

*Geography*

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SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM: PROBLEMS AND SOME BASIC  
DIRECTIONS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT

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The essentials and basics of sustainable tourism are analyzed. New trends, problems and principles of sustainable tourism management are introduced. Environmental, social and economic problems caused by tourism is discussed. It is analyzed that sustainable tourism is not a type of tourism, it is ideological and methodological basis for any kind of tourism activity. The basic directions of sustainable tourism management are related to green-washing, tourism carrying capacity, regional development indicators, value chain, types of tourists, knowledge-based economy, management of cultural heritage, collaboration between university, industry and government.

**Keywords:** sustainable tourism management, global trends of tourism development, positive and negative impacts of tourism.

**Introduction.** Over the last fifty years tourism has become one of the largest economic sectors globally, accounting for some 9% of the world's GDP and over 200 mln jobs. International tourist arrivals have grown steadily over many years and in 2012 stood at 1035 mln. In the last ten years this growth has been particularly marked in the emerging economies, where it has averaged 5.6% per annum, compared with 1.8% for advanced economies. UNWTO predicts that growth trends in world tourism will continue, with total arrivals reaching 1.8 billion by 2030. Again, emerging economies, including developing countries, stand to see the highest rate of growth. Tourism makes up a major proportion of exports in services: accounting for 29% worldwide and as much as 56% for the least developed countries [1].

As it is widely known the rapid growth of population, speed industrialization of economy, high level of globalization, etc. have brought big challenges (environmental pollution, increase of greenhouse effect, climate change, loss of biodiversity, land degradation, loss of national identity of small nations, big gap between developed and poor countries, disparity in the social sphere, poverty etc.) for Society, which can be solved only by joint efforts of all World's Community. Due to this reason, the Concept of Sustainable Development (CSD) has been created (1992: even its roots come from the beginning of 1970<sup>th</sup>) and integrated in all the

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sectors of Human activities, including tourism; and on the basis of principles of CSD a new ideological platform for tourism sector has been “designed”.

As the CSD is a complex and systematic approach, it serves as a methodological basis for each sphere, where it is being “injected”. For tourism sector (and for others as well) the “CSD seems to be environmental concept, because it was created for environment protection in general, being Eco-centric (Eco-systematic) approach. But now its essence has changed and the concept become from eco-centric to Geo-centric (Geo-systematic), because it includes not only Natural, but also Social components as well, which are concerned to be equal” [2]. From the point of view of tourism sector CSD should serve as an umbrella for creating common principles, approaches, methods, aspects, etc. to make sustainable every type of tourism (from ecotourism to mass tourism).

**The Term “Sustainability” and Concept of Sustainable Development.** The term “sustainability” nowadays is used as an important milestone for a global development in politics, business and society and often regarded as a modern approach. Nowadays there are some definitions of “sustainability”, but still there is no common and general acceptable one. In general “sustainability” means the “development of something without any horrible issues and with fluctuations, which do not make irrevocable changes in the system” [3]. At the same time, the term “sustainability” is being associated with the concept of regulations between Society and Environment. “Sustainability” is not only about environmental protection, though many people associate the term with the environment. As the picture below demonstrates (Fig. 1), the social and economic dimensions are equally important.



Fig. 1. Sustainability [3].

That is not only meant for a sustainable tourism development, but can be integrated in all kinds of social and economic decisions and activities. Social, environmental and economic affairs have to be balanced imbalances have to be compensated, following the principles of equitability, viability and bearableness, if it will lead to sustainability. There is a bunch of definitions, but all are targeted to the same direction. Natural resources are limited; overuse of the long run damages the environment and endangers our livelihood. So, it can be highlighted that “sustainability is the balance of ecological, social and economic interests” or “one key for three locks”.

According to these principles, the ideology of sustainability has been conceptualized and new concept: CSD was created. Which has also many definitions, but now a widely accepted is the Brundlandt Commission definition made in 1987, which says: “Sustainability and/or sustainable development is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” [4].

According to this approach the CSD, therefore means: meeting the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the ability of future generations, a vision of progress with short, middle and longer-term objectives, local and global action, regards on social, economic and environmental issues as components of human progress, today's ecology is tomorrow's economy.

Therefore, sustainable development touches all sectors of everyday life, for population and industry, for private and public sector; it deals with appropriate living conditions, tolerance, human rights and education.

