the local economy in the archipelago.

• The value added for archipelago visits in 2021–2022 totalled over EUR 860 million annually. The majority is directly linked to the tourism industry, and a smaller part to indirect spillover effects in the regional economy.

• On average, each visit generates approximately EUR 27 in value added. About 80% of it is created in the direct industry where the consumption takes place, while the rest is made up of the indirect effects in other industries.

Employment – Jobs in tourism and in the supply chain

Employment generated locally by the tourism industry is calculated based on the value added, wage share and wage totals in each sector. Employment is expressed in full-year equivalents, where one full year equivalent corresponds to one full-time job for one year.

• The local employment effect of the tourism industry in the archipelago is about 22,000 full-year equivalents per year. During one day in the peak season, more than 22,000 people work in the tourism industry in the archipelago. 10 seasonal workers working full-time for three months in the summer is equivalent to 2.5 full-year equivalents, which means that the tourism industry actually employs many times more people.

• The employment effect includes both employment in the direct industry and with local subcontractors. Almost half are in hotels and restaurants, while just over a tenth are in trade and food production. The remainder is distributed among other sectors.

• The majority of employment linked to the tourism industry of the archipelago consists of jobs in the regions of Southwest Finland and Uusimaa and Stockholm County. These three regions account for 65% of employment based on the number of visits.

Tax revenues - A local and state level

Tax revenue from the tourism industry is calculated based on the local value generated by visits to the archipelago. Revenue is calculated based on the total value added of the tourism industry.

• The tax revenue generated by archipelago visits amounts to approximately EUR 250 million annually. Of this, 44% is tax on labour, and the remainder is VAT and tax on capital. Tax revenue from labour largely stays within the municipality and region.

• On average, each archipelago visit is estimated to generate tax revenue of EUR 8, or 13% of the turnover per visit.

Summary conclusions, if September becomes the new August

One scenario examines the economic potential of an extended season where visitor numbers in September are assumed to be the same as in August. Looking at the mainland regions of Sweden and Finland, this means an increase in September visits of 50%, or a full-year increase of just over 4%.

• The direct turnover effect of the tourism industry in the scenario is EUR 55 million. An increase of more than 45% in September and 4% for the whole year.

• A September in line with August would imply a need for an increase in labour input equivalent to 9300 full-time positions for one month – equivalent to 775 full-year equivalents of employment. On an annual basis, this represents an increase in employment of 4%.

• The effect of a season extension is different for different local areas. The effects are generally the greatest in areas without a fixed link, which are also the areas with the lowest number of visits in relation to the whole. Mainland and fixed link areas – which have less seasonality than those without fixed links – thus reduce the overall impact.

Takeaways for further work

Efforts to keep the archipelago alive all year round are ongoing in many places, both at a regional and Nordic level. This includes season extension initiatives in line with the examined scenario of an increased number of visits during the month of September. For future work, we would like to leave a takeaway from the analyses and discussions carried out in connection with this study.

A September on a par with August would mean a large increase in both visits and the need for labour input related to the visits. Just over 4% more visits for the whole year and 50% more in September, resulting in an annual employment increase of 4%. Looking at the whole year, 4% may seem low, but the result can also be interpreted from a seasonal perspective: An increase in annual visits of just 4% could – if the increased visits occur in a concentrated period – result in a significantly longer season for local jobs and commercial services for the benefit of the archipelago's population and businesses.

However, the significant difference in the number of visits between August and September also points to obstacles to the realisation of this scenario. For example, the differences in weather and temperature affect the propensity to visit the archipelago at different times of the year. The start of the school year at the end of August also changes the daily patterns of many households. Archipelago transport timetables are also changed after the end of the summer, affecting accessibility in archipelago areas.

If the barriers to realisation were low, it is likely that the differences between August and September would already be lower at present. However, just as there are local differences in visitor patterns, some local areas are better placed to overcome the barriers to seasonal extension than others. In future work, it is possible to identify these areas by looking at current visitation patterns in relation to travel opportunities, local facilities and accommodation. Identifying these areas would be valuable in concentrating efforts in selected locations. The realisation of an extended season also requires coordination between operators, including a mandate to "own the issue" of season extension.

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