



different decision-making levels of government, and that regulations are vague and extremely discretionary.

"This means that our greenfield land is managed by different bodies, each with their own considerations and interests to look after. Decisions made by one body will often affect or intervene in the interests of other bodies. This creates a breeding ground for conflicts over land use management," he says.

"On the whole, we are unable to safeguard those values and considerations emphasised by the Norwegian Parliament as being essential for guaranteeing sustainable land use management," he adds.

### **Bit by bit**

According to Winge, land use development in Norway can be characterised as bit-by-bit expansion with no foundation in holistic planning. Although a single development initiative alone may not be particularly damaging, the total of a number of initiatives over time can result in unforeseen and undesirable effects.

The challenge is to see the overall effect of all of the small initiatives.

"This is the paradox -- and the background for my thesis. The expansion of small power stations is a good example. The government said at the turn of the millennium that the era of large power plant expansion is now over, and instead we have been concentrating on small plants. But the total impact of the small ones can be just as far-reaching as that of the large ones," Winge points out.

### **Around the world several times**

Norway has also embraced extensive plans to develop power lines and wind power stations. This initiative presents great potential for conflict with other land use interests in greenfield sites.

"Of the thousands of kilometres of untouched nature that have been lost in the last five years, energy initiatives alone account for around 40 per cent," the researcher says.

"The national grid in Norway has now been extended by more than 128,500 kilometres of power lines. If you imagine this as one continuous power line, it would go round the earth more than three times."

### **The fight for land**

The increased pressure on greenfield land has led to clear differences of interest in public administration. The situation in Norway today can be characterised as a 'fight for land', Winge says.

"The fight generally concerns development cases where administrative bodies attempt to get the most support for their particular interests, rather than decision-making processes where the authorities work together in search of solutions that everyone can agree on. The failure of the law to control land use management contributes to this fight," he summarises.

### **Laws become empty phrases**

"The question of which interests should be prioritised is still first and foremost a topic for political debate. The legislation gives voice to many good values and considerations, but several provisions are in practice just empty phrases. The principle of sustainable development says no more than what the individual decision-maker finds appropriate in the individual case," Winge points out.

"Legislators must make a choice and take a position as to what has to be taken into consideration, rather than

passing the buck to a sector-specific and level-controlled administrative instrument,” he concludes.

 [Plans to build power lines and wind turbines can conflict with other interests in outlying areas. \(Photo: Colourbox\)](#) [8]

 [Thousands of kilometers without major infrastructure development has been lost over the last five years. \(Foto: Colourbox\)](#) [9]

 [Nikolai Kristoffersen Winge. \(Photo: Øystein Wollan/UiO\)](#) [10]

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