**Causes of Global Development of Tourism.** Nowadays visiting other places is considered to be natural part of life and most people expect to travel at least on an annual basis, if not more often. As it becomes less difficult and more affordable, more and more people travel and for a greater variety of motives [5]:

- the social and economic emancipation of the urban middle class, and especially the working class was very important for the growth of tourism;
- the emergence of paid holiday, which provides sufficient lengths of time for people to plan trips, as well as the ability to afford trips, are equally important;
- mass tourism is possible only with the development of efficient and affordable system of transport, and these need to be sufficiently large-scale to take a large number of people;

- modern tourism requires an organizational backup system and provision of infrastructure and personnel able to run the tourism business. Such facilities include accommodation, transport, entertainment and retailing, as well as traveling. Tourism has increased because tourists are more competent and travel, are more relaxed about traveling and wish to travel more. A number of factors are behind this: increased acquisition of foreign languages; travel procedures such as customs and airport check-in counters are becoming less constraint; the use of IT to provide details on availability of flights, accommodation etc.; increased education levels and better training of personnel within the tourism industry; globalization of credit cards, facilitating financial transactions and purchases; improved telecommunications, making it easier to keep in touch with developments at home; standardized forms of accommodation and other services in international hotels, restaurant chains and car-hire offices, reducing the sense of dislocation that foreign travel might create.

Based on these factors over the past six decades, tourism experience continued expansion and diversification, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world.

**Causes of Sustainable Tourism Origin: Positive and Negative Impacts of Tourism.**

*Environmentally.* Negative impacts from tourism occur, when the level of visitor use is greater than the environment's ability to cope with this use within the acceptable limits of change. Uncontrolled conventional tourism poses potential threats to many natural areas around the world. It can put enormous pressure on an area and lead to impacts such as soil erosion, increased pollution, discharges into the sea, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires. It often puts a strain on water resources, and it can force local populations to compete for the use of critical resources [3].

Tourist activities are always add-ons to normal life of destination and can lead to conflicts, e.g. about diminishing resources.

*Socially.* Tourism can cause change or loss of local identity and values, brought by several closely related influences: commodification, standardization, loss of authenticity and staged authenticity, adaptation to tourist demands.

Because tourism involves movement of people to different geographical locations and establishment of social relations between people, who would otherwise not meet, cultural clashes can take place as a result of differences in cultures, ethnic and religious groups, values and lifestyles, languages and levels of prosperity. The result can be an overexploitation of the social and cultural carrying capacity of the local community. The attitude of local residents towards tourism development may unfold through the stages of euphoria, where visitors are very welcome, through apathy, irritation and potentially antagonism, when anti-tourist attitudes begin growing among local people. So, the negative aspects could be the following: culture becomes a commodity, local traditions and ways of life are negatively impacted, traditional residents are displaced, increases in crime. At the same time, it can have a positive impacts such as opportunities for capacity building, education and training, improvements in health, education and other forms of well-being, improved socio-cultural status through community recognition, increased pride and self-confidence, which can be defined and reported in concrete terms, reduced vulnerability through, for example, livelihood diversification, which can be reported at the household level, empowerment of the poor through effective engagement in the policy and planning process in their locality [6].

*Economically.* There are many hidden costs to tourism, which can have unfavorable economic effects on the host community. Often rich countries are better able to profit from tourism, than poor ones. Whereas the least developed countries have the most urgent need for income, employment and general rise of living standard by means of tourism, they are least able to realize these benefits. Among the reasons for this are large-scale transfer of tourism revenues out of the host country and exclusion of local businesses and products [3]. Tourism can have the following positive economic benefits: creation of SME business opportunities, which provide employment and earnings from the sales of goods and services, the creation of direct employment in formal sector businesses by the poor, the development of collective benefits, where a community gains from concession or lease agreements with formal sector enterprises or from user fees for passing through a village or visiting a community forest, charitable donations from tourism businesses or from tourists. It can have negative impacts as well: pressure on services and facilities necessitating increased investment, increased cost of living for local people [6].

***Sustainable Tourism as a New Type of Relationships between Society, Economy and Environment.*** There are countless definitions about sustainable tourism circulating around the world, depending on interest, position and background of the author and touching the three aspects economy, environment or social affairs. Compared with the development of conventional tourism, sustainable tourism is a relatively young branch. By dissociating it from the phenomena, of “mass tourism”, in the follow up the creation of a variety of new interpretations occurred, trying to characterize a more environmentally friendly sound tourism. “Gentle” or “green” tourism first introduced in 1977 by the G.F. Baumgartner, were both precursors for sustainable tourism, which was first used as a term in the late 1980s. Sustainable tourism was not a serious topic at that time and only

marginally mentioned. Only in the middle of the 1990s sustainable tourism was recognized and adopted by the organizations such as UNEP and UNWTO. Due to its complexity, a comprehensive and universally accepted terminology is still missing as well as for a variety of terms, describing different key aspects of sustainable tourism. From the approach of this article, sustainable tourism is an umbrella for all kinds of tourism like nature-based, urban- or even mass tourism, if they follow the guidelines of sustainability as described below.

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations; including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Expressed simply, *sustainable tourism* can be defined as: “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” [7].

