

“A tourism perspective about Stakeholder classification and collaboration in Scania: In the context of the Fehmarn Belt connection”

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Abstract

The Fehmarn Belt connection has potential effects for the region of Scania in terms of tourism development. Since, the travel time between Hamburg and Malmö will be reduced to 3 hours it offers new possibilities for tourists. To understand the potential effects for tourism in Scania, the role of stakeholders need to be addressed. The study focuses on developing the knowledge about different stakeholder typologies and how the stakeholders are collaborating. Moreover the research examines how stakeholders are reasoning about the potential effects from the Fehmarn Belt connection. With a qualitative approach, the empirical data was collected through a document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The findings show different actions among stakeholders in tourism planning, such as collaborating with stakeholders, improving mobility, promoting sustainable tourism practices and developing different types of tourism. A shared vision, stakeholder collaboration and implementation of strategies are necessary to reach the potential the Fehmarn Belt connection offers.

Keywords: Fehmarn Belt connection, stakeholder typologies, stakeholder collaboration, tourism planning, Scania

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1.Introduction

On May 4th 2026 an historic event took place, the first element of the upcoming Fehmarn Belt tunnel was immersed in the water between Denmark and Germany (Femern, 2026). The Fehmarn Belt connection is one of the most important infrastructure projects and has the potential to connect several regions (Ramboll, n.d.a). This could further lead to growth and development between Germany, Denmark and the south of Sweden (Europakorridoren, 2025). In the research team, one researcher originates from northern Germany and the other from southern Sweden. Both researchers are living in close proximity to the Danish border, therefore they are particularly aware of the potential effects the connection may have on cross-border mobility and travel patterns. The topic is current, which is shown through a report by Ramboll (2026) titled: “Future road and rail transport” which highlights several characteristics and potential of tourism and mobility in southern Sweden. The Fehmarn Belt connection is often associated with opportunities, but also raises concerns regarding possible challenges and risks for the surrounding regions, which stakeholders need to be aware of and handle correctly. In our case the focus is on stakeholders connected to the region of Scania.

To provide context for this study, the introduction first presents a background of the Fehmarn Belt connection. This is followed by more detailed information of tourism and stakeholders in Scania. Based on this, the problematisation and aim of the research are introduced, followed by the research questions that guide this study.

1.1 Background

The Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link (FBFL) is the world's longest immersed tunnel that is going to be 18km long (Fehmarnbelt Business Council, 2022). The tunnel is between Puttgarden on the island of Fehmarn in the Northeastern part of Germany and Rødby in the Southern part of Denmark (Ramboll, n.d.a). In this study, the FBFL is more used in regards to the actual infrastructure project and the Fehmarn Belt connection in a more broader sense. The railway route today goes through Jutland, which is 160km longer than the link will be when it is put into service. The current travel time by train between Hamburg and Copenhagen is 4 hours and 58 minutes, which will be shortened to 2 hours and 30 minutes with the FBFL. Furthermore, it will

take 3 hours to travel by train between Hamburg and Malmö, in contrast to the 5 hours and 33 minutes it takes right now (Fehmarnbelt Business Council, 2022). An alternative more direct route is taking the ferry between Puttgarden and Rødby. However, the FBFL will be more reliable, since there is no dependency on time schedule or weather conditions (Fehmarnbelt Business Council, 2022). In the year 1992, an agreement was made between the Transport Ministers of Germany and Denmark to conduct research for making a shared basis of the decision-making process regarding the FBFL. In November 2010 a review of the plans were made, and the results confirmed that the project represented a very good value for money assessment. The construction work of the FBFL started officially on 1 January 2021 and according to the current plan it will be put into service in 2029 (Federal Ministry of Transport, 2026).

According to Femern A/S, which is a state-owned enterprise of the Danish Ministry of Transport (Femern, n.d.a), there are several reasons for building the FBFL. First, it will contribute to the green shift in the transport sector, which will reduce the CO₂ emissions because of shorter and faster routes. There is a potential of removing today's pressure on the roads and railways (Femern, n.d.b). However, the FBFL could result in bottlenecks in the transport system, for example in Hamburg or between Copenhagen and Malmö (Ramboll, n.d.b). For the FBFL to be able to operate efficiently, there is a need to establish local and regional rail projects so that connection and accessibility problems can be solved. There might be capacity constraints or not enough flexibility in regards to road transport (Sweco, 2023). The second reason is time-saving for the passengers, since the travel time for trains will be lowered (Femern, n.d.b). Choosing a sustainable alternative is challenging due to time constraints, particularly when travelling for business. The FBFL would therefore offer a new competitive alternative for business travelers (Ramboll, n.d.a). Lastly, the reason for building the link is because it will strengthen the link between Scandinavia and Europe (Femern, n.d.b).

The region will expand wider from Hamburg to Oslo and will include 14 million people (Sweco, 2023). With the agreement to build the FBFL, the organization STRING was formed. This organization unites currently different political authorities from the local and regional level in 7 cities from 4 different countries (STRING, n.d). Their objective is to connect the area and create

a megaregion so that green growth can be achieved through shared power (Ramboll, n.d.a). The FBFL is also part of the TransEuropean Transport Network (TEN-T), which is creating the transport corridor from Helsinki to Palermo that connects Europe (Fehmarnbelt Business Council, 2022). TEN-T includes the longest European corridor, Scandinavian-Mediterranean corridor, that Germany, Denmark and Sweden are a part of (Ramboll, n.d.b). FBFL will fill in the missing gap in the Northern European railway (Fehmarnbelt Business Council, 2022).

Tourism is one sector that probably will experience huge impacts from the FBFL (Ramboll, n.d.a). It is a phenomenon that involves the traveling of people to a place outside their usual environment with purposes such as leisure, business or professional (Papp-váry et al., 2025). For the megaregion, tourism is an important contributor for the economy. The importance of tourism varies between the regions, whereas Scania is one of those where tourism is highly important. More specifically, between the years 2010-2019 the development of tourism grew with 71% in Scania (Ramboll, n.d.a). However just because the FBFL opens, it does not automatically mean that tourism will increase in southern Sweden. The impacts are depending on a combination of several factors, such as political decision, investments, collaborations and travel behaviors. Moreover, the development in infrastructure calls for collaboration between stakeholders and that they understand as well as adapt their work for facing both the opportunities and challenges. The stakeholders in tourism can be strengthened in terms of increased tourism by spreading insights and awareness about the expected potential for the industry. Stakeholders that are working with issues related to tourism, transport and cross regional questions in Scania are for example Visit Skåne, Skånetrafiken, Öresundsinstitutet, STRING, Innovation Skåne and Destinationssamverkan Malmö AB (Ramboll, 2026). Visit Skåne is Scania's regional destination management organization (DMO) and is owned by Region Skåne Holding AB. They are working to foster growth of the tourism and event industry, also to strengthen the international brand of Scania. They are collaborating with municipalities, the region, other regions and other international networks and collaboration projects (Visit Skåne, 2026).

The region of Scania is affected by strong seasonality, with the main number of tourists coming during the summer. Nearby markets that are dominating the tourism flows to the South of Sweden are especially Germany and Denmark. Another important market is the Netherlands.

Tourists from these different countries have different demands of what they expect from their holiday. German tourists primarily seek nature and outdoor activities, whereas Danish tourists combine the interest in nature with an interest in culture, shopping and gastronomy. Visitors from the Netherlands have high requirements on sustainability. At the moment the Öresund bridge and the Copenhagen airport are the main channels how tourists travel to the South of Sweden. However, infrastructure projects such as the expansion of the Copenhagen airport and mainly the building of the Fehmarn Belt connection are most likely leading to a transition in the flow of tourists (Ramboll, 2026). Tourism in the region will be affected by the connection, such as the number of day trippers that will rise on both sides of the tunnel (Fehmarnbelt Business Council, 2022). Due to the geographical distance of Sweden, air travel is quite common (Ramboll, n.d.a). Traveling through the border between Germany, Denmark and Sweden could be seen as cross-border tourism. There are different factors that decide on the mode of transport for travel such as accessibility and perceived ease (Ramboll, 2026). A growing number of people wish to travel environmentally friendly and look for ways to travel sustainable where the Fehmarn Belt connection can become a game changer and make the tunnel the preferred mode of transportation (Ramboll, n.d.a).

1.2 Problematisation and research aim

Visit Skåne is the stakeholder who is responsible for strengthening the brand of Scania as a tourism destination (Visit Skåne, 2026). However, that does not explain which stakeholders are working for planning and developing tourism in the region. With the upcoming opening of FBFL, and the impact it may have on the tourism industry some concern may be raised. Therefore the focus lies with the perspective of the Fehmarn Belt connection and on stakeholders connected to tourism planning in Scania. Moreover, defining the actions that lead to a categorization of the stakeholders. These then lead to certain stakeholder typologies based on the Salience model (Mitchell et al., 1997). Existing research highlights the benefits of stakeholder collaboration in tourism planning (Alrwajfah et al., 2019; McComb et al., 2017; Silwana & Dube, 2022), however they are not specially focusing on stakeholder typologies. Therefore this study aims to address this research gap by contributing to more clarity. Thus, adding to the actions that contribute to the formation of stakeholder typologies. This is of importance as the existing literature on stakeholder typology does not offer specific actions to categorise the

stakeholders in the different typologies (Perkins et al., 2022). Since the FBFL is still in the building process, the exact effects and potential impacts on tourism in Scania are still uncertain. The aim of the study is to advance knowledge about different types of stakeholders and how their actions show how they collaborate. Furthermore exploring how stakeholders see the potential effects that could arise from the Fehmarn Belt connection and how this also leads to collaboration.

Thus, the three research questions this study aims to answer are the following:

RQ1: Which actions contribute to the formation of certain stakeholder typologies?

RQ2: How are stakeholders in the Region of Scania collaborating in regard to tourism planning with the upcoming opening of the Fehmarn Belt connection?

RQ3: How do the stakeholders reasoning about the potential effects of the Fehmarn Belt connection in regards to tourism?

1.3 Structure of thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters, where each one contributes to a clear aspect of the overall research. Following the introduction, chapter two presents the methodology and the method that has been used in this study. Chapter three provides a review of earlier literature about tourism planning including sustainable tourism, place branding and mobility. Furthermore the theoretical framework is presented, which is the salience model by Mitchell et al. (1997). The last section in chapter three is combining stakeholder collaboration with tourism planning. In chapter four the findings from the empirical material are presented. The findings are further analysed and discussed in chapter five, by using the theoretical framework. Lastly, the paper ends with a conclusion in chapter six, where the research questions are answered. Followed by theoretical contributions, limitations of the research, suggestions for future research and practical implications are presented.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research design

The nature of this study is qualitative, due to the aim of understanding the collaboration between stakeholders in Scania who work with tourism development. By adopting a qualitative approach, it contributes to sensitizing and exploring the reality of this situation (Flick, 2023). An abductive approach has been adopted, by shifting focus between theory and empirical material (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). The theoretical standpoint about epistemology and ontology in this research will be discussed. First is ontology, where this study is based on constructivism. That is understood as social actors creating the meaning of a social phenomena (Clark et al., 2021). In this study that means the stakeholders are creating the social connection in regards to FBFL. Second, the study is based on an interpretivist epistemology. This is used by exploring how stakeholders perceive the collaboration and how they view tourism development. The knowledge gained is therefore socially constructed through the subjective experience of the social action (Clark et al., 2021). The Fehmarn Belt connection has been used as a starting point for the research. This study applies a case study research design, by focusing on stakeholder collaboration in Scania. Problems with a case study approach can be that it is not considered generalisable. However, the main concern of the research method is not generalisability but reliability. Therefore, it is very important to show the context in depth and to explain why something is important (Hammond & Wellington, 2020). The empirical data has been progressively developed in line with adjusting the theory during the process (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). Triangulation is being used to get another perspective by using another method, however it is of high relevance that it not just leads to more data of the same. More detailed a between-method triangulation has been applied, meaning in this research that semi-structured interviews as well as a document analysis were done. This leads to greater knowledge and a strengthened quality regarding the research (Flick, 2023) as well as more reliability in the gained data (Clark et al., 2021).

2.2 Sample and Data collection

The thesis initially began with a document analysis. In a later stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted while the document analysis was still in progress, allowing both methods to be carried out at the same time. There are different criteria that assess the quality of qualitative research. As this study includes two qualitative research methods, theoretical saturation was reached and no additional data were found after 8 documents were analysed and 8 organisations were interviewed (Flick, 2023).

2.2.1 Document analysis

A document analysis was conducted, with the aim of developing our understanding about the Fehmarn Belt connection. This method was chosen because documents can be used to understand the context of institutions and its social realities (Flick, 2023). However, the document analysis was not following the ordinary process but rather deepened the background knowledge of the phenomenon. This can be seen in the Introduction chapter of the thesis as the documents are mostly used there. This also explains why the data from document analysis is not used to the same degree as the data from interviews in the findings chapter. The search for documents was made with terms such as “Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link”, “Germany”, “Denmark”, “tourism” and “transport”. As it is important to select documents with a high quality the following four criteria by Scott (1990, cited in Flick, 2023) have been used: Authenticity, Credibility, Representativeness and Meaning. To ensure the authenticity of the reports it was looked at the origin of the documents (Flick, 2023), as it is important to have in mind that documents are produced with a certain purpose and therefore they are not just a representation of reality (Clark et al., 2021). The analysis consists of 8 documents, that includes reports from organisations such as Schleswig-Holstein, Fehmarnbelt Business Council, Europakorridoren, STRING, Greater Copenhagen, Sweco and Ramboll. All of these documents are grey literature meaning that they are non-academic sources and may not have a reviewing process as it is the case for academic resources (Clark et al., 2021).

