

SUMMARY REPORT of FULUFJÄLLET/FULUFJELLET FINAL WORKSHOP

Background and objective

The project “Value of Transboundary Nature Protected Areas Situated near the EU Outer Borders” – TRANPAREA, deals with economic valuation of protecting nature, particularly the remaining pristine nature that is shared between more countries, so-called transboundary nature protected areas (TNPA). The TRANPAREA project started in September 2013. It benefits from a Norway Grant under the Polish-Norwegian Research Programme. The project is led by the Faculty of Economic Sciences at the University of Warsaw, in partnership with the Institute of Transport Economics (TØI) in Oslo.

The overall goal of the TRANPAREA project is to provide information that contributes to the assessment of economically efficient preservation of scarce nature habitats. More specifically, the TRANPAREA project aims to test empirically whether TNPAs located at EU’s outer borders qualify as international public goods, by investigating people’s stated preferences for preservation of both sides of the border. In order to fulfil this aim, the objective has been two-folded: i) conduct comparative valuation studies of two TNPAs - the ‘Eastern’ (Białowieża / Białovieskaja Pušča) and ‘Scandinavian’ (Fulufjäll / Fulufjell); and ii) work out appropriate recommendations based on the studies’ implications and communicate the studies’ findings to a wider audience.

The workshop was celebrated in order to fulfil the second objective. Main stakeholders of the Fulufjället/Fulufjellet area were invited to discuss policy recommendations based on the TRANPAREA project’s results. In a formal invitation sent per e-Mail, workshop participants were briefly informed about the project’s scope and the objective of the workshop. They were also informed that we were seeking their contributions to 1) produce contextually relevant and feasible policy recommendations, and 2) explore how to facilitate its uptake and engage key stakeholders.

Workshop’s location and participants

The workshop took place on Thursday, the 2nd of June of 2016 at Knappgården, Särna (Sweden). Stakeholders were identified among those who had been involved in the hearing of protection proposal described in the Conservation Plan for Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park and Fregn nature reserve (due to its recentness). Then, corresponding institutions at the Swedish side were identified. Significant efforts were made in order to recruit workshop participants among those that were considered interested parties of the Fulufjället/Fulufjellet area, on both sides of the border. Four stakeholder representatives attended the workshop, all from the Swedish side, plus the project member. The table below describes the workshop participants.

Name	Position
Agneta Arnesson-Westerdahl	Project leader at Länsstyrelsen Dalarna
Mattias Ahlstedt	Leader at Naturskyddsföreningen in Dalarna
Rolf Lundqvist	Author of several books on Fulufjället/Fulufjellet
Ole Jörgen Wold	Chairman of the Northern Dalarna Tourist Board and Visit Idre
Iratxe Landa Mata	Researcher TØI – Core team, TRANPAREA – Workshop moderator

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Unfortunately, none from the Norwegian side was able to attend the workshop. However, the four stakeholders representing various institutions on the Swedish side, brought valuable knowledge about the area of study from different perspectives. Their interest in the TRANPAREA project was due to the importance of Fulufjället/Fulufjellet for the Älvdalen Municipality and the Dalarna County from a recreational, economic and natural perspective. The four participants indicated that they were motivated to attend the workshop either due to their interests in protecting more nature, exploring values attached to protected areas other than timber production (e.g. eco-tourism), finding ways of benefiting more from the national park, or safeguarding the municipality's interests related to tourism or other activities.