Sustainable tourism should:

1) make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage, biodiversity;

2) respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built, living cultural heritage and traditional values and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance;

3) ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Concluding: the main differences between traditional and sustainable tourism can be the following (see Table):

*The main differences between traditional and sustainable tourism [8]: adopted by authors*

Criteria	Approaches to Tourism	
	Sustainable tourism	Traditional (massive) tourism
Tourists' attraction	The capacity of tourist services, economic and ecological capacities define the character of tourist activity.	Tourist activity orients on the permanent growth of tourist flows. The capacity of tourist services limited only by the capacity of material-technical bases.
Tourists' behavior	The visitors, during the staying, follow some models of behavior according to culture of visited territory. The visitors' behavior does not damage natural resources, traditions and manners of local territory and population.	The visitors bring they style of life and behavior to territory of rest.
Attitude to environment	For visitors the evidence of natural objects is much more valuable than they consume value.	Consumer attitude of visitors is dominant to protection of natural resources. The natural objects are being estimated according to their utility for human.
Attitude of visitors and local population	Friendly and respectful attitudes: this aims to cognate new nature.	Formal attitude: assume themselves as owners who must be served.

***The Basic Directions of Sustainable Tourism Management.*** Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders,

as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them [9].

In order to develop criteria and objectives, sustainability experts and the tourism industry within newly founded partnerships started reviewing and analyzing a bunch of voluntary criteria and certifications already existing around the world in order to come to a common understanding of sustainable tourism. Out of this discussion the following four pillars of sustainable tourism were developed, concerning [3]: demonstrating effective sustainable management; maximizing social and economic benefits to the local community and minimizing negative impact; reduction of negative impacts to cultural heritage; education of negative impacts to environmental heritage.

One of the nowadays direction is the management of *green-washing*. Since ecotourism has become a significant economic segment in the field of tourism, the term “green-washing” is frequently used to describe misguided developments. Terra choice, an independent testing and certification organization, describes green-washing as “the marketing tactic of misleading consumers about a product or service’s environmental friendliness”. A study carried out by this organization in 2010, came to the conclusion that 95% of so-called green products are being green-washed. In the segment of electronics and cleaning products more than 50% use false and misleading labels [3]:

One of the main directions is the management of *tourism carrying capacity* (TCC). TCC tries to transfer the systemic of the carrying capacity on tourism development. As usual, there are different definitions circulating.

UNWTO defines tourism carrying capacity as “the maximum number of people, who may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic and socio-cultural environment and/or an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors satisfaction” [3]:

The definitions of carrying capacity need to be considered as processes within a planning process for tourism development, which involves:

- setting capacity limits for sustaining tourism activities in an area. This involves a vision about local development and decisions about managing tourism;
- overall measuring of tourism carrying capacity does not have to lead to a single number, like the number of visitors [3]. In addition, carrying capacity may contain various limits in respect to the three components (physical-ecological, socio-demographic and political-economic). Taking into consideration this approach, the touristic destination can be managed more sustainable.

For sustainable tourism management *regional development indicators* are needed. According to the economic impact it is measured by direct, indirect and induced effects [10]. The direct effects describe the direct cash flow from customer to host, like expenses spent for accommodation, restaurants, transport and guided tours. The indirect effects describe the economic integration into the tourism market like food production and purchase to restaurants and shops, organization and establishment of infrastructure, as well as services in advance, like information

systems in the region. For these kinds of activities no direct contact between customer and supplier are necessary. The induced effects describe the circulation of money in the region. It means that additional income from tourism will be refinanced in the region and raise the economic wealth of all players.

From the perspective of a sustainable tourism management this means to follow the above mentioned criteria in product development by tour operators and package providers, creating service capacities like accommodation, transport and gastronomy and individual service provisions like food supply, excursions and other leisure activities (value chain). The model of a value chain is a good opportunity to connect all stakeholders being active in the tourism industry and to coordinate their products and services in an effective way following the same goal. For tourism destinations it is a useful instrument to involve practitioners from different institutions, e.g. from government, business, science and to demonstrate the opportunities of economic development by the following principles of sustainability.

Sustainable tourism management also depends on the *types of tourists*. According to Stanley Plog [11] there are three main types with different attitudes:

- the allocentrics, so-called venturers seek new experience in unknown, pristine and undeveloped areas, discovering them before others. They enjoy meeting people from other cultures, accepting simple services and accommodation and planning their trips individually. They avoid guided tours in favor of own explorations on a high activity level;

- the mid-centrics are not like adventurous, but open to new experience preferably in places of sufficiently similar cultures. They prefer arrangements that include basics like transportation and accommodation, but allow to keep individual flexibility. They are quality-conscious and willing to pay for good services, take their holidays.