Table 1: List of documents

Name of the document	Author/organization	Year
Framtidens väg- och rälsburna transporter [Future road and rail transport]	Ramboll Management Consulting	2026
Fehmarn Bält och Kronoberg [Fehmarn Belt and Kronoberg]	PlanImpact - Göran Cars	No date
The Fehmarn Belt tunnel – Creating connections	Fehmarnbelt Business Council	2022
Rail Freight with the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link	Sweco	2023
Fehmarn Bält ändrar villkor [Fehmarn Belt changes conditions]	Europakooridoren	2025
Economic impacts in the STRING region from the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link	Ramboll	No date
UNLOCKING THE TRANSNATIONAL POTENTIAL IN THE FEHMARN BELT REGION	Ramboll	No date
Dänemark-Strategie des Landes Schleswig-Holstein [Denmark strategy of the state of Schleswig-Holstein]	Schleswig-Holstein	2024

2.2.2 Interviews

To complement the document analysis and get insights from stakeholders in Scania, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The advantage with semi-structured interviews is that the subjective viewpoints of the interviewee are more likely to become clear in comparison to a standardized interview or a questionnaire. An interview guide (see appendix A), was developed and was a key part for preparing and conducting the interviews. This led to conversation and was used flexibly depending on the interviewees' answers (Flick, 2023). Another reason for the interview guide is that it allows comparability between the different interviews. Different types of questions were used in the semi-structured interview, which are for

example introducing questions, follow-up questions and probing questions (Clark et al., 2021). The interview guide has made use of these different types of questions and has been divided into five main themes: Background, General information about the company, Fehmarn Belt connection, Stakeholders and the report by Ramboll (2026). The interviews took place between March 3 and April 1, and lasted between 40-75 minutes. All interviews except one were done digitally via Microsoft Teams, even though it was offered to conduct the interviews in person the interviewees preferred mostly to conduct the interviews digitally. Both of the researchers attended most of the interviews, where one had the role of an interviewer and the other as observer. The purpose of this was for the observer to add things that the interviewer may have missed. Three of the interviews were held in Swedish and the others in English. This was made with the aim of making the interviewee more comfortable as well as the interviewer. It contributed to a more conversational interview and increased developed answers, as well as the chance of more additional questions being asked. However, during all interviews, the observer effect may have been present, whereby interviewees, due to awareness of being observed, may have changed their natural responses (Clark et al., 2021).

As our thesis is focusing on the tourism development in Scania it felt natural to focus on interviewing stakeholders connected to Scania. There are two reasons for this choice with the first one being, Scania is the closest region in Sweden located geographically to the Fehmarn Belt connection. Second is the report by Ramboll (2026) which gave this research great insights and was also used to find potential respondents. The report was done by Ramboll on behalf of Visit Skåne, Visit Halland, Region Halland and Malmö Stad. A non-probability sampling more precisely purposive sampling was conducted. This sampling method was chosen so that the respondents have experience about tourism and the Fehmarn Belt connection, by this they could give valuable insights. To gain access to right respondents snowball sampling was also applied throughout the data collection process. By asking interviewees for suggestions of other participants to contact, potential participants were found that matched the defined criteria (Flick, 2023). As it is important to have specific criteria for inclusion and exclusion (Clark et al., 2021), the following criteria have been set: (1) stakeholder who has some involvement in regional development in Scania, (2) some knowledge about the Fehmarn Belt connection.

To begin with, a total of 12 organizations were contacted which resulted in 8 interviews. As mentioned earlier interviewees were first found through the report by Ramboll (2026) and looking at which stakeholder in Scania that was involved in it. While going through the report stakeholders such as STRING and Øresundsinstitutet were also identified. In addition other stakeholders from other reports that were used for the document analysis were contacted, however we did not receive any feedback. Another perspective of the local DMO in Scania gave Visit Lund. To get more insights into the mobility Trafikverket has been interviewed. Region Skåne as well as Sydsvenska Handelskammaren gave a more regional perspective. Thus, their level of expertise as well as their individual viewpoint on different aspects differed.

Table 2: List of interviewees and organization names

Pseudonyms	Organisation name	Short description
Annika & Benjamin	Visit Skåne	The regional DMO, mission to market Scania and working with sustainable development in the region.
Cecilia	Visit Lund	A local DMO, mission to recruit and develop events as well as to provide high-quality hospitality in Lund. Subsidiary of Lund Municipality.
Daniella	STRING	A lobby organisation that consists of 16 members in the region and was formed out of the Fehmarn Belt connection. Helps to move forward with the political processes.
Eskil	Malmö Stad - Community planning and urban development	Municipality of Malmö City. This department works with strategic issues and analysis about infrastructure across the Öresund region.
Filippa	Trafikverket	Responsible for the long-term strategic planning as well as building of infrastructure for roads and railways in Sweden.

Gustav	Øresundsinstitutet	An independent knowledge center, that is Swedish/Danish. Contributes with analysing data, organizing network meetings and as a news agency.
Hanna	Sydsvenska Handelskammaren	Chamber of commerce in south Sweden, working with problems for their members. Policies in relation to electricity and energy, skills supply and transport infrastructure.
Isac	Region Skåne - Transport and infrastructure	The regional government of Scania. This department is part of the regional development. Planning infrastructure for the future and prioritizing where to make improvements in the regional infrastructure.

2.3 Data Analysis

After conducting all data, the interviews were transcribed. As stated in the consent form, AI was used to transcribe the interviews. Due to the AI functionality all interviews were directly transcribed by the transcription tool by Microsoft Teams. Then all the transcriptions were looked over again and the video recordings were used to make sure the transcribing was done correctly by the AI tool. By doing that a familiarization with the data took place, where semantic as well as latent codes were found. When writing the findings some of the quotes were needed to be translated from Swedish to English. This was done in a combination of the authors together with Google Translate and DeepL. The NVivo software supported the process of coding and structuring the data. The whole process was guided by a thematic analysis, more detailed an inductive thematic analysis has been used. In addition to identifying and analysing patterns, it contributes to a rich description of the data (Flick, 2023). The analysis started with some broader codes to structure the document analysis. Those codes were “stakeholders”, “transport”, “geographical”, “tourism”, “infrastructure project”, “planning” and “change”. Before the coding of the interviews was made, we realized that a lot of the data in the codes were similar or went

hand in hand with each other. Therefore a second level of coding of the document was needed and the interviews were coded based on the new codes. The new evolved codes were "recognizing", "action" and "in-between". Based on this, we reviewed the codes into sub themes (Flick, 2023), in both the documents and the interviews.

2.4 Ethical considerations

Research's aim should be to minimize risk and harm for the individuals and society. To avoid harm for participants, the individuals should be respected (Flick, 2023), which was done in this study by keeping confidentiality and transparency. This means that participants are kept anonymous and not identifiable, therefore pseudonyms are used to avoid the individuals being identified to their real-world identity (Flick, 2023). However the name of the organization is not anonymous since it has valuable meaning for the aim of this research. An informed consent form was used, to make the participants understand the risk and benefits of participating as well as to explain that their participation were completely voluntary (Flick, 2023). The informed consent form, involved information about the purpose of the interview, that the participation is voluntary, consent to record the interview and some further information such as anonymity and confidentiality (see Appendix B). Even though this had been sent before, the interview began by focusing and mentioning again the terms of the interview and another consent to record the interview, to further highlight the importance of confidentiality. After consent was given the interviews started with some introducing questions.

3. Earlier research and theory

The following section will first present earlier research about tourism planning, which is this study's main concept. Tourism planning includes various aspects, however this research focuses only on some aspects such as place branding, sustainable tourism and mobility. In relation to the Fehmarn Belt connection, these aspects are important for attracting the right types of tourist, who behave properly and not negatively impact the environment and the locals in Scania. Lastly, mobility is important for understanding tourists' travel patterns. Then the studies theoretical framework are explained, which are the salience model. At the end of this chapter, earlier research on stakeholder collaboration and tourism together are presented.

3.1 Tourism planning

The tourism sector involves interaction and collaboration among various tourism stakeholders, which is important for the stakeholders to understand (Perkins et al., 2022). On the local level, tourism planning is often a response to the unwanted effects of tourism development as well as an effort to make a more attractive destination. Due to the rapid nature in the tourism industry, the planning has rather been ad hoc responses than strategic developments (Hall, 2008). Positive impacts of tourism may be that it is an activity that generates employment and entrepreneurship opportunities (Silwana & Dube, 2022). To develop successful and beneficial tourism planning, it is important by management and planning to include the whole community. The stakeholders' participation and engagement is also very important (Alrwajfah et al., 2019). However if the planning and management of development are poorly executed, there is a risk of several negative effects of tourism (Alrwajfah et al., 2019; McComb et al., 2017). Tourism planning takes place in different forms, structures, scales of governance, spatial scales and temporal time scales. The different forms of tourism planning are for example development, infrastructure and organisation. The scales of governance as well as the spatial scales can be for example international, national, regional and local. Lastly the temporal time scales can be understood as for example measuring change, development and implementation (Hall, 2008). Tourism planning and development are impacted by politics, even if it is part of the external environment. Tourism policies are influenced by politics, districts and local municipalities, to control the tourism industry (Silwana & Dube, 2022). The importance is that the key elements of the planning process for regional and local tourism should be utilised in a systematic way. This is done for matching the different stakeholders necessities, values and priorities (Hall, 2008).

3.1.1 Sustainable tourism

Environmental change has been for a long time an increasing problem on a global level, even if it has now come to realize that everything is connected such as the environment, economy and society. This further explains that sustainability is something that concerns many (Hall, 2008). Furthermore this explains that communities that plan for economic development with help of tourism need to have primarily focus on developing sustainable policies (Alrwajfah et al., 2019). Today, many countries are focusing on sustainable development as part of their tourism strategies

(Papp-váry et al., 2025). Sustainable tourism can maintain the attractiveness of a destination and there is a need for a balance between the three pillars: economic, social and environmental (Hall, 2008; Papp-váry et al., 2025). Regarding the environmental pillar, this includes protecting biodiversity, the use of renewable resources and waste reduction. Social in the terms of enhancing well-being of local communities, encouraging proper visitor behavior, visitor satisfaction and valuing the attractiveness of aesthetic and cultural environments. Lastly, economic sustainability in terms of supporting local economies as well as promoting the benefits and cost of tourism (Ivănescu & Săvan, 2024; Papp-váry et al., 2025). In addition they suggest a fourth pillar that must remain in balance as well, which is regional collaboration (Papp-váry et al., 2025). However, when analyzing sustainable tourism, the focus is primarily on change, in terms of the shift of one condition to another (Hall, 2008). In addition, to develop sustainable tourism the focus should be on making a balance between tourism growth and protection of the environment (Ivănescu & Săvan, 2024).

Papp-váry et al. (2025) highlights that sustainable practices are highly significant in terms of long-term development in tourism. However, various research indicates that there is limited success in practice regarding sustainable tourism (McComb et al., 2017). In tourism planning a sustainable approach consists of two key principles, which are the strategic orientation with long-term planning as well as stakeholders participation with involvement (Alrwajfah et al., 2019). Papp-váry et al. (2025) highlights the importance of regional collaboration in the tourism sector for reaching the sustainable development goals. Collaboration and adaptation are necessary for development, since there is no one-size model that fits all countries. Furthermore the regional collaboration utilizes shared resources, promotes cross-border tourism and long-term development. Benassi (2025) highlights the complexity of cross-border tourism, that is a set of benefits and challenges with a central role in tourism systems, diverse economic, cultural and social interactions throughout international boundaries. In accordance with the European Union, it is important to manage cross-border tourism effectively by easing its environmental impact, preserve cultural identities and to identify the pressure on infrastructure that is created. Cross-border tourism is a vital tool for developing border regions, for strengthening regional identities and supporting interactions across borders. Sustainable cross-border tourism supports regional benefits in terms of long-term impacts for example enhancing the service quality.

Furthermore, Papp-váry et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of advancing sustainability awareness within tourism. They suggest that this can be achieved through knowledge sharing, education, and cross-border collaboration among tourism stakeholders, policymakers, and researchers. Moreover, to support sustainable tourism, is focusing on sustainable infrastructure. To preserve cultural environments and reach sustainable goals, regulations in tourism infrastructure are needed to be developed. In contrast to sustainable tourism, as highlighted by Ivănescu and Săvan (2024), there is over-tourism which is explained as negative impacts of an exaggerated number of tourists in one place. This unsustainable growth often leads to environmental degradation, cultural erosion and extends on local infrastructure and services as well as impacting the quality of life for the locals. Measures for dealing with these challenges are promoted such as visitor numbers being limited, highlighting off-season travel, and developing the capacity of local infrastructure to frame tourism sustainability.

3.1.2 Place branding in tourism

Increasing awareness and fostering a favourable perception of a destination are the goals of place and destination branding. Destination branding primarily aims to attract tourists, while place branding seeks to also increase the attractiveness of a place for a broader range of stakeholders, including residents. In the context of place branding, place image refers to the perceptions, beliefs, and impressions that individuals hold about a destination. This is accomplished by employing brand marketing techniques. With the advancement of globalization, places are experiencing increasing competition to attract tourists. Tourism literature has discussed the topic of how to create an attractive place a lot (Ageeva & Fordouni, 2019). Attractions, facilities and accessibility are three important factors for a destination (Hall, 2008). There are tangible parts such as infrastructure, heritage sites and other attractions as well as intangible parts such as specific practices that are included in a place (Ageeva & Fordouni, 2019). The advantages of the destination need to be promoted. This is important so that a future visitor knows what values are possible to create with a potential visit (Hall, 2008). It is important to market the value not only for tourists, but also for local collaborators and industry players (Papp-váry et al., 2025). The destination is not just for tourists but also for the people who live, work and have their normal routines. This is also coupled to sustainable tourism and thus also keeping the destination attractive for the residents (Hall, 2008).

To strengthen a regional brand identity and at the same time improve the sustainable tourism initiatives, it is necessary to develop a holistic marketing approach. Branding strategies that are innovative and sustainable should be adopted by destinations to identify concerns about the environment, visitors changing expectations and to remain competitive in a more global perspective (Papp-váry et al., 2025). Furthermore, it is important that the places and attractions are accessible. It is even better for destination marketing of places if they are accessible to a huge population. This accessibility can come through a car, train and airplane. Tourism infrastructure is therefore very important in regards to tourism development (Hall, 2008). It is common for cross-border destinations to integrate their marketing strategies and develop a broader regional framework. This is done by implementing independent brands with the aim of strengthening their presence on the market and to communicate synergies across multiple places (Benassi, 2025).

