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The Norwegian ELAV-Project

Ove Mogård

Allskog BA, Norway

1 Background

When the invitation came from the Executive Committee for northern Norway to participate as an Interreg northern periphery partner in the ELAV project, it fit perfectly with our ambitions for local forestry business planning. Allskog, the cooperative society for forest owners in northern Norway (Figure 1), had worked with ideas on performing a full scale project for local business development based on forest resources in one of the northernmost municipalities for a long time, without knowing how to raise the necessary funding.

At a preliminary meeting in Mørkret, Sweden in June of 2004, it became clear that the ELAV-project might be the right opportunity, and potential Norwegian project partners were contacted. The result was a joint Norwegian project with Allskog, Statsskog SF (the crown forest) and the governor of Troms county Agricultural Department as project partners. The following debate regarding the selection of a case study area, resulted in the Municipality of Bardu being chosen. They subsequently became the most important of the project partners .

86 percent of the forest land in Norway is owned by local farmers. The average forest holding is approximately 50 hectares. Rural communities are in need of extensive business development based on local resources , to realise sustainable development and secure a sound economic basis.

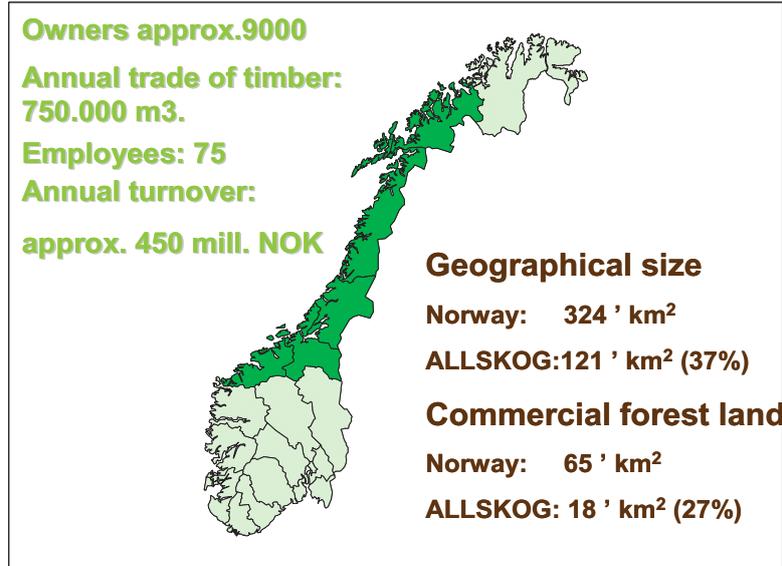


Figure 1. Key figures and target area for the Allskog society of private forest owners.

2 Case study area

The municipality of Bardu (Figure 2), population 3.874 (1.01.2005, source Statistics Norway) is one of two municipalities located in the interior river valleys of Troms county. In this area forestry and farming is the most common agricultural combination (Figure 3). Besides being a garrison town, producing hydroelectric power, and having a rather well developed tourism business, dairy farming and forestry represent a major part of the overall income to the community. The mountain area is almost endless, and represents a wide spectrum of opportunities for recreational use, such as camping, hunting, fishing and so on. Bardu is not a old municipality. The first settlements of farmers came from south-eastern Norway, in to the interior river valleys in Troms in the 18th century.

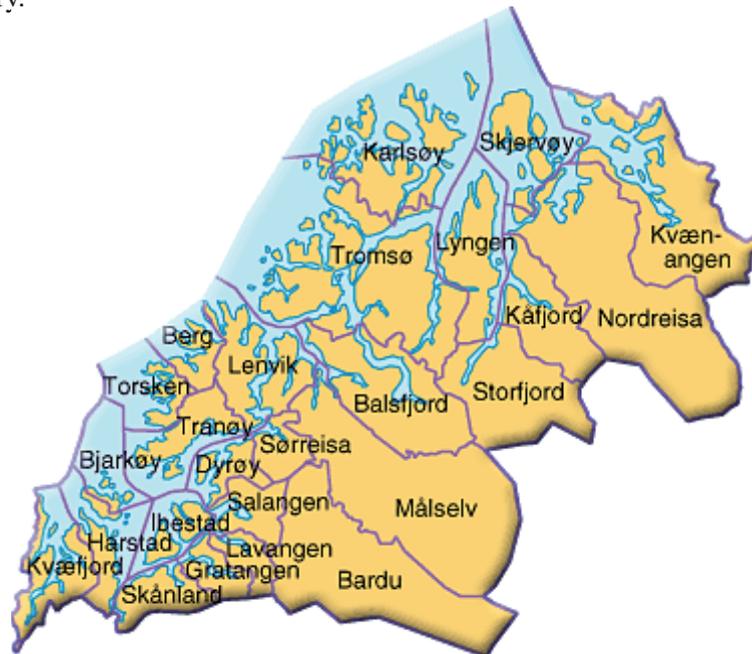


Figure 2. Map of the municipalities of Troms, with Bardu located in the south-east.

3 Status

The Norwegian ELAV-project is established to focus on detailed planning of forest resources, to encourage local people to use this information in the practical development of their own ideas. A project leader is employed on a part time basis for the project, and is working with the municipal agricultural office in Bardu.

Until now (March 2006), the project leader has put considerable effort into organising several interest groups of local farmers, entrepreneurs and other personal of ongoing or planned projects. The interest-groups are established with themes such as traditional forestry, non-timber forest products, tourism and health and social business.

4 Expectations

The major results the partners expect from the project are to obtain an updated land resource database emphasising the forest land and its values. Furthermore, that the networks of people active during the project will continue to be active after the project is closed, and implementing the strategic plan for land resource utilisation created within the project.



Figure 3. Scenery from Bardu