- the psychocentrics, also called dependable, who are not risk-takers, tend to go to familiar places and well-established tourist destinations, prefer tour packages and seek uncertainty avoidance.

The management of sustainable tourism should be based on the “knowledge-based economy”. The term “knowledge-based economy” is an advancement of this approach and has added the structural aspects of technological trajectories, developments and rules from systems perspective. This perspective also includes discussions about intellectual property rights as another form of capital [12].

This approach is very much dependant on a so-called “knowledge management”, describing the management of corporate knowledge and intellectual assets that can improve a range of organizational performance characteristics and add value by enabling an enterprise to act more intelligently [13]. Knowledge management focuses on identifying knowledge, explicating it in a way, so that it can be shared in a formal manner and thus reusing it [13].

As far as tourism is a cultural thing as well, the *management of culture and cultural heritage* is very important in sustainable tourism. In the past the classical international core tour operators came from low context societies. It means that the subject matters of contracts by the majority were relatively reliable, transparent and clear in case of problems. In tourism this can cause conflicts and misunderstandings, if clientele from a low context culture travel to destinations with high context cultures or vice versa, which are more and more entering the markets [14].

For sustainable tourism management there should be collaboration (Triple Helix model). The fundamental idea of the model is that university can play an enhanced role in innovation of knowledge-based societies and that the three helices: *university, industry and government*, interact in order to produce innovation, and, therefore, regional and national economic growth. While the Triple Helix model emphasizes the role of the university for regional innovativeness, the other systemic approaches call attention to either industry or government as they have the leading role in innovation [3].

**Conclusion.** At present the sustainable tourism is becoming the main methodological, theoretical and practical basis for today's any kind of tourism branch and touristic activity. At the same time, till now there is no generally accepted definition around the world, because sometimes it is being associated with the ecotourism, gentle tourism, responsible tourism, eco-friendly tourism soft tourism, geo-tourism etc. Anyway the main accepted approach is coming to be the following: "Sustainable tourism is not a discrete or special form of tourism. Rather, all forms of tourism should strive to be more sustainable" [9]. For this reason sustainable tourism is going to be more attractive and strategic, which needs regulation (management) not only in micro (inside the companies: small and middle size enterprises), but also in macro level (territorially on local, regional and global levels). Especially the second one needs collaboration, because it includes big diversities: from cultural to national and natural. And to find a common understanding of sustainable tourism for these levels is a problematic question. Sustainable tourism has become a part of nowadays human's local, regional and global problem. In order to take the chances of a sustainable development, which is focused on a long-term strategy, having the following generations in mind and mitigating the negative impact and increasing the positive impact of tourism capacity building and participation of the key players following the principles of a knowledge-based economy are a precondition for a successful development and a new generation of leaders.

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Հոդվածում վերլուծվում են կայուն զբոսաշրջության էությունը և հիմքերը: Ներկայացվում են կայուն զբոսաշրջության կառավարման նոր միտումները, հիմնախնդիրները և սկզբունքները: Ներկայացվում են զբոսաշրջության հետևանքով առաջացած բնապահպանական, սոցիալական և տնտեսական հիմնախնդիրները: Վերլուծվում է այն մոտեցումը, համաձայն որի կայուն զբոսաշրջությունը զբոսաշրջության առանձին տեսակ չէ, այլ գաղափարական և մեթոդաբանական հիմք է զբոսաշրջային ցանկացած գործունեության համար: Կայուն զբոսաշրջության կառավարման հիմնական ուղղությունները հիմնված են գրինվոլոնգի, զբոսաշրջային տարածքային տարողունակության, ռեզիլիենտ կարգազման ինդիկատորների, արժեշրջային, զբոսաշրջիկների տեսակների, զիտելիքահենք տնտեսության, մշակութային ժառանգության կառավարման, համալսարան–արտադրություն–կառավարություն եռակողմ համագործակցության վրա:

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УСТОЙЧИВОСТЬ В ТУРИЗМЕ: ПРОБЛЕМЫ И НЕКОТОРЫЕ  
ОСНОВНЫЕ НАПРАВЛЕНИЯ УПРАВЛЕНИЯ УСТОЙЧИВЫМ ТУРИЗМОМ

Резюме

В статье проанализированы сущность и основы устойчивого туризма, а также представлены новые тенденции и принципы управления им. Проанализированы экологические, социальные и экономические проблемы, вызванные туризмом, и показано, что устойчивый туризм – это не особый вид туризма, а идеологическая и методологическая основа для каждого вида туристской деятельности. Основные направления для управления устойчивым туризмом связаны с гринвошингом, туристской емкостью территории, индикаторами регионального развития, цепочкой создания ценностей, видами туристов, экономикой, основанной на знаниях, с управлением культурным наследием и сотрудничеством между системой образования, индустрией и правительством.