Ageeva and Fordoui (2019) write that a place brand describes a specific geographical area. There has been some research on the place branding of the Öresund region. Falkheimer (2016) writes about how there has been the goal of a bi-national brand identity with the opening of the Öresund bridge. The paper concludes that a bi-national brand identity has not been achieved. The region does not possess a common cultural identity, and the concept of a single, unified region may be more of a vision than a reality. Hall (2008) demonstrates that different governments may have different priorities, leading to so-called place conflicts. These highlight competition between different regions and areas, which extends beyond a country's own borders. Benassi (2025) highlights that bigger cities act as important hubs for attracting tourists to regions over the border, which also provide benefits for rural areas along the cross-border tourism routes. In that sense, cross-border tourism potential fosters the economic growth and social development of rural areas due to their location.

3.1.3 Mobility in tourism

Mobility is a key factor in tourism planning, as it can be efficient to understand how tourists move around at the destination. In other words, are the public transport practices important to comprehend when managing and marketing a tourism destination (Hall et al., 2017). To manage the mobility aspect of tourism, it should be through the development of sustainable transportation

systems (Ivănescu & Săvan, 2024). A successful implementation of sustainable public transport requires a proactive and effective management by authorities at the destination. Tourists may often not have enough information regarding their options for public transport, which explains that the willingness of giving up private cars is not always the case. Improvement in the quality of the public transport service can lead to attracting more travellers. Tourist's dissatisfaction is overall most commonly based on transportation services. Poor public transport may influence the experience negatively for the tourist, but on the other hand a well developed public transport does not automatically improve the experience (Hall et al., 2017). Tourists are provided with different travel options that connect different origins and destinations by sustainable tourism mobility. Sustainable transport systems enhance accessibility while minimizing environmental impacts (Ivănescu & Săvan, 2024). Kaul (1985, cited in Predideaux, 2000) highlights the importance of the role of transport systems for successful tourism development. Transport has an important role in the development of new attractions and also the sustainable growth of the already existing ones.

To be able to accommodate visitors' needs, a modification of a public transport network is necessary for attracting tourists. An extensive public transport network can be seen as attractive for travellers, where high accessibility to trains is one of the most important attractive factors. However if the services are unsatisfactory it does not help that there is a connection through the network (Hall et al., 2017). Predideaux (2000) states that the choice of transport is affected by the distance from the origin to the destination. Investments in transport infrastructure are necessary for destinations that are aiming for growth. For example an upgraded airport is of importance for expansion into cross-border markets and for international markets accessibility to an international airport is necessary. Moreover as stated by Benassi (2025) transport infrastructure is commonly a critical factor for development of cross-border tourism. Investments in infrastructure enhance better physical connectivity and knowledge sharing among stakeholders across borders. Common challenges for cross-border tourism are infrastructural shortcoming, capacity issues and organizational fragmentation.

The tourism system is a combination of parts that are forming a complex role, which are often used when describing the interrelationships between areas that makes it possible for travelling to

and from a destination. The system consists of four elements. The first one, *generating region*, is the area where the trip starts and ends. The second element is the *transit region or route*, which is the area the tourist needs to travel through on the way to the destination. The *destination region* is the third element, and is the place that is chosen to be visited and here occurs the most consequences of the system. The last element is *the environment*, which is the whole area combined where the travel flow happens and as well as the tourists interactions (Hall, 2008). Prideaux (2000) highlights that accessibility is the relationship between transport and tourism, more specifically the link between tourist generating regions and tourism destinations. Transportation plays an important role in destination development together with other variables such as attractions and activities, market segments and accommodation. Leiper (1990, cited in Preideaux, 2000) evolved the concept of transit route region, which is understood as the region travellers are passing when departing and returning. Here the transport has the role as the channel between tourist homes and holiday destinations.

To make an attractive public transport system for tourists, the key is its ease-of-use. If it is a complicated system, it risks holding people off from trying to use it (Hall et al., 2017). Ease of travel is the result of well-developed transport that has an important role in improving the tourism flow (Benassi, 2025). Clear information and a simple ticketing system are two important factors that contribute to ease of travel for tourists. Clear information such as all communication modes is in English, such as internet sites, tourist information centers and station signages. Therefore one barrier for tourists using the public transport system could be the language. For managing a simple ticketing system, a multi-modal ticket that functions between different public transport modes can be a good alternative. In the same way, different channels need to be available since all tourists do not have smartphones to receive information or buy tickets (Hall et al., 2017).

Developing sustainable tourism, the use of packages is an alternative. In public transport, a multimodal package of combining it with other modes contributes to more choices and flexibility for the tourist. Such a combination can for example be having public bikes close to public transport stations or offer packages that include car and bike (Hall et al., 2017). Aligning with this, Ivănescu and Săvan (2024) stated that packages can be used as a tool for sustainable

mobility. To manage and develop the experience for being more practical and enjoyable for the tourist, a package could include things such as entrances to attractions or different discounts but also different alternatives for transport such as tourist buses, cable cars and bicycles. The package improves the tourist experience through access to various public transport, at the same time positive impacts for the environment.

3.2 Stakeholder Theory

Freeman (2010) described the stakeholder theory first in his book *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. Stakeholder theory emerged out of the idea that it is not enough to focus only on the shareholders of a company. For a long time in businesses the most focus was put on the maximisation of shareholder value. Mondoñedo (2022) mentions that stakeholder theory is the primary opponent to the shareholder model. However, even though the maximisation of value is very important it leads to a more short term thinking of managers and does not generally lead to a long term success of the organisation (Freeman, 2010). In addition Mondoñedo (2022) highlights in the tourism sector the stakeholder theory is both managerial and instrumental. The first is managerial, which helps managers to create as much value as possible. Second instrumental which is a practical tool to provide competitive advantage since it contributes to the enhancement of a close relationship.

3.2.1 Stakeholder mapping with Salience model

When studying stakeholders it is important to identify and map their characteristics as well as their role in a project. This is necessary in a tourism planning and development process because of being able to encourage collaboration between key stakeholders. Understanding stakeholder types and the relation between stakeholders can lead to many positive outcomes. For example, it can facilitate support for the development of tourism in a region (Perkins et al., 2022). In accordance, several factors are important for a tourist planner to have. First of all the need to identify the stakeholders and influence them to participate. It is important to see and understand the value of collaboration between stakeholders. Lastly, it is essential to be trusted and accepted among the stakeholders (Hall, 2008). The aim of stakeholder mapping is to establish the connection between different actors, their goals, their roles and responsibilities (Rodríguez-Herrera et al., 2025). For being able to map the characteristics of the stakeholders, it

is important to first of all define stakeholders. They can range from single individuals to groups that can affect and can be affected by the company (Freeman, 2010). Furthermore, Rodríguez-Herrera et al. (2025) highlighted the importance of being able to achieve the set goals to consider different types of related stakeholders.

Mitchell et al. (1997) propose the model about stakeholder salience (see Figure 1), which is understood as the degree of priority to the stakeholder with the most salience. The salience model is dependent on three attributes such as *power*, *legitimacy* and *urgency*. The first attribute, *power*, is understood as the ability the stakeholders have to affect decisions (Raha et al., 2021). There are different types of power: coercive, utilitarian, and normative power. These different types show that power can be exercised through different things for example force, financial resources and symbolic resources such as prestige, trust and esteem. Power therefore depends on these three types of power and a stakeholder can also gain power in for example making decisions if they increase in an area of power. The second attribute, *legitimacy*, explains how stakeholder's actions are seen as appropriate or unacceptable based on shared norms, values and beliefs. There is often the idea that legitimate stakeholders are automatically having power or that powerful stakeholders are legitimate but this is not necessarily the case. These two stakeholder attributes of power and legitimacy can exist by themselves but can also exist together and create authority (Mitchell et al., 1997). Lastly, *urgency* is explained as the need for attention by the stakeholders through time-sensitivity (Raha et al., 2021). Urgency requires two conditions to be met. These conditions are first a time-sensitive claim and second that the stakeholder believes the claim is critical. If these two elements are met, the stakeholders' claim demands prompt attention (Mitchell et al., 1997). Different combinations of the attributes lead to different stakeholder classifications. In addition, a categorization can be based on different stakeholders classification, such as the ones in the salience model (Perkins et al., 2022; Rodríguez-Herrera et al., 2025).

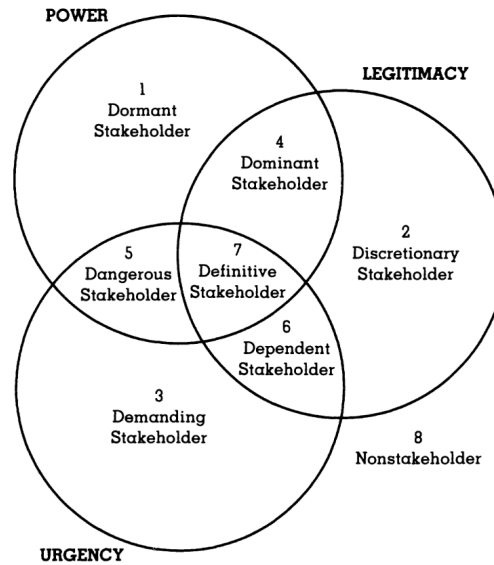


Figure 1: Salience model (Mitchell et al., 1997)

The eight stakeholders typologies are organized in three categories: latent, expectant and highest. The low level, latent, consists of three classes, which are (1) *dormant*, (2) *discretionary* and (3) *demanding*. *Dormant stakeholders* only have the attribute of power, but since they do not have any legitimate relation or urgent need their power remains unexploited. *Discretionary stakeholders* have the attribute of legitimacy and are usually an interesting group of stakeholders that managers do not need to engage but have the possibility to if they want to. Lastly, the *demanding stakeholders* are the one with urgent claims and are commonly referred to as noisy and irritating stakeholders that stay unconsidered by the managers.

The mid-level, expectant stakeholders, are the one with higher engagement and those who expect something. The first classes in the mid-level are the (4) *dominant stakeholders*, which possess the attributes of power and legitimacy. Those stakeholders are characterized by their influence being secured and they receive much attention from the managers (Mitchell et al., 1997). Moreover the dominant stakeholders are commonly connected to regional tourism organizations since they have some power (Perkins et al., 2022). The second class in the expectant group is (5) *dependent stakeholders*, who are the stakeholders with urgent legitimate needs and are depending on other stakeholders for power since they have little or no power by themselves. The third class in

the mid-level classification is the (6) *dangerous stakeholders*. The ones that have urgency and power attributes, might act pressuring and may even be experienced as threatening to the organization.

Last of all it is the highest level, (7) *definitive stakeholders* who have all three attributes. Any expectant stakeholder can turn into a definitive by developing the missing attribute. It is very common that a dominant stakeholder, that has power and legitimacy attributes, does this turn when their needs get urgent and then becomes clearer from the manager. There is also a typology as (8) *nonstakeholders*, which are the ones who possess none of the attributes (Mitchell et al., 1997). In the case of a tourism destination, the eight types represent different implications in terms of management. It can be used to understand the social dynamic of a specific area, helping to identify and to analyze the present social capital there. It is a methodology that has already been used in the field of tourism with success (Rodríguez-Herrera et al., 2025).

Moreover, Beck et al. (2025), highlight the importance of understanding stakeholder salience in management. The study examines the relationship between stakeholder salience and stakeholder collaboration, addressing a gap in the existing literature, as this relationship has been underexplored in previous research. The research shows that an enhancement in stakeholder salience takes place due to cooperation. In addition if a stakeholder has already higher salience it is more likely that other stakeholders seek a collaboration with them. However it is also the stakeholder itself that due to its higher salience is critical for the success of the project and is thus more willing to collaborate. This collaboration leads to for example an exchange of information. Moreover, relationships are built and with that also trust is built due to the cooperation. As a last factor of collaboration, legitimacy is also enhanced. Generally, there are also limitations connected to stakeholder salience. Such limitations can be that a low score in specific attributes lead to the manager not thinking of a certain stakeholder as important.

3.3 Stakeholder collaboration and tourism planning

From stakeholder theory the concept about stakeholder collaboration has been developed (McComb et al., 2017; Perkins et al., 2022). Working together and creating value are the core of stakeholder theory (Silwana & Dube, 2022). The current research focuses on stakeholder

collaboration and mainly how stakeholders form a group. Tourism research must consider how and when to manage stakeholder collaboration (Perkins et al., 2022). Tourism planning is complex, due to the need for collaboration among the various stakeholders that have different interests and goals (Perkins et al., 2022; Silwana & Dube, 2022). This aligns with the stakeholder approach, that comprises a diversity of organizational groups of interest as well as goal setting and implementation of political policies (Alrwajfah et al., 2019). To enhance the tourism policy development, the stakeholder collaboration can benefit from a group of district municipalities, local municipalities and tourism organisations (Silwana & Dube, 2022). The popularity of stakeholder collaboration in the tourism sector has increased, mainly due to the assumption of sustainable tourism getting positively affected. Therefore researchers see a value in studying stakeholder collaboration in different types of tourism, such as urban, heritage and rural (McComb et al., 2017). Furthermore, to enhance the tourists' experiences, stakeholder collaboration between businesses, governments and local communities are of interest (Papp-váry et al., 2025). The process of stakeholder collaboration is also complex, but it is found in previous research that it is still always beneficial (McComb et al., 2017). All the stakeholders in the tourism planning should be informed about decisions in the development (Silwana & Dube, 2022). In accordance with the need of empowering, integration and engagement for all types of stakeholders in the tourism planning process (Alrwajfah et al., 2019). However the stakeholders' role is critical and the need for collaboration is important for development (Papp-váry et al., 2025). Additionally the benefits and challenges of stakeholder collaboration in tourism planning are presented further in coming sections.

