

Sustainable Approaches to the Destination Management: The Performance Assessment Aspects

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the destination management performance in the sustainability field. Many countries have been discussing the opportunities of implementing the sustainability principles, standards and methodological approaches to the sustainable destination management. The paper focuses on sustainability as a function of the destination management and discusses some performance criteria (the Global Sustainable Tourism Council Criteria and the Green Destinations Standard) for the destination management organizations

Keywords: *destination management, sustainability*

1. INTRODUCTION

The sustainable development in the tourism industry is supported by the international organizations like the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), and some consultancy firms. This lets the destination management organizations (DMOs) at the national levels define problems, frameworks, and guidelines for sustainable tourism development. According to The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the DMOs, such as governments and tourism policymakers, have a unique opportunity to shape and set strong policies to increase tourism's role in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (the SDGs).

The sustainability performance focus includes economic, socio-cultural and environmental goals. Many tourism trends and policies [1-5; 11-17; 20-23; 25-27] have shown an international benchmark on how effectively countries have been supporting sustainable and inclusive tourism growth. There are two main trends in the tourism development, which do not contradict each other:

- digitalization and preparation of tourism businesses for the digital future
- reconsideration of tourism success for sustainable growth [18].

In addition, the application of modern approaches and best practices of sustainable development in destination management can be the important crisis instruments for the tourism industry. Despite the serious negative impacts of COVID-19 on the international tourism industry the crisis has provided the opportunities to rethink tourism development and destination management for the future. Achieving more sustainable tourism recovery requires focus on the environmental and socio-cultural pillars of sustainability. Currently, it is important for all destinations to develop multi-level governance mechanisms including the following aspects:

- revising perceptions of tourism success across all levels of government and on behalf of all stakeholders;
- accepting an integrated policy-industry-community approach within the city, regional, and economic development strategies, and in close cooperation with business and local communities;
- mainstreaming sustainable policies and practices at all levels of government for the transition to a green tourism economy;
- developing more sustainable tourism business models at the businesses levels adopting eco-responsible practices, and using technology to better manage visitor flows;

- developing better measurement for better management [19].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

There are various methods and approaches to the destination management performance in the sustainable way. In the last few years, the selection of criteria for the SDGs achievement have remained relevant. For example, if we compare two approaches to assessing the stakeholder involvement in the Global Sustainable Tourism Council criteria (the GSTC) and the Green Destinations Standard criteria (the GDS), we can see some similarities and differences (Table 1).

The GSTC defines two groups of criteria: the destination criteria and the tourism industry enterprises criteria. These two groups have the following sets of the sustainability performances: sustainable management; socio-economic sustainability; cultural sustainability; environmental sustainability [8]. The GDS is a GSTC-recognized set of criteria to measure, monitor and improve the sustainability policy and management of destinations and regions. This approach makes sustainable development more objective and demonstrable, covering the following areas of the sustainable tourism: destination management; nature and scenery; environment and climate; culture and tradition; social well-being; business and hospitality [9].

In general, countries can choose a certain standard for evaluating the effectiveness of the DMOs, but for creating a unified information base in the tourism industry sustainability it would be better to focus on the unified evaluation criteria standard.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Contemporary studies in the field of the destination sustainability take into account a whole range of factors, elements, and participants or stakeholders. The essential

element of the sustainable development is the stakeholder engagement. Among the main stakeholders of this process, a significant role is assigned to the destination management organizations (DMOs), but in addition to the government, other stakeholders also take part in the implementation of the SDGs. The stakeholders in the tourism industry involve non-governmental and non-profit organizations; local society; scientific community; and private sector. Only collaboration of the government and the different stakeholders can encourage the performance of SDGs.

Effective stakeholder engagement and coordination can be promoted through the special forums, the consultation of the various stakeholders in planning process and implementation of sustainable tourism strategies. For instance, the Danish National Tourism Forum receives continuous feedback and support from the Danish Tourism Advisory Board, which has participants from a wide range of stakeholders with different tourism interests. Also, within the framework of its Smart Tourism Strategy, Visit Denmark ensued support to digitalize Danish tourism’s value-chains to increase the collaboration in the tourism [24].

4. CONCLUSION

A new norm of our life is that each country should independently monitor and evaluate progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, in Russia, according to some studies, the most goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development have been already integrated into the main strategic and program documents of the Russian Federation. The participation of Russian civil society, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, volunteers, and the academic community, i.e., all stakeholders, has been important and necessary for

Table 1. The stakeholder engagement assessment in the sustainable destination development [based on 8; 9]

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council Criteria (the GSTC)	Green Destinations Standard (the GDS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards - the destination regularly informs tourism companies about sustainability problems and engages them in making their business more sustainable. • Resident engagement and feedback - the destination has a system to improve local understanding of sustainable tourism opportunities and difficulties and to build the power of communities to react and participate. • Visitor engagement and feedback - visitors are informed about sustainability challenges in the destination and the participation that they can play in addressing them. • Promotion and information - promotion and visitor information material about the destination, marketing messages and other communications show the destination’s values and approach to sustainability and consider local communities and natural and cultural assets with respect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder involvement - The destination management organization engages residents and the tourism organizations in sustainable destination management. • Community involvement in planning - The destination activates and promotes state support in sustainable destination planning and management. • Resident engagement and feedback - The destination has a system to intensify local understanding of sustainable tourism opportunities and issues. • Stakeholder contributions - Enterprises, visitors and the public are offered possibilities to bring to community and sustainability initiatives in a responsible way

achieving the SDGs. But reaching some SDGs still requires increased joint efforts of the government, the private sector and society [10].

The different countries have their own traits and difficulties in the implementation of the SDGs which are caused by geographical, socio-cultural, and economic conditions. In Russia, on the one hand, there is the growing interest to the sustainable development by various stakeholders, and, on the other hand, some sustainable development goals are more recognized and approved than the other ones.

The results of the study "Sustainable development. The Role of Russia" provided by Global Compact Network Russia have shown the following SDGs are the most adopted in the country:

- SDG 8 - Promoting sustainable economic growth;
- SDG 3 - Ensuring a healthy lifestyle and promoting well-being for everyone at any age;
- SDG 4 - Ensuring fair quality education;
- SDG 9 - Building strong infrastructure, promoting inclusive sustainable industrialization and innovation;
- SDG 12 - Ensuring rational consumption and production models;
- SDG 17 - Strengthening partnership for sustainable development [10].

Focusing on the best international experience in the tourism sustainable development some recommendations can be done for the stakeholder involvement in the tourism industry of Russia:

- increasing awareness of the tourism stakeholders about the importance of social and environmental aspects the sustainability;
- stimulating and motivating the tourism business for the sustainable business practices;
- improving intersectoral and interinstitutional collaboration in the tourism sustainable development:
- developing the rating of tourism industry enterprises for achievement of higher indicators in the sustainability;
- changing in public awareness aimed at achieving economic, social and environmental balance in the destination management [6].

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