Structure of the workshop

After a brief personal presentation and some introductory words about the workshop, participants were made familiar with the TRANPAREA Project, i.e. its objectives and method as well as the main concepts the project deals with. Because the project relies on a survey-based methodology (stated preferences methodology and, more specifically, choice experiment), special attention was given to explaining and describing the process of designing the questionnaire, including the valuation scenario and choices. Then, the sample and the main (yet preliminary) results were described and explained. These results were summarized as following:

- Most of those supporting nature protection, and who are willing to pay for it, are probably not motivated by their own use, although they may retain an option use value
- Willingness to pay exists and increases with the size of the extended area to be protected
- Willingness to pay for the domestic part is greater in both samples (which brings us to reject the main hypothesis about Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park being a “perfect” international public good)
- The difference between willingness to pay for domestic and foreign extension is lower in Sweden than in Norway
- Most respondents understood well the questionnaire

Based on these results, workshop participants were requested to discuss feasible policy recommendations, taking into account the contextual reality, i.e. the recentness of the establishment of the national park (especially on the Norwegian side), the conflicts that arose during the process at both sides of the border and existing Scandinavian traditions in protecting nature. Moreover, workshop participants were also asked to express their views on how to implement policy recommendations as well as how to further use the TRANPAREA project results. Although most of the discussion took place after having presented the results, workshop participants were encouraged to raise questions and comments from the very beginning of the workshop. To activate the discussion, several questions were proposed by the workshop's moderator. Such questions included the following:

- Is extension of the protected area "politically possible" in the near future?
- Can “people's voice” / “willingness-to-pay” (WTP) be emphasized in decisions?

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- Would this estimated positive WTP constitute a strong enough argument for decision-makers?
- Would the WTP for park extension “make up” for a renewed conflict with forestry and local interests?
- May policy makers be willing to adopt the novel “renaturation” perspective?
- Is the protected area in Fulufjäll/Fulufjell (already) “big enough”?
- Could Fulufjäll/Fulufjell be conceived as part of a larger protected area?
- To whom should policy recommendations be addressed?
- What would need to change contextually to make policy recommendations from the study more feasible?
- How does the existence of the national border, the TNPA, affect the further development in Fulufjäll/Fulufjell, in a natural, socio-economic, or organisational perspective?
- May the lack of attendance from some stakeholder groups, particularly at the Norwegian side, have been triggered by a lack of interest (or is there too much conflict potential in study’s scenario)?
- How can we disseminate results among interested parties and get their feedback?
- How can the project contribute to raise the interest for the topic and for Fulufjället/Fulufjellet among the wider audience?
- How would the location(s) of the new area(s) to be protected (or obtain increased level of protection) be decided?

If feasible, we could consider including these questions in in-depth telephone interviews with some stakeholder representatives that did not attend the workshop, in order to collect further insights from a broader number of stakeholders.

Main issues discussed during the workshop

Workshop participants reacted **mainly positively to the idea of protecting more nature areas** and perceived the **TRANPAREA project results as relevant**. One of the workshop participants was **not surprise about results**. It was perceived as normal that there is a willingness to pay for protecting nature, because the survey was conducted among citizens of, respectively Sweden and Norway, who may live far away from the area of study and for whom an extension of the Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park would have no influence on their daily life. At this point workshop participants were reminded that the introduction of the tax would affect survey respondents.

The focus on TNPAs also proved relevant. An issue that was mentioned at a quite early stage of the workshop by one of the workshop participants, that **there are specific challenges linked to the cross-border nature of TNPAs**. The existence of **different regulations** at each side of the border affects, for instance, the development of infrastructure for recreational activities such as appropriate trails that do not stop at the border. Partly this is due to the **lack of scientific investigations on the Norwegian side** to assess the biological and geological value of the Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park. Without the biological assessment required by Norwegian Environment Agency to assess which areas should not be disturbed, for instance, trails at the Norwegian side cannot be developed. Another challenge would be that most of those trails would then run into zone I in the Swedish side, which is the zone with the highest **protection level** of Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park.