3.3.1 Benefits of stakeholder collaboration

In a tourism policy development process, stakeholders involvement consists of many factors that need to be addressed. Internal factors include coordination among tourism stakeholders, and external factors consist of the political and socio-economic environment (Silwana & Dube, 2022). The importance of involving different types of stakeholders at different times, can contribute to effective strategic planning (Alrwajfah et al., 2019). Moreover by involving multiple stakeholders as long term strategies enhance the sustainable development (Papp-váry et al., 2025). Furthermore the development of solving problems can be enhanced by understanding the effectiveness of stakeholder involvement. An earlier study suggests that for being as effective

as possible in the planning, in the beginning of the idea, the focus should be on which role the involved stakeholders have (McComb et al., 2017). By involving stakeholders and using the community-based approach in the planning process, it can result in positive effects for the destination region and change the balance of power between the stakeholders (Alrwajfah et al., 2019). To support the tourism planning process, trust is an important element for understanding stakeholders' collaboration and holds communities together (Hall, 2008). Stakeholder collaboration in businesses can impact positively on enhanced decision making and increased trust (Beck et al., 2025).

Collaboration among stakeholders is necessary in tourism planning, to help every stakeholder to understand their role in tourism. The collaboration is enhanced through establishing a good relationship between employees of the municipality and the tourism associations. The goal is to include all the involved departments to find a common interest in order to evaluate tourism (Silwana & Dube, 2022). Moreover McComb et al. (2017) highlights that the stakeholders who will support tourism development are the ones that gain benefits from tourism. In contrast, the stakeholders who do not see the benefits of tourism will less likely be supportive. In addition the tourism planning process necessitates input from different stakeholders, both those who are directly and indirectly affected by the development. However it is important to involve every stakeholder in the planning process, since they are receiving the impacts of tourism plans and policies (Silwana & Dube, 2022). Moreover earlier studies indicate that shared decision making is an important part of stakeholder collaboration especially for the key stakeholders. In rural destinations, competitive advantages can be fostered by stakeholder collaboration in particular if the image of the destination is unclear. Moreover stakeholder collaboration has advantages for rural destinations as it can be identified as two competitive assets. First, the tourism development consists of active participation of stakeholders and also a set of management that in a wider aspect facilitates as well as supports the tourism development (McComb et al., 2017).

3.3.2 Challenges with stakeholder collaboration

Previous studies highlight the negative view and the lack of stakeholder collaboration. In fact the practical success of stakeholder collaboration is limited, and the majority of all collaboration fails (McComb et al., 2017). To get stakeholders interested in collaboration can be a difficult

task. Therefore to avoid failure, the main task should be to make the stakeholder feel understood (Perkins et al., 2022). However, collaborative action is impossible if there is a lack of trust among stakeholders (Hall, 2008). To keep the tourism policies consistent, coordinated initiatives and stakeholder involvement are recommended in the planning process. Therefore should the local government and tourism stakeholders collaborate in regards to tourism plans and policies (Silwana & Dube, 2022). Ineffective tourism planning can be the result of municipalities not creating supporting policy environments for tourism businesses. Poor implementation of tourism strategies further explains the need for realistic strategies in order to implement them (Silwana & Dube, 2022). To enhance tourism development in a region, a long-term plan needs to be managed in the regional tourism planning (Alrwajfah et al., 2019). In contrast Benassi (2025) stated that in cross-border tourism, the lack of collaboration can result in competitiveness between close by regions, unnecessary marketing and slowdown in regional innovation because of limited knowledge sharing. To minimize failure in the process, greater stakeholder involvement early on is important (McComb et al., 2017). Furthermore the complexities in stakeholder collaboration are a factor for failure, due to the various stages involved in the process (Perkins et al., 2022).

Previous research identified the risk of growing gaps between stakeholders, those who support and those who are critical. This could lead to failure of stakeholder collaboration due to the risk of conflict among stakeholders. Therefore the stakeholder collaboration needs to be effectively managed, to not risk negative impacts for the collaboration (McComb et al., 2017). This may be further explained that there are many tourism stakeholders at the local and regional level, which are not always time and resource efficient for the tourism planning (Silwana & Dube, 2022). Furthermore the lack of collaboration in the planning process is the result of a missing shared vision or a missing stakeholders engagement and participation (Alrwajfah et al., 2019). Another factor that influences the stakeholders involvement negatively, are the possible management structures. If stakeholders provide inputs, but lack influence in the decision-making, their willingness to participate is reduced. This further explains imbalance of power among stakeholders, which are critical for effective collaboration. Furthermore the lack of knowledge and understanding of stakeholders, are a common factor for not proposing their ideas (McComb et al., 2017).

4. Findings

In this chapter, we will in the first section present the findings through stakeholder mapping that is based on the salience model. The coming sections are further about actions identified in different areas in Scania, such as stakeholder collaboration, mobility, sustainable tourism and new types of tourism. The findings end with a presentation of how stakeholders are talking about the potentials from the Fehmarn Belt connection that includes the four scenarios from the report by Ramboll (2026).

4.1 Stakeholder typologies

Scania consists of multiple stakeholders in the field of tourism planning in regards to the Fehmarn Belt connection. However, the stakeholder mapping includes only the stakeholders that were interviewed in this research, due to a limitation needed to be done no further stakeholders were added. The stakeholders in this study were categorized as definitive, discretionary and dominant typologies. There were no dormant, demanding, dangerous or depending stakeholders as well as non-stakeholders. In table 3 the stakeholder typologies are presented in more detail:

Table 3: Stakeholder typologies in Scania

Stakeholder typology	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Action	Stakeholder
<i>Definitive Power (utilitarian)</i> Legitimacy Urgency	X	X	X	-Influence other stakeholders with money, to make improvements in the regional infrastructure. -Collaborate with Trafikverket about infrastructure -Are part of STRING. -Working with urgent and critical projects in relation to the infrastructure, that affects the whole region.	Region Skåne
<i>Definitive Power (normative)</i> Legitimacy Urgency	X	X	X	-Influence of the infrastructure, by preparing projects that the government approves or disapproves of. -Develop mobility in Scania, which affects tourism planning. -Have big needs for developing some infrastructure projects in Scania, hurry up the process because of the Fehmarn Belt connection.	Trafikverket
<i>Dominant Power (normative)</i> Legitimacy No urgent claims	X	X	0	-Mandate to influence other stakeholders, with knowledge and expertise. -Responsive to needs and are coordinator among other stakeholders. -Their main mission is marketing Scania as a destination and sustainable development of the region. -Has good reputation and are respected within the tourism industry. -Part of the report "Future road and rail transport: Scenarios for the development of the transport system and the tourism industry in southern Sweden" -No actions they prioritize as critical.	Visit Skåne

<i>Dominant Power</i> (normative)	X	X	0	-Mandate to influence other stakeholders, with knowledge and expertise.	STRING
Legitimacy				-Has good reputation and are respected within the field of the Fehmarn Belt connection -The organization was built out of the Fehmarn Belt connection.	
No urgent claims				-No actions they prioritize as critical for Scania right now	
<i>Dominant Power</i> (normative)	X	X	0	-Influencing other stakeholders as chairman of STRING 2026 -Normative power as they are a municipality and are seen as a trusting organisation	Malmö Stad
Legitimacy				-Part of the report “Future road and rail transport: Scenarios for the development of the transport system and the tourism industry in southern Sweden” -They work with the regional development also in connection to mobility	
No urgent claims				-No direct urgency but still part of planning mobility and working with other stakeholders	
<i>Dominant Power</i>	X	X	0	-Influencing Trafikverket on what “objects/projects” they should work with what -Give lectures about Fehmarn Belt connection -Influence through reports, articles, seminars creating dialogue also with national decision makers -Are seen as trustworthy	Sydsvenska Handelskammaren
Legitimacy				-Influenced that the Fehmarn Belt tunnel is getting built -Part of Fehmarn Belt Business Council (FBBC) -Their vision is to increase regional growth and competitiveness	
No urgent claims				- Infrastructure is not their main focus, therefore no urgent claims.	

<i>Dominant Power</i> (normative)	X	X	0	-Small influence on other stakeholders. -Share knowledge by doing analyses -Got a group of Stakeholders to the Fehmarn Belt tunnel together with the Swedish government.	Øresundsinstitutet
Legitimacy				-Focus on benefits for their members. -Has organized network meetings about the Fehmarn Belt connection.	
No urgent claims				-Has limited time and resources to contribute to projects outside their organization.	
<i>Discretionary</i> Lack of power	0	X	0	-More focused on local level, lack power for the region	Visit Lund
Legitimacy				-Want to be involved and gain knowledge about tourism planning in Scania since it provide benefits for their business	
No urgent claims				-Occupied by action for their own organization	

4.2 Action in tourism planning

4.2.1 Collaborating with stakeholders

To understand the current collaboration between stakeholders in Scania regarding the Fehmarn Belt connection, it is necessary to first understand the need and benefits of collaboration in the tourism industry. This is highlighted by both a smaller organisation as well as a bigger one:

“We need to... We can't... We have very little muscles alone, we need to collaborate with someone to be able to reach out in the noise.” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

“[...] but what you can say is like the more connected we become and the more connected we feel, the more we're going to collaborate.”(Daniella, STRING)

Furthermore this aligns with Silwana & Dube (2022) who have written that collaboration is necessary in tourism planning for understanding every stakeholders role. Stakeholders understanding their role are of further importance when collaborating across borders. As stated by another organisation, about the collaboration in relation to the Fehmarn Belt connection:

“Since it's not in our country, we really, really need to collaborate with other stakeholders so that we have, you know, as much information and as much knowledge as we possibly can. So it's a key. Key question, actually, to have good relations with other stakeholders and the right information, right information, but enough information.”(Filippa, Trafikverket)

This enhances that collaboration is a main issue for stakeholders working with the Fehmarn Belt connection. It indicates the connection between stakeholder collaboration and good relationships are of high relevance. Furthermore this strengthens the use of cross-border tourism for developing border regions, and supporting interactions across borders (Benassi, 2025). This is further discussed by *Eskil* from Malmö Stad, who explains that due to their already functioning relationship with Copenhagen, they could further work together in cooperation for promoting tourism in the Öresund region. Especially when the Fehmarn Belt connection opens, a same ambition is shared to attract more people to the region. There is an idea of collaboration with

promotion instead of doing it separately. In addition the collaboration in marketing of the region is highlighted by *Annika* at Visit Skåne as well:

“We have been working together with Malmö for a long time. First, I mean, a couple of years ago, it was about promoting new airlines, new flight routes. And then for the last couple of years, it has been a focus on trains. Just, yeah, and in parallel, we are working on the marketing side with campaigns together with the Deutsche Bahn, for instance. So we want, we do want more people to come by train.” (Annika, Visit Skåne)

All of this is in accordance with the fact that stakeholders collaboration is developed by creating a good relationship (Silwana & Dube, 2022), and that it is common in cross-border destinations to integrate their marketing strategies (Benassi, 2025). In addition, a part of Scania partly belongs to the Öresund region which could be argued that the marketing can be for the whole region. However as Falkheimer (2016) stated, the goal of developing an bi-national brand identity for the region has not been achieved yet and may more be a vision than a reality. This argument is strengthened by following:

“I don't think a single one will come here for the Öresund region. But on the other hand, through cooperation between the actors in the Öresund region, we can get stronger marketing and talk about how Kronborg Castle is really cool, but Sofiero Castle in Helsingborg is also cool, and there's the Glasriket up in Småland. I still think you talk a lot about local place branding.” (Gustav, Øresundsinstittet)

This shows that the Öresund region is more of a vision than an actual region. To strengthen a regional brand identity like the Öresund region, it is important to develop a holistic marketing approach (Papp-váry et al., 2025), with collaboration among stakeholders to highlight attractions from different destinations in the region. However, lack of collaboration in cross-border tourism, can lead to competitiveness between destinations and unnecessary marketing (Benassi, 2025). In addition to the Öresund region, as stated by (Ramboll, n.d.a), the megaregion is also developed together with stakeholders, which are described here as members:

“So we have STRING. It consists of 16 members in the region. So it's the regions and it's the largest cities that are members. What we do is we bring them together and we also, of course, share information. We also bring forward their concerns. [...] Yeah, so Malmö has the chairmanship in STRING is by turn, and now it's Malmö who has the chairmanship [...] (Daniella, STRING)

“The STRING is a member organization, so we've been, we've been members since, since the beginning, so we're we of course we're we're taking part a lot in in the in the activities, but we're also working to.. to create the the activities where we.. we part of the the steering committee and and so on, and and we we are of course we are using.” (Isac, Region Skåne)

This shows that STRING collaborates on an international level with stakeholders also from Scania. Moreover there are different stakeholders involved in various areas in Scania. As highlighted by McComb et al. (2017) stakeholder involvement can contribute to develop and solve problems. This aligns with what is stated by two of the respondents and one document:

“And there's also a little bit of togetherness in that. Together with all the other stakeholders [...]” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

“There are several ongoing collaborations and joint initiatives in southern Sweden that aim to strengthen tourists travel to and within the region.” (Ramboll, 2026, p.34)

“You could say, lobbying together with the other municipalities in Skåne and together with the region Skåne to get more investments in traffic infrastructure and so on.” (Eskil, Malmö Stad)

The importance of togetherness is being pointed out from different types of stakeholders. This indicates that stakeholder involvement is present in the region of Scania, in both infrastructure and tourism planning. Furthermore, the report by Ramboll (2026), was a project created where the togetherness was present and a lot of stakeholders in Scania were involved. However the stakeholder involvement may not be present anymore in accordance with that project. This is shown by the following:

“Actually, just providing knowledge about it. We are not collaborating with anyone in particular outside this report. We did that together with Malmö Stad and Visit Halland. And now, I mean, we continue spreading the word about it.” (Annika, Visit Skåne)

