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Title: *Does the concept of "A New Rural Paradigm" provide basis for durable economies in the North?*

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The challenges of generating more durable bases for economies in sparsely populated and rural areas has become a major challenge for northern and Arctic regions, and for several reasons:

- Renewable resources still have some importance for fisheries, forestry and agriculture, but decreasing world market prices put considerable pressure on their competitiveness, and thereby on their viability.

- While large scale industries, mining, and energy extraction used to be basis for larger settlements in the North, FiFo (Fly-In-Fly-Out) workforce from areas in the world where wages are considerably lower tend to outcompete local involvement.

- Similarly "turn-key" production facilities delivered from outside the North tend to take away local incentives in establishing local production and service facilities.

- And last, but not least, the migration patterns with increased outmigration of young and skilled persons and an increased ageing of the population limits the options for new initiatives in the traditional activities characterizing the North.

One option is trying to maintain the settlement pattern through considerable governmental transfers to the regions. Another is to try to stimulate new initiatives outside the activities that has traditionally been situated in the North. This is for instance the basis for OECD's concept of "New Rural Paradigm" where questions of making use of local resources "both natural and human" has become one of their key issues. And especially in relation to renewable energy resources which in their perception could become an important starting point for sparsely populated and northern regions.

In this commentary the concept will be discussed in relation to the realities of the Northern and Arctic regions.