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Although workshop participants acknowledge that the TRANPAREA project mainly deals with assessing the willingness to pay for the non-use value of protecting nature, they thought that **use values are also important**, that one should see “use” and “non-use” values in combination. They believe that nature protection can/should still allow for using that nature for tourism purposes and even some kind of timber production (e.g. in areas where the biological values are not so high). These views seem to be shared by other local stakeholders who did not attend the workshop. One participant raised **doubts whether visitors would generally perceive a nature area that resembles a natural forest more attractive** than an area, which has been clear-cut by the forestry industry. It may depend on the recreation purpose. For instance, those who cycle for “training” purposes may not care about what the surroundings look like and may be, instead, more concerned about the quality of the trail/path/road. Furthermore, visitors may find certain thickly grown forests as a barrier to enjoy **landscape views**. This participant reminded that one should not forget that the forestry industry has contributed to make these areas more accessible (something which locals may appreciate), whereas the national park could translate into less **accessibility**.

What the application of results concerns, workshop participants believe that these results **would not be enough to back up a political decision** to extend Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park. This especially applies to the Norwegian side but also to the Swedish side, where so much land has been already protected in Älvdalen. One of the workshop participants mentioned that such a decision may be difficult to take within the next five years. Based on previous experience such processes take long time. However, as another participant stated, **someone has to start the discussion because it is worth it**.

Workshop participants indicated that **survey results must be backed up by interested parties**. In such processes, it is key to **ask local people about their expectations** in order to know whether the possible extension of the national park is in conflict with their priorities. In order to know whether this “willingness to pay” for extension of the protected area would make up for a renewed conflict, one needs to talk to the forestry industry and to other local stakeholders. Workshop participants seem to agree that **policy recommendations should be addressed at the municipal level first and, then, at the county level**, this being applied at both the Norwegian and the Swedish side of the border.

Workshop participants also perceived the adoption of the “**renaturation**” perspective as quite **challenging** because its long-term perspective is in clear contradiction with the short-term perspective of the democratic processes. Yet, as one participant indicated, it is **necessary** because there are not many natural areas left to be set under protection. Moreover, another participant mentioned that **this could represent valuable assets for tourism**. Workshop participants believe that policy makers will only be willing to support “renaturation”, if it helps them to get re-elected. This, in turn, means that this perspective needs to be attractive and accepted by society.

Workshop participants **wonder about the location** selected to protect nature, if the three yellow-marked area adjacent to Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park were really the most relevant ones. They considered that there might be areas not adjacent to Fulufjället/Fulufjellet that might be more valuable. Moreover, they also questioned whether **the protection under the national park** was the appropriate