It is rather communication to other stakeholders that is taking place after the project has finished. One important aspect that affects the stakeholder collaboration are the different goals each stakeholder has (Perkins et al., 2022; Silwana & Dube, 2022). As it is mentioned by two respondents:

“Mm, so that when it comes to collaboration with stakeholders, we have... Completely different roles, all of us.” (Hanna, Sydsvenska Handelskammaren)

“Yes, it always is because you may have different assignments tied up. There may be assignments that clash. But I think you only find... if you have the opportunity to choose in which area you will collaborate. That way you can be smart and powerful... But that is always how you simply have to work with it [...] Yes, it is. It's really hard. And it's just like I said there too, that almost every city or place works in different ways. And has different assignments in their portfolios as well.” (Cecila, Visit Lund)

This clarifies the complexity of stakeholder collaboration in tourism planning, as well as strengthening that even though the process is complex it still is beneficial (McComb et al., 2017; Perkins et al., 2022; Silwana & Dube, 2022). Moreover the complexity is a natural and necessary part of the stakeholder collaboration which can be connected to what one respondent stated:

“All collaboration is full of challenges, of course. It's never easy to know that you want exactly the same thing, but it's very, very important to collaborate, [...]. Of course, we have challenges, but it's that's just another reason to collaborate. It's really important to get to know each other and understand each other's perspective, and so on. I think if we didn't have any challenges, maybe there would not be a need to collaborate” (Isac, Region Skåne)

Additionally this indicates that the stakeholder collaboration for Region Skåne consists of both advantages and disadvantages, but it is seen as a part of the collaboration process. As stated by Perkins et al. (2022), to avoid failure and to get more interest from stakeholders there is a need to

make the stakeholders feel understood. For the stakeholders in Scania, it can further mean that an understanding of stakeholders' different assignments could lead to better collaboration and interest from more stakeholders. As stated by Hanna:

“Yes, no, but. I think as I said, there are a number of different actors, but it has its own explanation, that is, we have slightly different assignments and so on, because I think sometimes you can see it as if it were the ultimate cooperation. It would be that everyone cooperated, but that would soon become reality. [...] But what I would say is that I would like to see more involvement from the Swedish side in the issue.” (Hanna, Sydsvenska Handelskammaren)

Hanna from Sydsvenska Handelskammaren, stated that she thinks that all the regional stakeholders want the same thing and have the same goal. This goal is that Sweden gains as many possible advantages of the Fehmarn Belt connection as possible. Since they all have a common interest, this should enhance the stakeholder collaboration (Silwana & Dube, 2022). However, Visit Skåne expresses that everyone has the willingness to collaborate but most of the time has to prioritise their own mission. This further aligns with what is highlighted by McComb et al. (2017), the importance of early on in a project to make it clear which role all involved stakeholders have. Furthermore, a significant factor in the stakeholder involvement process is the coordination among stakeholders (Silwana & Dube, 2022). The following quote shows the importance of coordination, when the respondents were talking about Visit Skåne:

“Yes, but I think so. They are a very good coordinating partner for us, I would say, and they are responsive to our needs. They have both the knowledge and they are good at coordinating.” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

Sydsånska Handelskammaren agrees with that statement by believing that Visit Skåne has that role, but on the other hand thinks that it should be Region Skåne that should be the visionaries for the tourism development in Scania. In contrast another respondent stated following:

“Yeah. Well, we have this, there's this classical always discussion about when you work with minor municipalities in the surrounding, what is the, who is the leader? And so that is also a discussion is Malmö, because it's the largest city in Skåne. Does it have a special role that it has

to drive and the others have to more collaborate with Malmö in some of the strategies.” (Eskil, Malmö Stad)

McComb et al. (2017) highlights that when many stakeholders are involved, unbalanced power evolves due to the failure to take into account the power dynamics.

4.2.2 Improving mobility

In the following the collaboration between stakeholders in Scania in regards to mobility and infrastructure will be presented. Infrastructure includes many different stakeholders and each of them have their role in the process. First, as mentioned earlier there is the tourism system. In our case the generating regions are for example Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. As *Annika* from Visit Skåne stated:

“We have a mission to both market the destination, main markets are Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands but we also work with the sustainable development of the destination.” (Annika, Visit Skåne)

In the report by Ramboll (n.d.a) the role of the Fehmarn Belt connection is made clear and how this can lead to more accessibility for travellers. As part of the tourism system accessibility plays a key role in leading people from a generating region to the destination region (Prideaux, 2000). The destination region is Scania and it is already a popular destination region as the nights spent by foreign visitors have been increasing by 71 per cent from 2010 until 2019 with a total of 1,8 million nights spent in the year 2019 (Ramboll, n.d.a). *Hanna* from Sydvenska Handelskammaren has also mentioned the rise in hotel nights in Scania:

“So that's also an interesting thing. I don't know if you look at it, there are increases in hotel nights in Skåne. From there you can go in and dig out a little bit of statistics and look at an increase from both and I think that's probably like the Dutch and Germans and Danes who are the big group and there you could, as I said, speculate that it could increase if you get much faster transport routes there” (Hanna from Sydsvenska Handelskammaren)

However, in order for the accessibility to grow, infrastructure needs to be prepared by different stakeholders. *Isac* from Region Skåne explains that they have two main roles:

“We’re making the big plan for the regional infrastructure and we are like a lobbyist for the national infrastructure.” (Isac, Region Skåne)

On the local level, transportation is also already rising as stated by *Eskil* from Malmö Stad. He mentions what could be done practically and says more precisely:

“But it's not only because the Fehmarn Belt opens, that is more a structural tendency that more and more people are travelling by car and more and more freight is transported by lorries and so on. So how do we deal with that as a city, which have certain limits, how far we can deal with something that is international, that is on EU and national level, of course.” (Eskil, Malmö Stad)

The certain limits could be understood such as transport capacity for the infrastructure in the city of Malmö. This further shows that there is a need even before the Fehmarn Belt connection, but the need is more time dependent now.

“The flow from Fehmarn Belt is [...] we wouldn't have had those objects in our plan if it wasn't for Fehmarn Belt, more or less. Because, you know, even if we have Fehmarn Belt, we still have big needs on, not at all, on Södra Stambanan. So we would have done a lot of them, even if we hadn't had Fehmarn Belt, but it's an extra reason for doing them and a reason for, you know, putting them, maybe try to do them a bit faster and hurry up the process, the projects.” (Filippa, Trafikverket)

In the interview *Isac* from Region Skåne says:

“So we don't build anything, but we do prioritize governmental money to make improvements in the regional infrastructure. [...] “But when it comes to really, you know, creating the projects and so on, it's Trafikverket, [...] They do all the work in the end, so we just decide how they can spend the money and then they do the work.” (Isac, Region Skåne)

Region Skåne thus has an important role in the accomplishment as they can prioritize governmental money to influence the goal. As *Filippa* at Trafikverket stated, they have an enormous role in the achievement of the shared objective to get the infrastructure ready in time for the opening of the FBFL. By doing this they prepare objects for the government to approve or disapprove of. This means that they are working on raising awareness for the infrastructure needs especially towards the government. Infrastructure is also often mentioned as an extremely slow process. Infrastructure is planned in 12 year cycles and all Swedish regions need to make a 12 year plan for their regional infrastructure. In the interviews different stakeholders mentioned that the government in Stockholm is not understanding the urgency of the project.

“We have been trying to say to the government in Sweden that, hey, this is happening here. We need to. We need to do something as well, but because we have a lot of different estimations of how the traffic is going to change and how. How big volumes of freight, and...trains, you know, is going to enter or exit Sweden because of the new link. And but the Swedish government hasn't really done anything to improve the railroads in Sweden and now it's really, really late and we know that it's going to..” (Isac, Region Skåne)

“But what does the Fehmarn Belt actually mean? It is relatively unknown in Stockholm.” (Gustav, Øresundsinstitutet)

In comparison has *Filippa* from Trafikverket a bit of a different opinion and says:

“And also, you know, as you said, it's like an urban legend that, oh, in Stockholm, they don't know about Fehmarn Belt. But yes, they do, but perhaps not as much as we do, but it's okay because there's a lot of things that we don't know about Stockholm. So it's quite natural that we don't” (Filippa, Trafikverket)

The planning of infrastructure always includes many different perspectives for example rail freight, the mobility of inhabitants and making it more accessible for them. Thus tourism is often more a side focus. This is shown in following:

“There is a general challenge that planning of public transport and the transport system has a limited focus on tourist travel” (Ramboll, 2026, p.30)

Even though Trafikverket is not directly working with tourism and the planning of how many trains should go in a day, *Filippa* describes taking trains in the summer:

“[...] there’s no room on the trains, because there’s so many who use the train during the summer. This then can then of course be coupled to infrastructure planning as she says: “ [...] that maybe needs to mean that we should have one train more, or we should have more tracks...” (Filippa, Trafikverket)

However, having a focus on tourism can be quite important. As *Eskil* from Malmö Stad says the impacts of making southern Sweden more accessible as a destination region through the Fehmarn Belt connection. This can have quite prominent impacts and might have a more drastic impact on people than on freight.

“[...] the tunnel, when it opens, it will have a great impact on freight transport, especially on rail. But I think that some of the analysis that we have made recently, also within tourism, shows that passenger transport actually will benefit maybe more. [...]. But the potential is very big because you save around two to three hours with the tunnel and time in that aspect is very almost half the travel time. But for freight [...] saving two or three hours doesn't mean a lot in that transport span. So but passengers which travel slightly shorter, three hours saving time is very big. So people are talking about that could have a great potential in the future. So one of the challenges that we have to work with, how can we improve that quality of travelling by train when you come to the rail yards in Sweden or come from Germany, how can you improve that quality when you're traveling?” (Eskil, Malmö Stad)

However, this quality of travelling by train has to be achieved. As Hall et al. (2017) write, the only way to achieve an effective use of public transport is when the authorities and tourists work together. They argue further that the transportation services are one of the main reasons for a tourists dissatisfaction. This can be a huge difficulty as mentioned before the Fehmarn Belt

connection will offer a new kind of accessibility to Denmark and Sweden also as a transport mode with limited environmental impacts (Ivănescu & Săvan, 2024).

4.2.3 Promoting sustainable tourism practices

Silwana and Dube (2022) mention that in order for tourism planning to be effective it is important for municipalities to create tourism plans and policies. *Annika* from Visit Skåne talked about their tourism plan they have created for 2030:

“But the sustainability is core in our business. We have a long-term strategy about where tourism matters, which means that we think that correctly handled and managed tourists could actually make the society a better place”. (Annika, Visit Skåne)

This indicates that developing sustainable tourism is highly relevant for the region of Scania. As highlighted by Papp-váry et al. (2025) as well as Alrwajfah et al. (2019) a sustainable approach is important for long-term development. This supports the relevance of sustainable practice for stakeholders working with tourism. When analyzing sustainable tourism, the primary focus is on change (Hall, 2008), in accordance with:

“I think we often use the term that we work with balanced and sustainable growth within tourism.” (Benjamin, Visit Skåne)

Where the focus is on growth within sustainability, that may indicate that the focus is on a positive change and outcome for the region. Moreover the balanced growth can be explained as the focus in sustainable tourism should be on making balance between tourism growth and protection of the environment. However the growth of tourism could have rather negative impacts, in terms of an unsustainable growth due to over-tourism (Ivănescu & Săvan, 2024). To avoid the risk of over-tourism, certain actions can be taken.

“Yeah, we measure the guest nights, of course, everyone does that. But we are not just aiming at getting as much tourists as possible, rather spreading them over the geography and over time, making sure that it's, yeah, beneficially good for the society and the place, the destination.” (Annika, Visit Skåne)

To actively try to spread the tourist over different places and over time, could be explained as an action to avoid over-tourism. In accordance with Ivănescu and Săvan (2024) that highlight the challenges of over-tourism, efforts such as limiting visitor numbers at certain places and by highlighting off-season travels could be taken. Furthermore it can be argued if it is a benefit for Scania to attract a huge number of tourists due to the Fehmarn Belt connection. As stated by *Annika* at Visit Skåne:

“So I mean, in general, it's good that many people want to come and visit, but as we said, it has to be a balanced, balanced flow.” (Annika, Visit Skåne)

In addition avoiding over-tourism is strengthened by focusing on sustainable tourism and by keeping the place attractive for the people who live and work there (Hall, 2008). Furthermore this aligns with the slogan of Visit Lund “A great place to live is a great place to visit” that are further explained by *Cecilia*:

“It's not entirely unique. But there's a lot to it. So if we can build Lund for both those who live and work here. And those who work in Lund and run businesses. Then it will also be a good place to visit.” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

This shows the importance of developing impacts suitable also for the locals (Ivănescu & Săvan, 2024). The over-tourism often leads to the need for extended services at the destination, in terms of being aware of the changes that are coming and how to manage it.

“But no, it's just a matter of how we're going to receive them when they come. How are we going to get Lund to be able to handle it in a sustainable way. How are we going to be able to offer the service that we assume will be in demand and so on.” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

This indicates that there is an awareness of more tourism flow to Lund due to the Fehmarn Belt connection as well as an awareness of the importance of avoiding negative impacts for sustainability. However it can be argued that with cross-border tourism, the Fehmarn Belt connection could foster enhancement in the service quality (Benassi, 2025). Moreover this

strengthened Visit Lund's perspective, that the quality of the services need to be in place for the change in infrastructure that affects the region.

In contrast to over-tourism and many tourists visiting the main attractions, another perspective is of relevance. Europakorridoren (2025) demonstrates that in relation to the region of Schleswig-Holstein's tourism strategy, sustainability is a main starting point for developing the tourism industry. The argument is that sustainability is partly about protecting the environment but also about what type of experiences today's and future tourists will claim, such as something else then the traditionally mass tourism. This mindset of sustainability in their tourist strategy has its similarities with the strategy of Visit Sweden. In alignment with Papp-váry et al. (2025) that sustainable tourist main focus is on the environment but also the respect for local communities. According to Europakorridoren (2025) sustainability is understood as the focus of offering culture, nature and genuine experiences. In addition Ramboll (2026) highlights that tourists in a higher degree search for genuine and meaningful experiences and that food experiences, culture and local events are reasons for traveling to Scania. The search for more genuine experiences aligns with development of sustainable tourism where the attractiveness of aesthetic and cultural places should be respected (Ivănescu & Săvan, 2024; Papp-váry et al., 2025). Additionally in relation to the opening of the Fehmarn Belt connection, it will be important to develop this in a sustainable way. Due to cross-border tourism preserving cultural identities is mainly important (Benassi, 2025), this will likely be of relevance to the region of Scania as well.