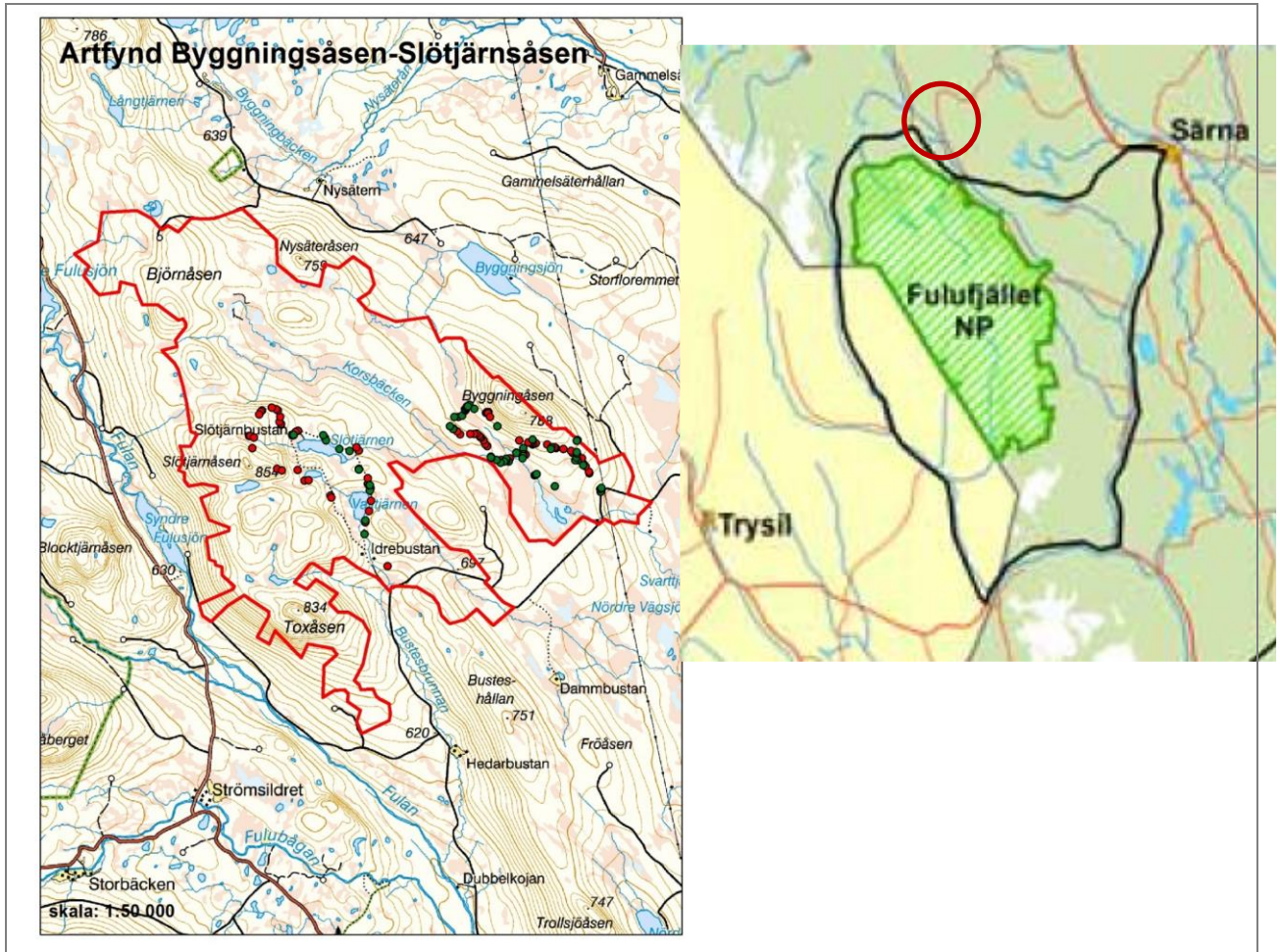
level. One of the workshop participants suggested that the protection as a **nature reserve**¹ could possibly be **easier**. In fact, another participant recalled that the process of establishing a national park at Fulufjället/Fulufjellet, started by purchasing some lands from the Swedish Church and protecting these as a nature reserve². Workshop participants did however express concerns about whether the **size** of the current national park is enough to ensure the protection of its biological value, especially at the Norwegian side³. One participant pointed to that the establishment of the Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park is not enough, when the landscape around it as a whole is losing important habitats. At this point, the need for creating a **buffer zone** was mentioned.

In this sense, **the extension of the national park was perceived as something positive**. However, workshop participants were **not sure whether the adjacent areas would be the most appropriate** to extend the Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park, because many of these areas were clear cut when (or before) the national park was established at the Swedish side. A further local stakeholder who could not participate in the workshop but had the opportunity to provide some input indicated that one alternative area that seems relevant to consider is “*Slötjärnsbustan med omnejd*” (Slötjärnsåsen-Björnåsen) to the northeast of the Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park (figure); the area at the other side (north-eastern side) of Fulan river. The most northern parts in the map (left) representing approximately one third of the area are already protected as nature reserve but the two thirds in the South comprise old growth forests with high conservation values and interesting biodiversity that should be protected too. Otherwise, there is a risk that it will be clear cut instead. In line with these thoughts, it was mentioned that it is necessary to **couple the TRANSPAREA project results** (which assess the issue from an economic perspective) **to the existing knowledge on the area from a natural science perspective**, in order to increase the impact of the project.