4.2.4 Developing different types of tourism

A common type of tourism that is increasing in the region of Scania is the interest for camping. Together with the growth of this kind of traveling, stakeholders need to take some certain actions. As identified by Ramboll (2026) there needs to be a rising awareness about certain areas that risk to be affected negatively due to the camping tourism. An example could be areas that already have a high pressure during certain periods. It could also mean to have a plan in advance for reducing the risk for erosion and deterioration, such as popular campsites that have the risk for deterioration, littering and traffic uncertainty. This is in corresponding with what *Cecilia* stated:

“Then there's such a thing as a full-service parking lot. With latrine emptying and garbage and water refilling and electricity points. [...] there are only a few somewhere in the municipality. [...] We are working to make things a little better there. [...]. We cannot pretend that campervans will not appear either. We cannot just deny it, because they will. If there are no full-service facilities in the form of equipped parking spaces, they will park for free wherever they want. It will end up with garbage lying around in nature. So there I think that, there we have a responsibility to work together with the municipality and other actors to ensure that there is an acceptable service. [...] there must be a service for them.” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

This statement indicates the need for service improvement at campersites are highly important, due to the fact of avoiding negative impacts on the environment. Hall (2008) states that to be an attractive region, it should consist of sufficient tourism infrastructure that support tourism business and the needs of the tourists. Moreover improving the service quality is an action of stakeholder collaboration among actors in the municipalities. This action is something that needs to be focused even before the Fehmarn Belt connection opens.

“There are already a lot of Germans coming with campers. It won't be any less when the Fehmarn Belt connection is in place. So we need to look at that... [...] talking to the urban planning administration, trying to lobby a little, getting colleagues to understand what it can mean.. that it is smart if that is the case.” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

The increase of campervans in the tourism industry is stated by *Eskil* at Malmö Stad as well, who explains that most of the Germans come by car but the issue is to get them to spend money in Sweden since they often bring a lot of things with them. Therefore stakeholders in Sweden and Malmö are looking at how they can attract tourists to use hotels or bed and breakfast instead. The advantages of taking the car are stated by Ramboll (2026) as well. The tourists are able to combine more than one destination during the trip, which offers freedom, flexibility and control. Therefore it could be a possibility for stakeholders in Scania, to promote the advantages of taking the car and campervan when travelling in the region. This statement is supported by Hall (2008), that the advantages of the attractions, facilities and accessibility at the destination need to be promoted. It can be argued that promoting the car as transport to Scania may not be in alignment with sustainable development. However it is not an easy task to get tourists willing to give up

their private cars due to the lack of information for public transport (Hall et al., 2017). One may argue that promoting and raising the awareness of public transport could lead to higher chances of tourists being willing to take the train instead of the car. However, as stated by Predideaux (2000) the distance to the destination is affecting the choice of transport. The shortening in travel time as a result of the opening of the Fehmarn Belt connection (Fehmarnbelt Business Council, 2022), may influence the decisions for tourists from Germany to choose public transport over the car. Benassi (2025) supports this by highlighting the importance of investments in transport infrastructure for the development of cross-border tourism.

In addition to camping tourism, the German, Danish and Netherlands tourists seek experiences in nature and outdoor life (Ramboll, 2026). The relevance of nature are supported by *Cecilia* at Visit Lund:

“And the Germans are also very interested in nature and want to get out into nature, so we think that the more we can work on linking the destination to a destination in Lund, including nature and the villages, the more attractive we will become.” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

This indicates that Visit Lund sees the value of pointing out the attractiveness of their destination. Whereas they see Lund as one of the attractive points for Germans tourists along with nature and villages outside the city. In accordance with Benassi (2025), who stated that to attract cross-border tourists such as Germans, bigger cities are important for regions and also results in benefits for rural areas that are close to the tourist routes to the cities. The importance of rural areas and nature are stated by *Gustav* at Øresundsinstutet as well:

“We have the Allemansrätten [the right of public access], we have quite a few free visitor attractions [...] It's also about our nature that we sometimes don't understand. I think that for a German who comes up to our Allemansrätten [the right of public access] and forest, it's quite attractive. But we don't use... or maybe we don't find ways to make attractions so that we can charge a fee while also making money from them. That's also an important part.” (Gustav, Øresundsinstutet)

The value of nature and the attractiveness of Allemansrätten [the right of public access] for German tourists are highlighted. Moreover this explains that the free access of nature in Scania is attractive for tourists visiting the region. In correspondence with Hall (2008), marketing the value and attractiveness of Scania makes the tourists see the advantages of the region. On the other hand, *Gustav* highlights the problem with earning money from nature seeking tourists. As argued before by *Eskil* from Malmö Stad, the issue is to get the tourists from Germany to spend money.

Furthermore, to foster competitive advantages in rural areas, the use of stakeholder collaboration can be beneficial (McComb et al., 2017). A competitive advantage of nature and the rural area in Scania is the possibility of holiday homes. *Hanna* from Sydsvenska Handelskammaren, mentioned a contributing factor for growth is the increase of holiday homes in south Sweden. Germans, Danish and Dutch see it as an attractive choice for a destination as they appreciate the forests, nature life and the more pleasant climate in Sweden compared to the rest of Europe. The report by Cars (n.d) highlights that with the improved accessibility due to the Fehmarn Belt connection, there is a possibility for development of rural areas in a region next to Scania. Summer guests contribute to the growth of the region. However even if this case is in another region than Scania, this still could be understandable in Scania since it aligns with what is stated by *Hanna* at Sydsvenska Handelskammaren. However it could further be argued about holiday homes being the generating region, (Hall, 2008) or the destination region (Hall, 2008; Leiper, 1990 cited in Preideaux, 2000). This further may have an influence on if they act as tourists or residents when they are travelling in the region. In addition to leisure tourism, the Fehmarn Belt connection will contribute to an increase in business travel (Ramboll, n.d.a). The connection will enhance international accessibility due to more rapid access to more airports. This could lead to more business travel such as meeting and conference tourism (Fehmarnbelt Business Council, 2022).

For a tourist planner to develop sustainable tourism, the use of a package as a tool could be a good option (Hall et al., 2017). In the report by Ramboll (2026) they have identified packaging and information sharing as one of the factors that affects a destination's development and attractiveness. Packaging in terms of offering a combination of travel, accommodation and

experiences which contributes to make it easier for the tourist to plan their trip. The overall tourist experience is affected by the lack of attractive package offers. This aligns with what Ivănescu and Săvan (2024) highlighted that it is more practical and enjoyable for the tourist when offering packages consisting of both the attractions and transportation. In alignment with Ramboll (2026), that highlights “last-mile”, which means an offered solution for traveling from the start to the end. By developing this kind of packaging traveling will be of relevance for the German market and would lead to an increase in tourism. Packaging as being a good tool is identified by another stakeholder as well:

“[...] then we also need to work with packaging... with concepts, niche travel types and so on... Lund and Mittskåne can have cycling trips and so you know, so we will absolutely need to do that going forward, I'm convinced of that... Through Visit Skåne. We don't work with packaging, we've talked a little about it. But we don't have those resources at the moment.” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

This indicates that stakeholders working with packaging is something that is going to be even more important when the Fehmarn Belt connection opens, to offer the tourists an easy way to travel. In addition, the report by Schleswig-Holstein (2024), states that attempts to promote tourism in the border region can be by developing experience packages. This shows the importance of packages on both sides of the border. Hall (2008) underlines that it is important to promote the advantages of a destination. Using package as a marketing tool in tourism planning is stated by Eskil:

“So there's a challenge to open up Malmö and show what could be interesting. Also together with Lund, see it as a package that in southern Sweden, you have a lot of actually destinations that are interesting... And very close, you have also nature and forest, which a lot of Germans like, and the coast, both east and west coast of Sweden, is attractive for many Germans coming as tourists. So I think that is something that they already know in the tourist sector and has to be promote it even more.” (Eskil, Malmö Stad)

Furthermore this suggests that packaging is a useful tool to promote a destination. Hall et al. (2017) emphasizes that the package is a multimodal way of combining flexibility and more

choices for tourists in public transport. Flexibility in public transport aligns with what Ramboll (2026) presents about the strong preferences of bike tourism in the Netherlands market. In relation to the opening of the Fehmarn Belt connection, there is a potential for southern Sweden to strengthen sustainable tourism by developing the possibility to bring the bike on the train. This can be done with collaboration among transport operators. Bike tourism is an increasing tourism type in Scania, which is highlighted by *Cecilia* at Visit Lund:

“It was one of the tourism initiatives in recent years that has been made down here in a regional cycle route. Which has been created and marketed. It goes from Lomma to Lund and from Lund to Lomma. Then in connection with it we have done a cycle tour that we have in our app. Where Lomma municipality has bought into it and is simply a part of our app.” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

This indicates a current collaboration between two municipalities for supporting sustainable tourism by packing the offer through a digital app. This explains that packaging has the potential to be an important tool for destinations in relation to the Fehmarn Belt connection.

A challenge in tourism planning is to reach out with information to tourists. Ramboll (2026) points out that there is a need for better information before and during the trip such as having information in multiple languages. There should also be accessible information in travel applications, digital marketing and physical information points. It is also about having the competence as the host to meet and welcome different cultures. In accordance with Hall et al. (2017), language could be a barrier for tourists and that clear information is an important factor contributing to the ease of traveling.

“I also know that they're talking about looking at translating their website into German, translating the menus into German, like and that and that says something about what you kind of think that like. Yeah, but what the customers are going to come from.” (Hanna, Sydsvenska Handelskammaren)

“But what we can do is work with the tourist destinations and the industry to make sure they are export-ready. That they have websites in German, for example.” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

“So my first advice, and this applies to the tourism industry in particular, is to have websites in German, to have proper German-speaking staff. Then I have a good contact person in the Netherlands who says that you talk too much only about Germany.” (Gustav, Øresundsinstituttet)

This indicates that there are stakeholders that are already thinking about this language barrier in the tourism industry and see the potential negative effects in relation to the opening of the Fehmarn Belt connection. Moreover Ramboll (2026), demonstrates that clear communication and guidance foster a responsible and sustainable approach for tourism.

4.3 Recognizing and reasoning about the future effects

Stakeholders actions and how they collaborate in regards to the Fehmarn Belt connection, may differ from how they talk about potential effects. As stated by Ramboll (2026), sharing insights and raising the awareness of expected changes, strengthens the tourism stakeholder's ability to plan for growth. Due to the changing travel patterns, arising insights and awareness help companies to adapt and develop their businesses. In addition, municipalities also need insights about the big and expected changes. This means to understand how to manage and plan for a better tourism and to benefit best from the potential effects of increasing tourism. This is consistent with Papp-váry et al. (2025), to foster awareness of best possible actions, knowledge sharing is important in terms of stakeholder collaboration. The need of rising awareness is stated by Isac at Region Skåne as well:

“So it's really important for us to raise awareness of what's happening in our vicinity. Because usually the government doesn't really realise that until it's more or less too late, because this is so, the infrastructure process is so extremely slow. And so, for us, it's a bit frustrating because we see what's happening, but we cannot really interest it in another way than two years to raise awareness about.” (Isac, Region Skåne)

Furthermore this shows the importance of further collaboration among different stakeholders, in particular between governments. In addition, the benefits of collaboration are necessary to realize by the region. This is expressed by *Daniella* and *Gustav*:

“So if we don't do anything proactively, it's just going to be a corridor, and we can just hope that people will actually, along the corridor, stop and work together.” (Daniella, STRING)

“Yes, but I think you have to... you have to realize that certain visions are not realistic. [...] But the actors in this circle can gather their forces if they want in a way and collaborate. And so that you are heard louder, you reach further.” (Gustav, Øresundsinstitutet,)

This could be an explanation of the significance of collaboration and something that needs to be more put in focus. However the future is uncertain and the potential effects of the Fehmarn Belt connection can be a challenge to predict. As highlighted here:

“We need to really understand how much and when will we see it in Sweden? [...] And how can we ensure that we know, you can never really, you know, there's only so much you can know. But...how do we ensure that we know enough about these projects to be able to say, well, when Fehmarn Belt opens, we can see this and this, probably not this.” (Filippa, Trafikverket)

“We are also looking at it from the outside and as I said, it is very much a guessing game moment because it will be there before things are in place. No one has the answer and will be like this exactly like this it will be because it also depends on topics like what investments we make on the Swedish side and what investments Germany then makes in turn and so on.” (Hanna, Sydsvenska Handelskammaren)

This shows that even if stakeholder collaboration is the key for success, it may not be enough in relation to the opening of the Fehmarn Belt connection.

4.3.1 Scenarios

The introduction section outlined the report by Ramboll (2026), which highlights several characteristics of tourism. Four future scenarios are shown about the transport system and development of the tourism industry in southern Sweden. This illustrates the potential of how guest nights and tourism flow to Malmö and Scania can be developed. It also shows the possible consequences for the tourism industry in relation to the development of the infrastructure. The four scenarios are based on two influencing factors. The first one is the transport system capacity

and accessibility, which explains how well the infrastructure is working for the needs of the tourist. Furthermore the transport system can be either fragmented or seamless. The second factor is about the attractiveness and positioning of the destination which means how strong and well coordinated the tourism offer is. Additionally what influences a destination is either fragmented and weakly profiled, or clearly profiled and coordinated. In table 4 the four scenarios are illustrated:

Table 4: Four future scenarios

(translated with google translate and authors, based on Ramboll, 2026, p. 6)

	Fragmented and weakly profiled destination	Clearly profiled and coordinated destination
Fragmented transportation system	<i>Scenario:</i> <i>Southern Sweden at a standstill</i> Delays in the Fehmarn Belt, fragmented planning and weak marketing mean that southern Sweden is left in the dark. Tourism is dominated by domestic guests by car, mainly during the summer. International visitors are declining as other options become easier to reach.	<i>Scenario:</i> <i>A winding road to your dream trip in southern Sweden</i> The region is very attractive with its nature, culture and gastronomy, but the infrastructure is not keeping up. Delays, weak ticketing systems and lack of mobility solutions create bottlenecks. Demand is high, but capacity is low. Tourism is heavily car-based and concentrated on the coast and campsites.
Seamless transportation system	<i>Scenario:</i> <i>Southern Sweden as a transit route</i> The journey here is easy, but a lack of coordination and preparedness creates chaos at popular tourist	<i>Scenario:</i> <i>The interconnected and attractive destination</i> Southern Sweden is a model for sustainable, accessible and growing tourism. The Fehmarn Belt and

	destinations. The increased inflow of foreign tourism instead stops as important markets seek other destinations. Southern Sweden has to deal with consequences such as increased wear and tear and congestion without reaping the benefits.	Copenhagen Airport connect the region, and an integrated transport system makes it easy to travel by public transport between the coast, city and countryside. Booking systems are coordinated, and sustainable travel choices are the obvious choice.
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Table 4 outlines four potential outcomes that could happen in the region. Visit Skåne, who is one of the organisations beyond the report, stated following:

“And in every scenario, it's pretty much about working together in different corporations because no one can solve everything alone. So working closely with the municipalities, for instance, is very important in this area.” (Annika, Visit Skåne)

This implies that no matter which scenario is preferable, stakeholder collaboration is highly necessary. More specifically the collaboration between municipalities and tourism organizations are highlighted. This aligns with the common interest among collaborative stakeholders which are beneficial (Silwana & Dube, 2022). Moreover working together with other stakeholders can be seen as the key to success to move forward in the same direction. As stated by *Cecilia* at Visit Lund:

“Yes, this is exactly what is key. That you actually integrate infrastructure and destination development. That Visit Skåne works with destination development. But how do they ensure, or what paths do they take to those who actually own the issues around infrastructure? Similarly, that they can work with us so they can ensure that we inform and move in the same direction. But we are still only working with destination development.” (Cecilia, Visit Lund)

This indicates that the problem with the factors in the scenario “The interconnected and attractive destination” are highlighted as a challenge to ensure that the issues outside each stakeholders own interest are being taken into account. That scenario could be understood as the best and

desirable scenario since it has benefits for both parties. However as discussed by *Annika* at Visit Skåne:

“It could be considered the best. It could also be considered the most dangerous, because if it's not handled in the right way, it could be a catastrophe. But of course, I mean, I agree, it's the most interesting scenario of the four.” (Annika, Visit Skåne)

This could indicate that handling the planning in the right way means collaboration among stakeholders in the region. In accordance with the significance of managing a long-term plan in regional tourism planning, the stakeholder collaboration needs to be efficient to avoid the risk of devastating impacts (Alrwajfah et al., 2019; McComb et al., 2017). Furthermore, the scenario “Southern Sweden as a transit route” is an interesting potential scenario. As seen in following:

“It will be a discussion. Will we end up as a transit city, a transit region, or will we be also a destination? Depends on do we have something to offer that makes it interesting for people to stay? So that is one of the main questions. I don't have the answer to that, but that's a main question. Otherwise, they will just pass through by car or by train. So we have to, Malmö and the southern part of Sweden has to be very clever on how to develop it as an interesting destination. This is something they all people working with tourism are quite aware of. But we're also discussing will this Fehmarn Belt make it a more transit region or will we be a destination?” (Eskil, Malmö Stad)

“You kind of need a regional train to also make those stops in the hubs that we want to connect. So to make sure that it's not just a run through, but that you actually create value along the corridor. And so that's definitely part of the discussions to make sure that we actually, we create the interconnectivity. Otherwise it's just going to be a run through corridor.” (Daniella, STRING)

This demonstrates the risk of the region being a transit region if the destination does not have a clear strategy about promoting the value of the destination. In accordance with Hall (2008) that stated that the attractiveness of a destination needs to be promoted. Moreover it can be explained by the tourism system, where the tourist never reaches the destination region but rather stays in the transit region (Hall, 2008). To reach the scenario “The interconnected and attractive destination” rather than the scenario as “Southern Sweden as a transit route” some factors need to

be established such as attractiveness and accessibility. Moreover *Eskil* from Malmö Stad thinks that the report is great and that scenarios show the potential of tourists travelling more by rail. In alignment with Ivănescu and Săvan (2024), who points out the mobility aspect in tourism can be managed through development of sustainable transportation systems. This could indicate that with sustainable development of the railways it could lead to better accessibility for Scania. In contrast *Isac* from Region Skåne stated:

“But I...I’ve seen the calculations of the increase in tourism and so on, but I think it’s really, really difficult to calculate that. I think maybe sometimes it’s. There’s also a lot of wishing. Um... I don’t to me it’s it seems. It seems... Maybe a bit unrealistic that tourism would increase a lot here because of Fehmarn Belt. But maybe, and that’s probably a good thing, but I guess Kiel and Lübeck and places like that would be have a lot of increases as well, probably much more.” (Isac, Region Skåne)

This further questions the potential of the Fehmarn Belt connection and also the potential of the scenarios. However, Visit Skåne is working with the results from the report by discussing the potentials with the board directors of their organisation. Their aim is to identify focus areas that are important and could contribute to reach the preferred scenario.

5. Analysis and discussion

In the following part the research questions will be answered. The first question looked at the stakeholder typologies and how actions contribute to the formation of those typologies (see table 3). The first and the second question will be answered combined as the actions where stakeholders might be collaborating are influencing the stakeholders typology. To understand stakeholder collaboration better, the actions are analysed and discussed with the viewpoint of power, legitimacy and urgency. Mitchell et al. (1997) stakeholder typology was used to categorize the stakeholders. Perkins et al. (2022) paper on stakeholder typologies was used as a reference point. However, there is missing research on the actions that classify stakeholders. Therefore a lot of subjectivity also formed the discussion about the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency. Document analysis and interviews led to a number of identified actions.

These actions are structured in the themes: stakeholder collaboration, mobility, sustainable tourism and types of tourism.

5.1 Action

This section will address the first research question “Which actions contribute to the formation of certain stakeholder typologies?” as well as the second research question “How are stakeholders in the Region of Scania collaborating in regard to tourism planning with the upcoming opening of the Fehmarn Belt connection?”

5.1.1 Stakeholder collaboration

As described above, collaboration is highly valued by many stakeholders. Visit Lund is the only discretionary stakeholder. They do not have power in regards to the bigger regional tourism planning and also do not have the resources for that. Thus, this can strengthen the view of Beck (2025), that Visit Lund is a discretionary stakeholder that wants to collaborate with a highly salient stakeholder that can accomplish their shared goal to create a great place to visit. A more salient stakeholder they see as a coordinator is Visit Skåne. In contrast to Visit Lund, Visit Skåne has normative power. They have the power and legitimacy to influence other stakeholders with knowledge and expertise. The findings show that the dominant stakeholders more precisely Visit Skåne, STRING, Øresundsinstitutet and Malmö Stad are working together and are strongly connected. Visit Skåne has also explained that they have been working together with Malmö Stad for a long time. In addition Malmö Stad is taking over the chairmanship of STRING in 2026.

At the current state of the Fehmarn Belt connection the regional actors like Malmö Stad and Visit Skåne do not have a direct urgency. Visit Skåne and Malmö Stad were part of instructing Ramboll to do the report (Ramboll, 2026). The report is one example of collaboration between stakeholders in Scania. This leads to legitimacy and is one example of why both of the stakeholders are categorized as dominant. Their missing urgency can be seen in that there are no concrete actions planned after the report was published, except spreading the word about it.

Tourism planning for the region of Scania can also include cross-border interactions due to it being a part of the Öresund region. Stakeholders such as STRING and Øresundsinstitutet are naturally more focused on the wider region. As a members organisation, STRING does not have coercive power but has normative power to influence their members (Mitchell et al., 1997). Moreover, as stated by STRING as well, can this type of organisation maybe lead to more collaboration as the members feel more connected. This connection and collaboration is very important to market different attractions of the region and make southern Sweden more known and attractive as part of the Öresund region. To solve this issue of people not knowing so much about Scania when thinking about the Öresund region, place branding is important.

5.1.2 Mobility

Mobility requires a lot of collaboration as different stakeholders have different responsibilities. There are some stakeholders that are focusing a lot on mobility, such as Trafikverket and Region Skåne. A partial focus on mobility have Sydsvenska Handelskammaren and Malmö Stad. Looking first at the regional infrastructure and the collaborations, Region Skåne was as well as Trafikverket identified as a definitive stakeholder. These are also the only two stakeholders that were identified as definitive stakeholders, since they have all the three attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency (Mitchell et al., 1997). Region Skåne has utilitarian power, which is shown by the influence they have on the regional infrastructure by giving money to different projects. They are responsible for the infrastructure planning in Scania, which then also shows legitimacy. They are collaborating with different municipalities and Trafikverket. Region Skåne and Trafikverket are both also affected by the government's decisions as they can approve or disapprove infrastructural projects. Thus, even though they have respective power they are still working on raising awareness about the Fehmarn Belt connection. As a definitive stakeholder they are also feeling the urgency, due to having the knowledge and understanding that infrastructure takes a long time. This indicates that they understand the potential effects, which can feel frustrating when for example the government of Sweden is not as aware of the project. Therefore the government does not see the urgency as much as the more local stakeholders. Here it is also interesting to see that Region Skåne and Øresundsinstitutet as regional actors, feel like the government has to be more aware. Whereas *Filippa* from Trafikverket focuses on the national Swedish transport system and therefore has a more understanding viewpoint. She

suggests that it might not be the government's role to be so deeply involved in the issue of the Fehmarn Belt connection.

In 2026 Malmö stad takes over the chairmanship of STRING, which leads to more normative power as they can influence other stakeholders. However, as *Eskil* from Malmö Stad said, the Fehmarn Belt connection can have an enormous impact on passenger transportation. The effects will be most likely prominent in Scania due to geographical closeness to the FBFL. In southern Sweden there should be more urgency to prepare for the impacts from the stakeholders that hold power. Especially since tourism by train is expected to rise (Ramboll, 2026), it gets even more important to have a bigger focus on tourism in the planning of public transport. This indicates that better accessibility in Scania is needed, by tourists that come by train as well as by other transport methods to spread the tourists. However, during the interviews there was also the feeling that the effects are uncertain. Together with the delays of the FBFL and possible even further delays, there might be a false security of time.

5.1.3 Sustainable tourism

It can be significant to understand which actions regarding sustainable tourism are contributing to certain stakeholders typologies in Scania. This could then lead to an understanding of the collaboration regarding sustainable tourism. Visit Skåne's main focus is on sustainability and has a long-term strategy for developing sustainable tourism, that consists of a balanced flow of tourists to the region. In addition this explains that in the context of the Fehmarn Belt connection, Visit Skåne can be seen as a dominant stakeholder. Since they have high engagement in the field of sustainable tourism and are trying to influence other stakeholders in the region (Mitchell et al., 1997). In contrast, Visit Lund has the focus on making Lund a great place to both live at and to visit. This explains that they have a sustainable perspective by a developed service quality for both the locals and the tourist who visits Lund. From the perspective of the Fehmarn Belt connection and the region of Scania, this could indicate that Visit Lund is characterized as a discretionary stakeholder. They are taking legitimate actions for developing sustainable tourism in Scania, however their focus is only on a local level. This could be understood as their actions not being seen as urgent for the development of the region as well as not having the power to influence in a wider perspective (Mitchell et al., 1997). Visit Skåne, being a dominant

stakeholder, could take the lead of further development. Visit Lund would be interested in collaboration due to their legitimate action of developing tourism. In this case, if Visit Skåne shows a broader sense of time-sensitive they as the dominant stakeholder would be able to get other local stakeholders to join their collaboration.

5.1.4 Types of tourism

The Fehmarn Belt connection has the potential to lead to an increase in new as well as popular tourism types. Stakeholders typologies could help to understand how stakeholders in Scania are collaborating in regard to tourism types. Camping tourism is an already popular tourism type with the potential of increasing due to the Fehmarn Belt connection. There is an awareness among stakeholders, as it was highlighted by Visit Lund, Malmö Stad and in the report by Ramboll (2026). Both Malmö Stad and Visit Lund have identified actions that need to be taken into account to avoid the risk of camping tourism. Actions such as improvement in service quality as well as attracting tourists who spend money in the destination. Malmö Stad is already working with this together with other stakeholders in the tourism industry, while Visit Lund is also working with it but with the municipality of Lund. Moreover this could be explained by Malmö Stad being a dominant stakeholder (Mitchell et al., 1997), they are trustworthy in the collaboration with others stakeholders on a regional level. Visit Lund has a legitimate action (Mitchell et al., 1997), since they are focusing on developing improvements for the tourism industry at a local level. This could be interpreted as there is an existing awareness of the risk with camping among some stakeholders. However due to their identified stakeholder typologies this explains how their actions contribute to stakeholder collaboration in the context of the Fehmarn Belt connection.

Øresundsinstitutet was characterised as a dominant stakeholder and has the normative power due to their focus on trust and prestige (Mitchell et al., 1997), in terms of influencing smaller groups of stakeholders by coordinating meetings for the Fehmarn Belt connection. They see the value of nature tourism in Scania, but also identified an important challenge with not making money from that type of tourism. Øresundsinstitutet has the power to share knowledge, however they have limited resources and no general focus on tourism development. This explains that in the context of the Fehmarn Belt connection in Scania, they are a dominant stakeholder.