¹ A nature reserve is a lower IUCN protection level than national park in Sweden, while it is the opposite in Norway

² In Norway a comparative approach would probably be first to protect an area as a protected landscape, IUCN V, or a habitat management area, IUCN IV.

³ The TRANSPAREA scenario would extend the national park area, and, in addition to the yellow-marked area, be attached to Fregn nature reserve, at the Norwegian side, a IUCN I category protected area, somewhat closer to the zone I regulation on the Swedish side of Fulufjället/Fulufjellet.



Source: (left) Sebastian Kirppu; right (own elaboration)

Throughout the discussion, it became clear that the uptake of any decision regarding extension of protected areas (and/or increased protection level) and its success would to a large extent depend on **how much people know about the topic**. For instance, it was indicated that Swedes do not know much about the nature values on the Norwegian side of the Fulufjäll/Fulufjell area (and, probably, vice versa). It was also mentioned that, generally speaking, people are not very eager to visit forests, compared to (bare rock) mountains (and lake/sea areas) and that it is difficult to making forests attractive (compared to other nature types).

Despite the focus of the TRANPAREA project, the discussion turned somehow to the **commercial value of protecting nature areas**. One participant mentioned that Swedish nature and its forests have little chance when competing against Norwegian fjords in attracting visitors. At least two workshop participants perceived that nature-based tourism is still growing at a very slow pace and that it is difficult to develop tourism products that are nature-based. It was, for instance, mentioned that there is a lack of entrepreneurs among locals to build upon the (potential business) value provided by the Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park. It was also indicated that most people working with tourism activity (on the Swedish side) were non-locals or foreigners, that locals seemingly lacked ideas when it came to designing nature-based products and market these. One participant also mentioned that the nature

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area to be protected should be paid by those using it (while currently there are no entrance fees – visitors only pay for services like guiding). At this point, workshop participants were reminded that our project intended primarily to assessing the non-use value of protected areas; yet, admitting that the user perspective and user attraction are indeed relevant for the issue of (extended) nature protection.

In order to increase the impact of the TRANPAREA project, workshop participants recommended **explaining how these results could contribute to addressing different stakeholders' interests and expectations** regarding Fulufjället/Fulufjellet. Workshop participants were for instance concerned with **achieving established environmental goals, increasing the biological value, attracting more visitors** (which includes the design and marketing of a proper visitor strategy), **improving cooperation between Sweden and Norway, and educating people on the importance of protecting nature.**

Ideally, the workshop could have helped us some step further in mapping the above-mentioned issues, if more stakeholder representatives were present. One participant **did not believe that lack of attendance indicated lack of interest**, whereas another participant mentioned that the reason might have been the **invitation design**, focusing too much on the project and too little on what we were intending to achieve by the workshop. Therefore, this participant recommended **conducting a new workshop** to reach a broader range of stakeholder, mostly at the local level.

As TRANPAREA is limited in scope, resources, and duration, it was suggested that any new workshop would have to take place within the framework of another project. In such a workshop, if possible, TRANPAREA results could be briefly summarized and serve as one point of departure for a discussion centred on stakeholders' concerns. One project mentioned was an INTERREG project led by one of the workshop participants (Agneta Arnesson-Westerdahl), focusing on developing a strategy to increase the number of visitors to Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park, as well as in improving cooperation between Norway and Sweden. Generally, it was mentioned that TRANPAREA should attempt **to seek links to other projects**, for which its results could be useful as an input.

One of the workshop participants mentioned that long reports do not help in communicating results. One should, instead, focus on the highlights and link them to the interests of the audience. **Social Media** was regarded as an important tool to spread results among the broad audience rapidly and at a low cost. Moreover, to reach a broad local audience it was recommended to submit an article to **Fjällposten**, a local newspaper (Särna), which is free and is read by a broad audience. If such an article is submitted, words and terms should be carefully selected, making the text clear and context-relevant. Another possibility could be to spread some **leaflets at Naturum Visitor Centre**, to which Naturum has already reacted positively.

Main conclusions – input to policy recommendations

The main input for the design of contextually relevant and feasible policy recommendations can be summarized as follows:

- The topic of protecting nature is important and the change in protection tradition (towards “renaturation”) may be necessary, as few natural areas remain to be protected (and some protected areas need to be enlarged or include buffer zones).

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- Exploring whether Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park is an international public good is relevant because there are, indeed, challenges linked to the cross-border nature of TNPAs.
- There is already some knowledge about adjacent (or quasi-adjacent) areas to Fulufjället/Fulufjellet, which would be relevant to protect (e.g. Slötfjärnsbustan and its surroundings, to the north-east, beyond Fulan river). Such knowledge about the biological and geological value exists at the Swedish side.
- Politically support for extension is perceived as complicated and difficult, especially in Norway but also in Sweden, at least within the next five years.
- The TRANPAREA project results may provide a good basis for a discussion about “renaturation” and extension/connection of natural habitats.
- Results (i.e. that WTP increases with size) is perceived as a strong argument for decision makers, albeit insufficient.
- There is further need for:
 - Communication with forestry industry and local interests (asking people about their expectations), in terms of getting viewpoints on whether the estimated willingness to pay for park extension possibly could “make up” for a renewed conflict with forestry and local interests, e.g., how the compensation for those losing rights to use (as depicted by the TRANPAREA scenario) can be implemented.
 - Having a proper management, marketing and communication plan (what is the scope of the proposed extension of the protected area, and how can this be communicated).
- TRANPAREA should find out and explain how the study results can be followed-up in a way that makes it as congruent as possible to different interests, such as accomplishing environmental objectives, while attracting more visitors (and, thereby, local activity), as well as increasing the cooperation across the border – for the biodiversity protection as well as for the well-being of the citizens of the area.
- The potential impact of the study results depends, to a large extent, on how much people know about protecting nature (assuming that knowledge about the importance of preserving the nature gives an impetus to supporting necessary protection measures).
- It may be generally difficult for policy-makers to adopt the novel “renaturation” perspective, because the long-term process clashes with the short period of time for which they are elected. Policy makers need a headline, projects that preferably brings results within their election period, ideas that are “safe to bet on”.
- A proposed approach is to first create awareness and seeking support among local stakeholders, and then, eventually, bring the issue forward to the county-level and regional/national decision-makers.
- TRANPAREA needs to clarify to what extent the survey results, the stated willingness-to-pay for extending Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park by inclusion of adjacent areas that would become natural forest in the course of time (“renaturation”), could be applied to a slightly adjusted scenario. It may be easier to protect other areas than the yellow-marked areas on the map in the survey scenario and apply a different level of protection. (Choosing another area adjacent to Fulufjället/Fulufjellet national park would be congruent with the stated WTP, but not necessarily setting a different level of protection. The selection of an area that is not adjacent to the

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national park is something more distant from the survey scenario, which focused on “renaturation” of forest and extending a transnational national park area.)

Several ways of **communicating** the TRANPAREA project results were proposed: new workshop(s), seeking links to other projects, apply social media, publish in Fjällposten, and produce visitor leaflets.

Next steps

It was agreed that the summary of the workshop and the project will be sent to workshop participants and other interested parties by mid-June, with a request for further comments to the proposed policy implications of the TRANPAREA project results; whether it is possible to design feasible policy recommendations. Recipients of the summary reports will also be encouraged to distribute results within their network. Any new feedback will be included in the final report of the Fulufjället/Fulufjellet case study, which will be published in the TRANPAREA project’s website.

Finally, the TRANPAREA project has indeed benefitted from the valuable insights from the four workshop participants at the TRANPAREA final workshop, for which we remain grateful.

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