The findings show a limitation in some actions, where the stakeholders have awareness of certain tourism types but not expressively about current actions. Visit Lund shows awareness of the importance of promoting the attractiveness of nature tourism. Sydsvenska Handelskammaren had awareness about the increase in holiday homes in the region. The need to translate information and websites due to the language barrier are expressed by some of the stakeholders. Sydsvenska Handelskammaren and Øresundsinstitutet have the power of sharing knowledge to other stakeholders, due to their normative power of trust (Mitchell et al., 1997). In comparison, Visit Lund has legitimacy, by wanting to help to reduce language barriers of tourist destinations in Lund. Due to being a discretionary stakeholder, they are with their legitimacy an interesting group that has the possibility of involvement (Mitchell et al., 1997). Moreover this could be understood as there is a potential of stakeholder collaboration in regards to language barriers.

The findings shows that packaging has the potential to be an important tool for destinations in relation to the Fehmarn Belt connection. Packaging was highlighted by Ramboll (2026) as well as Malmö Stad and Visit Lund, as a valuable tool for tourism development. Malmö Stad suggested it as a marketing tool, but no current action about it was stated. This could be explained as they are being a dominant stakeholder and their lack of urgency is shown here. They may know it is a good action and they have the power to do it, however they do not feel it is time to prioritize it right now. According to Visit Lund they are not working with packaging, due to the lack of resources. That would rather be something for Visit Skåne to work with. However the findings show that they offer a package with bike tourism together with another nearby municipality. Packaging in bike tourism was found in the report by Ramboll (2026), which suggests the flexibility of bringing the bike on the train. Moreover this could strengthen and explain that Visit Lund has the legitimate action of developing tourism in Scania, due to the fact that they already have done an action that is presented as a potential by Ramboll (2026). However, as the findings show, an interpretation is that packaging can work as a marketing tool between destinations for promoting a region.

5.2 Reasoning about the future effects

This section will address the third research question “How do the stakeholders reasoning about the potential effects of the Fehmarn Belt connection in regards to tourism?”. The analysis shows the stakeholders perspectives about the potential outcomes. First, both Trafikverket and Sydsvenska Handelskammaren reasoned about the uncertainty. More specifically a lot of speculation about what will happen. It is unsure exactly what outcomes the Fehmarn Belt connection will lead to. However, as Region Skåne stated, raising awareness could be seen as important due to getting more stakeholders to realize the potential. Increasing awareness due to knowledge sharing and decision making leads to achieving the best possible outcome (Papp-váry et al., 2025; Silwana & Dube, 2022). This could be understood as the opportunities with the Fehmarn Belt connection are not generally known in the region. That being said, until the opening there may be a need to focus on raising awareness and sharing even more knowledge about the project and its effects for the region.

The need for stakeholder collaboration is highlighted by STRING in relation to not just being a transit corridor. In accordance with developing the region to strengthen a regional identity (Benassi, 2025). Furthermore Øresundsinstitutet demonstrates that collaboration is an important action rather than focusing on visions that could be unrealistic to achieve. This underlines the importance of collaboration among stakeholders (Papp-váry et al., 2025; Perkins et al., 2022; Silwana & Dube, 2022). This implies that for being able to develop a shared vision of the region, the stakeholders need to work together. The focus should be on realistic goals with the help of involving stakeholders.

The researchers asked the interviewees about their spontaneous thoughts about the report by Ramboll (2026) and more specifically the four future scenarios that were presented in table 4. Some of them had not seen the report, some had seen it just quickly and some had read it. This further explains that the thoughts about the scenarios may not be sufficiently represented. However as shown in the findings, some of the interviews had something to say about the report. Malmö Stad and STRING talked about the scenario that includes the risk of the region ending up as a transit route. Whereas Visit Skåne discussed the positive aspect as well as the challenges about the scenario “the interconnected and attractive destination”. The reasons for considering

different scenarios could be explained by different kinds of goals (Perkins et al., 2022; Silwana & Dube, 2022). This indicates that they see the report and the scenarios differently because they are different organizations with various focuses. However this could add difficulties in developing tourism and deciding which scenarios is the one to achieve. Since the goal in tourism development is to find a common interest (Silwana & Dube, 2022). The report by Ramboll (2026) highlights potential with the scenarios. However it did not include any strategies on how to achieve any of the scenarios. Visit Skåne stated that they are discussing the results with their board of directors. As previously mentioned, different organizations found different scenarios interesting. This could indicate that developing tourism based on the scenarios could be a challenge. Due to that there is not one shared vision on which scenarios would be the most preferred. That is often the result when the collaborating is missing (Alrwajfah et al., 2019). To avoid ineffective tourism planning, there is a need for implementing realistic tourism strategies (Silwana & Dube, 2022). Additionally, this indicates that the recent report has potential for developing tourism in Scania as long as there is a shared vision, stakeholder collaboration and strategies are implemented.

6. Conclusions

To address the relation between stakeholder collaboration and tourism planning in the region of Scania, the context of the big infrastructure change in terms of the Fehmarn Belt connection has been studied. The salience model by Mitchell et al. (1997) has been applied to understand the types of stakeholders that are in the region and which actions are being taken by them. Furthermore this adds more clarity to the research gap about stakeholder collaboration in tourism and stakeholder typologies. Through findings and analysis the aim of the study has been successfully addressed. This study explores the potential effects of the Fehmarn Belt connection and how that affects the stakeholder collaboration.

The thesis starts with exploring the stakeholder typologies based on found actions, in line with RQ1: “Which actions contribute to the formation of certain stakeholder typologies?”. The findings revealed several actions taken by the stakeholders. Actions such as collaboration with stakeholders, improvements in mobility, promotion of sustainable tourism and development of

various types of tourism. These certain actions contribute in different ways and variety to the three stakeholder typologies: definitive, dominant and discretionary.

Turning to RQ2 “How are stakeholders in the Region of Scania collaborating in regard to tourism planning with the upcoming opening of the Fehmarn Belt connection?”. The interviews as well as the document analysis revealed that there are various collaborations among stakeholders in Scania. How they are collaborating and with who differs depending on what goal each organisation has. For example some of the stakeholders collaborate in regards to the infrastructure and mobility, while others instead work together with developing tourism. One common thing that was found in collaboration was the way of sharing information. Most of the stakeholders highlighted the importance of sharing knowledge with other stakeholders. Several of the stakeholders are connected through different member organizations, where some stakeholders are members of STRING and Øresundsinstitutet. Furthermore some stakeholders collaborate through financial ways, where some have the power of deciding the amount of money others get approved for. Lastly the stakeholder collaboration where found in the terms of tourism planning. In the report by Ramboll (2026), where some of the stakeholders collaborated to achieve the report together. Moreover, stakeholders are working together in the terms of improvements of the quality of service and tourism in the region. For example for camping tourism, avoiding language barriers and promoting packaging. Together they raise the awareness of the potential of nature tourism, holiday homes and business travelling.

The RQ3 “How do the stakeholders reasoning about the potential effects of the Fehmarn Belt connection in regards to tourism?” is lastly being explored. Through findings and analysis, it is shown that some of the stakeholders experience uncertainty with the potential of Fehmarn Belt connection due to the effects being unknown. It also highlights the necessity of raising awareness so more stakeholders are familiar with the potential benefits and challenges. Beside this, the need for stakeholders collaboration are highlighted as a key in this context. However the perspective differs of which potential scenario that stakeholders could work for, due to each organization's own core focus. The potential could be reached with shared vision, stakeholder collaboration and implemented strategies.

This research contributed to the theory by showing more actions which could lead to a certain stakeholder typology. More generally did the thesis add to the academic research about the Fehmarn Belt connection. As FBFL is continuously being built, the most academic research that can be found is about infrastructure. Thus, this research gives a new perspective by focusing on the tourism perspective and stakeholder collaboration. There are certain limitations regarding this research. The first limitation is that as some stakeholders that we interviewed are quite a big organization it was hard to contact the right person. Thus, there might have been someone more suitable regarding our research for example more specialised on tourism and not only infrastructure. Due to time and resource constraints there was not the possibility to interview further stakeholders for example someone from the government. This also leads to suggestions for future research. In a future research the focus could be more on local stakeholders and the tourism industry for example hotels and local DMOs. A focus could also be set more on networks, how they are formed and how these influence the stakeholder collaborations. A network could be a togetherness of different stakeholders that represent a mix of stakeholders in infrastructure and tourism. This could be something that could practically be created also as part of a specific action to talk and have an exchange on how to prepare for the impacts of the Fehmarn Belt connection. Generally stakeholders should create a more specific strategic action plan with time frames on what they need to do before the FBFL opens.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview guide

Explain Agenda to Interviewees

- *Introduction of research team/project/aim/etc.
We are two students specializing in Service Management in Tourism at Lund University, Sweden. Writing our master thesis and our research is about finding more insights about how stakeholders in the Region of Skåne are strategically collaborating in the tourism sector in relation to the Fehmarn Belt connection.*
- *If at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable, you are not required to answer the question. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to skip any question or end the interview at any time.*
- *Before we start, is it okay if we both video and audio record the interview?*
- *If everything feels right, then we start recording now.*

Background

- Role at the organization
- How long have you been working at “xx?”

General about the organization

- What is xx’s mission?
- How is the organisation organized with different teams and focus areas?
- How are you collaborating with different stakeholders in the region of Skåne today?
- Which are the most important stakeholders that you collaborate with?
- How are xx working with tourism?
- Will it change in the future in relation to the Fehmarn Belt connection?
- How are you planning growing tourism in general in the region?
- How are you working with different stakeholders in general with tourism? Such as private actors, municipalities etc.
- How are you planning growing tourism in the region of Skåne in relation to the Fehmarn Belt connection?

Fehmarn Belt connection

- What is your role in relation to Fehmarn Belt connection
-Is it your full time job now or do you have other projects?
- How are you working with the Fehmarn Belt connection in your role, and when did you start working with it?

- How are xx working with the Fehmarn Belt connection at the regional level in Skåne?
- What is the current work with the project?
 - Are you focus on any specifically target group for example age or demographically?
- How are you working with the strategy chronologically? Do you have strategies for every year until it opens?
 - Planning for tourism
 - Marketing
 - Sustainability
 - Labour market
- How have you organized the work internally in the organisation, since the Fehmarn Belt connection will affect so many different areas. For example, tourism, labour market, innovation. Do you have a project team specifically for the Fehmarn Belt?
 - What are the important areas you are working with in relation to the Fehmarn Belt? And why those?
- What is your main focus in the work with the Fehmarn Belt connection?

Stakeholders

- Which stakeholders in the region of Skåne are you working together with in relation to the Fehmarn Belt connection?
- What benefit do you see with collaborating with different stakeholders in relation to the Fehmarn Belt?
- What challenges do you see there is with the collaboration with the stakeholders?
- How are you prioritizing the stakeholders, which you should work with and not?
- How are you dealing with conflicts among stakeholders?
- Do you have a strategy for the collaboration among stakeholders in Skåne in relation to the Fehmarn Belt?
- How are you working with the whole Öresund region, do you have any strategy for developing the whole region together with other stakeholders?
- How are you today planning and developing the competence and skills in the region of Skåne?
- What could be done to improve stakeholder collaboration in the region? What do you think is missing right now?

Report

- Have you seen (read) the report by Visit Skåne and Ramboll “Framtidens väg-och rälsburna transporter - scenarier för transportsystemets och besöksnäringens utveckling i södra Sverige”?

If yes, what is your spontaneous thought about it?

How will you work with the report?

If no, it's a scenario report that includes four possible scenarios that could happen in south Sweden after the opening of the Fehmarn Belt. The scenarios is based on two main factors, which are the transport system capacity and the destination attraction. What do you think will happen after opening? If you think of attractiveness of South Sweden and the capacity of the transport system.

- Are you familiar with the scenarios in the report?
There was one scenario “the connecting and attractive destination”. What do you think about that scenario, are you doing something with the aim of achieving that scenario? What do you think will be the greatest challenge in achieving the best possible scenario? “the connecting and attractive destination”?

Appendix B: Participant information sheet and Consent form



Participant Information Sheet

We are Linnéa Persson and Emily Hussels, studying a Master in Service Management with a specialisation in Tourism at Lund University. This information sheet gives you further information about our master thesis as well as your participation. Lastly, we would kindly ask you to sign the consent form.

Our research project

In our research we are focusing on the regional development in Skåne in relation to the Fehmarn-Belt tunnel. We want to gain more insights about how stakeholders in the Region of Skåne are strategically collaborating in the tourism sector. We have first looked at documents from different regional backgrounds such as Sweden, Denmark and Germany. In more detail we have looked at the report: “Framtidens väg-och rälsburna transporter” which we use as a starting point for the interviews.

Participation

The interviews will be semi-structured and will take approximately 1 hour. The interview can be conducted either in person or online, based on what we decided. By agreeing on the terms of the interview, it will be recorded and an AI tool will be used for transcribing.

The material and all personal information will be anonymised and be held confidential. Pseudonyms will be used to disclose information such as names and details of the organisation. According to GDPR, all personal information will be kept confidential between the researchers. The data will be deleted after the thesis has been approved.

Voluntary participation and further information

The participation in the interviews is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw anytime without any reason. If you choose to withdraw, you can request that we remove all data we have collected from you.

After the thesis has been approved it will be published on Lund University Publications Student Papers (LUP-SP). All the participants have the possibility of getting a copy of the thesis by contacting one of the researchers. If you have any further questions, please contact us anytime.

Thank you for participating in our research!

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Supervisor

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Informed consent to participate in study at the Lund University

By signing below, I am providing my voluntary informed consent to participate in an interview, where information will be collected and used for the master thesis. In the thesis, the information collected will only be presented in a way where you will not be identifiable. Your consent can be recalled at any time and any information collected from you will be deleted and not be used in any yet to be performed analysis.

To recall your consent, contact

Emily Hussels, em356hu-s@student.lu.se +4915753110048

Linnéa Persson, li8185pe-s@student.lu.se +46768529096.

Name:

Email address:

Phone number:

Signature: