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# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL for RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

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*Statement of Purpose*

The *International Journal of Responsible Tourism (IJRT)* is a publication that aims to offer, through scientific papers, a better understanding of the responsible tourism within the tourism promoter environments, to explain the consequences of applying these principles for the Romanian society and for the entire world and open a communication platform for successful international concepts and practices.

*IJRT* will include scientific papers submitted to the International Forum for Responsible Tourism program that have passed the peer-review stage and have been debated in the forum, considered to be important documents for understanding and developing responsible tourism.

*IJRT* intends to become a reference journal in the field, being the first initiative of this kind in Romania, and will be published exclusively online and quarterly by the Amphitheatre Foundation. The Journal will include applicable notes on the meaning of responsible tourism and methods of increasing the touristic potential by preserving cultural and social identity, the natural and anthropic environment, elements to be integrated in responsible tourism, along with an adequate education in the field.

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL for RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

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# IMPACTS OF GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES ON BENEFITS OF HOTELS: THE CASE FROM SERBIA

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**Abstract:**

*It is believed that tourism slowly and silently destroys environment, therefore implementing green technologies and responsible business behavior are among the most trending issues in contemporary tourism. Implementing Environmental Management System and quality standards ISO14000 and ISO14001 in hotels in Serbia are still at the early stage. The main goal of this study was to investigate the major obstacles for implementation of business based on ecological awareness and to assess to what extent the Green Marketing Strategies have influence on the image of the hotels, relations with the local community, competitiveness on the market, profitability and satisfaction of employees. The sample comprised 20% of the total number of hotels in Serbia which are known to use any form of 'green' marketing. The results confirm that the process of implementation of sustainable marketing strategies is at a very low scale (M=2.89). The regression analysis shows that the most beneficial are the satisfaction of employees and profitability. Furthermore, the results show that there are no differences in the implementation of such strategies regarding the hotels location, categorization and capacity, whereas certain benefits of green marketing vary in relation to location and the capacity of the hotel.*

Keywords: hotels, green marketing, sustainability, Serbia

## 1. Introduction

Since the early 1970s, when the first worrying signs about the environment began to appear, sustaining the nature has become an imperative. Various stakeholder groups have increasingly put pressure on companies to take drastic

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measures to protect and sustain the natural environment. Business has an essential role in preventing environmental damage, as it is responsible for much of the environmental degradation (Chan and Wong, 2006). Some leading companies are using environmental pressure to improve their operational efficiency, raise their corporate image, develop new products and opportunities, and thus gain a competitive edge (Taylor, 1992).

If the positive impact of tourism can be noticed most easily in the economy, then surely the negative impact can be noticed in the environment. Thus, companies should take into account not only economic prosperity, but environmental quality and social justice (Badulescu et al., 2014). In the field of tourism, it is known that destinations that promote sustainable development have better performances in the market (Berry and Ladkin, 1997). Tourism, which has a complex relationship with the environment, is both a negative factor and a vector of profoundly ecological policies and strategies (Popescu et al., 2014).

Hotel industry worldwide increases the efforts to sustain the environment. Necessity to implement the green issues in the service sector speaks in favor of tourism destroying the environment "silently". The hospitality industry does not grossly pollute the environment, nor does it consume vast amounts of nonrenewable resources, but it does have a significant effect on global resources and a vested interest in protecting the environment, since it depends on attractive and safe surroundings as a part of the core product (Leonidou et al. 2013). Despite the fact that natural environment forms a part of the tourism product itself, in most countries environmental legislation in hotel sector is still relatively rare.

Big international hotel companies implement eco standards in their businesses. By doing so, they influence the transformation of the relationship between tourism operators and the environment; raise awareness of its responsible consumption and the need to sustain the resources (Bradić, 2011). On a flipside, small private hotels and other types of accommodation that do not have buzz names or rich capital, have their own market sustainability high on the list of their priorities. Therefore, they should sustain the positive balance between investments and profit, which indicates that in practice it is not always the case of placing ecological awareness and business on top of priorities.

Some hotel operators use the term 'eco-hotel' as a marketing tool, presuming this name has a positive impact on attracting guests and on influencing the final choice of potential clients (Pizam, 2009), while they neglect the basic eco principles in their business. "Real" eco hotels and eco lodges use eco-friendly technology and contribute to environmental protection as they recycle, reuse and save their resources. Hsiao et al. (2014) define a green hotel as one that is successfully, "providing tourists with a comfortable, natural, healthy and safe lodging service infrastructure on the basis of environmental protection,

focusing on sustainable development and minimizing the negative impact on the environment".

In the hotel industry of Serbia, the implementation of ecological principles EMS (Environmental Management System) and quality standards ISO14000 i ISO14001 is still at its early stage and the results are barely recognizable. The president of the Hotelier Association of Serbia claims that Serbian hospitality has been facing many problems in the past decades, putting an emphasis on the issue of the owner of the hotel and the management. The owners would manage their own hotels rather than delegate to the trained and professional management. The even worse scenario is that of the owners establishing a management that does not have the power of decision-making when it comes to investments or innovations. Unprofessionalism, inadequate marketing and ignorance of the contemporary trends lead to the fact that Serbian hotels are currently occupied by 30-35%, whereas the average occupancy rate is twice as this number (Krsmanović, 2013).

Therefore, the main goal of this study was to investigate the major obstacles for implementation of business based on ecological awareness and to assess to what extent the Green Marketing Strategies have influence on the image of the hotels, relations with the local community, competitiveness on the market, profitability and satisfaction of employees. In addition, the authors sought to find out whether implementation of sustainable marketing depends on the location, categorization and capacity of the hotels.

## 2. Literature review

Implementation of 'green' techonolgies into the hotel industry dates back to the late eighties, predominantly on the teritory of the North America. In the last decade of 20th century and at the beginning of 21st century, significant efforts were made to create green business policy in hotel marketing, which started to globalize very soon (Bradić, 2011). Green marketing is in many studies described as an company's efforts at designing, promoting, pricing and distributing products that will not damage the environment (Pride and Ferrell, 1993, Salaiman et al., 2015). Implementation of green marketing is often caused by a company's moral obligation, pressure from government bodies and competitors, the potential to improve revenues, the opportunity to save on costs and the opportunity to build a positive image ((McIntosh, 1990; Bansal and Roth, 2000; Saha and Darnton, 2005; Delmas and Toffel, 2008; Kuo and Dick, 2010).

Hsiao et. Al. (2014) establish attributes of an Environmental Management System (EMS) for the hotel industry in Taiwan to create an instrument for green hotel evaluation. Environmental management system indicators were selected from ISO14000 and nine representative green hotel assessment systems. Dimensions

are: environmental policy, water resource, energy, solid wastes, indoor environment (health and safety), green purchasing, corporate management, staff education, public and community relationship and consumer education.

Chan (2013) attempts to address important green marketing ploys from the perspective of hotel managers. Ranked in order from most important to least, these ploys are as follows: (1) "Hotel green marketing should begin with green product and service design", "Hotels provide products and services that do no harm to human health" and "The Internet is an effective channel to market a hotel's green initiatives to customers directly"; (2) "Green hotels can elevate industry members' positive image and reputation to attract green-conscious tourists who will normally demand green accommodation when travelling" and (3) "Hotels here are sincerely instituting programmes that save water and energy, reduce solid waste, use resources economically and protect the planet's ecosystems" (Chan, 2013).

El Dief and Font (2010) explored the relationship among personal environment values (PEV), organisational envireonment values (OEV) of hotel marketing managers, together with a range of organisational and demographic variables and implementation of hotels green marketing strategies. According to the results, organisational context and demographic variables are more important in explaining GMSs than personal and organisational values. The results support the influence of organisational values on marketing managers' environmental behaviour, but not the influence of personal values.

Nicholls and Kang (2012) indicated that the existence of a written environmental policy is associated with higher levels of adoption of green practices, and managers from smaller independent properties are more likely engaged in community-oriented activities and the use of local and/or organic products. In terms of the perceived benefits of the adoption of green practices, they measure if it: improves the image of their property, improves relationships with the local community, gives them a marketing advantage over their competitors, increases profitability and increases employee satisfaction. With respect to size, respondents from large properties were more likely than those from medium or small properties to perceive benefits in terms of image, marketing advantage and relationships with the local community, and those from large properties were more likely than those from small properties to perceive benefits in terms of employee satisfaction.

Kyung et al. (2012) examine hotel guests' willingness to pay a premium for environmentally friendly and sustainable practices of the U.S. hotel industry. Their study found that U.S. hotel guests with higher degrees of environmental concerns declare a higher willingness to pay premiums for hotels' green initiatives. They also found that luxury and mid-priced hotel guests are more willing to pay premiums for hotels' green practices than economy hotel guests. Han et al (2011) found that

eco-friendly attitudes favorably affect hotel guests' intentions to visit a green hotel, to spread positive word-of-mouth, and to pay more. Their findings implied that women tend to rate eco-friendly intentions more favorably. However, more efforts must be made to communicate green hotel practices to the public to assist the selection of green hotels and more active participation for green consumption.

According to the previous studies that have been conducted in developing coutries, on short-term basis it is most efficient for the government to pose a strict set of rules (Bradić, 2011). The results of IP analysis in the work of Blešić et al. (2014a) showed that the main problem when offering a quality service in spa hotels in Serbia is the inadequate organisation and appointments of hotels. As Bradić's study (2011) shows, socially responsible business policy is still at the early stage in Serbia and there is plenty of space for improvements and progress. Generally, all the hoteliers have a positive attitude towards this concept, but its implementation is highly dependent on the legal regulations in the country and on the criteria on which the hotels are currently categorized. The major letdown is the fact that it is not worthwhile for the hoteliers to invest in the socially responsible business practices. Also, Blešić et al. (2014b) indicated that consumers in Serbia are not familiar with consumer social responsibility. People in Serbia are still not well informed about CSR and have low level of social responsibility consciousness.

After the in-depth literature review, the authors of this study hypothesized that the implementation of GMS in Serbia is still at the early stage, but where there is evidence of it, the benefits are multiple (improved image, relations with local communities, competitiveness, profitability and employee satisfaction). Furthermore, it was assumed that the benefits of GMS would vary in relation to characteristics of the hotel (location, categorization and capacity).

## 3. Methodology

The survey took place in Serbia and was conducted in January and February in 2015. In the year 2013, Serbia was ranked on the 102th place in terms of the total contribution of travel and tourism to its national GDP (WTTC, 2014). At the end of 2014 there were 226 hotels in Serbia. This study took into account 45 hotels, which make 20% of the total number (Table no.1). Surveying was conducted in two different ways: 1) via an online questionnaire sent to marketing managers of the hotels and 2) in situ. Open ended questions sought to get the answers regarding the green marketing and the obstacles they experienced attempting to implement it. The most frequent answers were those regarding the lack of financies and legal regulations, underdeveloped ecological awareness among the employees and outdated technologies. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed, but only

those hotels that have some form of green marketing in their business were taken into account. Eventually, 45 hotels comprised a representative sample.

The survey consisted of three parts. In the first part the general demographic data of hotel managers was collected (gender, age and education), as well as the characteristics of the hotels (location, capacity and categorization). The second part consisted of the scale for measuring implementation of green marketing, patented by Dief and Font (2010). The scale had 9 items that were grouped in one factor after conducting the factor analysis. Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which environmental issues have impacted their hotels' marketing strategy, using a five-point Likert-type scale (Table no. 2).

**Table no. 1:** Total number of categorised accomodations according to the type and category (December, 2014)

| | Total | Number | Number of acc. units (rooms) | Number of beds |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Hotels | 226 | 14604 | 24270 |
| 2. | Garni hotels | 94 | 1976 | 3162 |
| 3. | Apart hotels | 8 | 381 | 1069 |
| | **Total 1+2+3** | **328** | **16961** | **28501** |
| 4. | Motels | 13 | 301 | 498 |
| 5. | Hotel resorts | 4 | 215 | 384 |
| 6. | Appartement resorts | 1 | 26 | 107 |
| 7. | B&Bs | 3 | 78 | 119 |
| 8. | Camps | 6 | 1055 campers | / |
| | **Total 1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8** | **354** | **17581** | **29609** |

**Source:** Republic of Serbia: Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications

**Table no. 2:** Scale of GMS (Green Marketing Strategies)

| |
|---|
| Importance of environmental friendliness when considering product/service competitiveness |
| Importance of customer environmental awareness in targeting/segmenting decisions |
| Emphasis of environmental friendliness in the chain/hotel positioning |
| The impact of environmental issues on communication campaigns |
| The frequency of inviting from and/or providing environmental information to environmental stakeholders |
| The impact that environmental issues have on service/product pricing (e.g. green premium) |
| The influence of environment issues on selections of distribution channels (e.g. tour operators, travel agencies) |
| Redirecting clients towards sustainable activities |
| Importance of environmental friendliness in public relations campaigns (e.g. the local community) |

**Source:** Dief and Font (2010)

According to Nicholls and Kang (2012), the benefits of adoption of green practices can be divided into five categories (image, relationship with local communities, competitiveness, profitability and employee satisfaction). Finally, the third part refered to the benefits that hotels have if using GMS. Five benefits in this paper were measured with a single scale. Respondents were asked to assess, using a five-point Likert-type scale, the extent to which implementation of the green marketing strategies made benefits to a hotel.

**Table no. 3**: Hotels' benefits

| |
|---|
| Green marketing strategies improved the image of the hotel. |
| Green marketing strategies improved the relationships with local community. |
| Green marketing strategies gave a marketing advantage over hotels' competitors. |
| Green marketing strategies increased profitability of the hotel. |
| Green marketing strategies increased employee satisfaction. |

**Source:** Nicholls and Kang (2012)

Data analysis was performed in SPSS statistical software 20.0. Descriptive statistics were used to present the demographic characteristics of marketing managers and hotels' characteristics and also implementation of GMS and hotels' benefits. Alpha coefficient was introduced for measuring reliability of the GMS model. A regression model was used for measuring the influence of GMS on hotels' benefits. When the distribution of data differed significantly from the normal distribution (Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, $p<0.05$), the Kruskal Wallis test was used to check the differences in implementation of GMS and in hotels benefits from green marketing depending on location, capacity and categorization of the hotels.

## 4. Research results

### 4.1.Sample description

**Table no. 4:** Demographic characteristics of marketing managers and hotels characteristics

| Demographic characteristics of marketing managers | Percentage | Characteristics of hotels | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Sex:** | | **Hotel location:** | |
| Male | 53.3 | Urban area | 71.1 |
| Female | 46.7 | Rural area | 28.9 |
| **Age:** | | **Capacity:** | |
| 21-30 | 42.2 | Up to 50 beds | 31.1 |
| 31-40 | 37.8 | 51-100 beds | 28.9 |
| 41-50 | 4.4 | 101-150 beds | 8.9 |
| 51-60 | 11.1 | 151-200 beds | 8.9 |
| More than 60 | 4.4 | 201-250 beds | 6.7 |
| | | More than 250 beds | 15.6 |
| **Education:** | | **Categorization:** | |
| High school | 4.4 | 1 star | 0.0 |
| College | 20.0 | 2 stars | 2.2 |
| University diploma | 46.7 | 3 stars | 44.4 |
| MA studies | 28.9 | 4 stars | 44.4 |
| PhD studies | 0.0 | 5 stars | 8.9 |

**Source:** Authors

The sample consisted of slightly more male (53.3%) than female managers (46.7%). Most of managers belong to the 21-30 age group (42.2%) and to the 31-40 age group (37.8 %). As far as the level of education is concerned, most of them

have a bachelor's degree (33.8%) and a master's degree (28,9%) or they have finished college (20.0%).

Most of the hotels in the sample are 3 stars (44.4%) or 4 stars (44.4%) hotels. The majority of the hotels are located in the urban area (71.1%). When considering the capacity of the hotels, most of them are small hotels with up to 50 beds (31.1%) and between 51 and 100 beds (28.9%), but a significant proportion was of those with more than 250 beds (15.6%) (Table no. 4).

### 4.2. Descriptive statistics and reliability

The implementation of GMS in Serbia is at a very low scale (M=2.89). At green marketing strategies implementation the highest marks were given to the items: "Importance of environmental friendliness in public relations campaigns (e.g. the local community)" (M=3.47) and „Importance of customer environmental awareness in targeting/segmenting decisions" (M=3.44), while the worst marks were given to the items: „The influence of environment issues on selections of distribution channels (e.g. tour operators, travel agencies)" (M=2.04) and „The frequency of inviting from and/or providing environmental information to environmental stakeholders" (M=2.31).

Reliability analysis (Cronbach alpha) was conducted to test the internal reliability of the scale for green marketing strategies implementation. Cronbach alpha was 0.892 which confirms reliability.

**Table no. 5:** Mean scores of the implementation of the green marketing strategies in the Serbian hotel industry

| Green marketing Strategies | Mean | Std.D. |
|---|---|---|
| Importance of environmental friendliness when considering product/service competitiveness | 3.31 | 1.083 |
| Importance of customer environmental awareness in targeting/segmenting decisions | 3.44 | 1.099 |
| Emphasis of environmental friendliness in the chain/hotel positioning | 3.24 | 1.069 |
| The impact of environmental issues on communication campaigns | 2.80 | 0.991 |
| The frequency of inviting from and/or providing environmental information to environmental stakeholders. | 2.31 | 1.019 |
| The impact that environmental issues have on service/product pricing (e.g. green premium). | 2.40 | 1.009 |
| The influence of environment issues on selections of distribution channels (e.g. tour operators, travel agencies). | 2.04 | 0.976 |
| Redirecting clients towards sustainable holidays (e.g. not to harm the coral reefs). | 3.02 | 1.196 |
| Importance of environmental friendliness in public relations campaigns (e.g. the local community). | 3.47 | 1.079 |

**Source:** Authors

Cronbach alpha for the green marketing benefits was 0.857 which also confirms reliability of the scale. The results showed that implementation of green marketing has the most benefits regarding the image of the hotels (M=4.27).

**Table no. 6:** Mean scores of the benefits of the green marketing strategies implementation

| Benefits | Mean | Std.D. |
|---|---|---|
| Green marketing strategies improved the image of the property | 4.27 | 0.780 |
| Green marketing strategies improved relationships with the local community. | 3.80 | 1.079 |
| Green marketing strategies gived a marketing advantage over the competitors. | 3.64 | 1.131 |
| Green marketing strategies increased profitability. | 3.84 | 1.107 |
| Green marketing strategies increased employee satisfaction. | 3.71 | 1.141 |

**Source:** Authors

### 4.3. The impact of green marketing strategies implementation on the benefits of the hotel

The regression analysis was conducted in order to examine the level at which hotel benefits can be predicted based on implementation of green marketing strategies (Table no. 7). The results show significant influence ($p \leq 0.001$) in all five measured benefits.

**Table no.7:** Impact of green marketing strategies in predicting benefits of the hotel

| Dependant variable: Image of the hotel | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Beta | t | Sig. |
| Constant | | 1.557 | 0.127 |
| GMS | 0.469 | 3.480 | 0.001 |
| R=0.469, R2=0.220, Adjusted R=0.202, F=12.109, Sig =0.001 | | | |
| Dependant variable: Relationships with the local comunity | | | |
| | Beta | t | Sig. |
| Constant | | 4.172 | 0.000 |
| GMS | 0.478 | 3.565 | 0.001 |
| R=0.478, R2=0.228, Adjusted R=0.210, F=12.710, Sig =. 0.001 | | | |
| Dependant variable: Advantage over the competitors | | | |
| | Beta | t | Sig. |
| Constant | | 4.829 | 0.000 |
| GMS | 0.482 | 3.610 | 0.001 |
| R=0482, R2=0.233, Adjusted R=0.215, F=13.030, Sig =. 0.001 | | | |
| Dependant variable: profitability of the hotel | | | |
| | Beta | t | Sig. |
| Constant | | 3.820 | 0.000 |
| GMS | 0.580 | 4.667 | 0.000 |
| R=0580, R2=0.336, Adjusted R=0.321, F=21.776, Sig =. 0.000 | | | |
| Dependant variable: emloyee satisfaction | | | |
| | Beta | t | Sig. |
| Constant | | 4.213 | 0.000 |
| GMS | 0.618 | 5.150 | 0.000 |
| R=0.618, R2=0.381, Adjusted R=0.367, F=26.521, Sig =0.000 | | | |

**Source:** Authors

The GMS model predicts 22% of variability of the image of the hotel, 23% of variability of the relationships with the local comunity, 23% of variability of the advantage over the competitors, 34% of variability of the profitability of the hotel and 38% of variability of the emloyee satisfaction. It can be seen that the bigest benefit from the GMS is employee satisfaction which is very important for service quality.

### 4.4. Differences in implementation of GMS and in hotel benefits of GM depending on location, categorisation and capacity of the hotel

Regarding the location, categorization and capacity of hotels in Serbia, the analysis of Kruskal-Wallis Chi-square test showed there were no differences in implementation of green marketing strategies (table no. 8).

**Table no. 8:** Differences in implementation of GMS depending on hotels' capacity, category and location

| Variable | Chi-square test | Category | Location | Capacity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Implementaion of green marketing strategies | Kruskal Wallis Test | 4.377 | 0.077 | 9.152 |
| | Sig. | 0.224 | 0.782 | 0.103 |

**Source:** Authors

When taking into account the benefits that hotels have from the application of green marketing, the analysis of Kruskal-Wallis Chi-square test showed a significant difference between the profitability of hotels regarding the hotel location and the marketing advantage over the competitors regarding the hotel capacity (Table no. 9).

**Table no. 9:** Differences in hotel benefits of green marketing depending on hotel categorization, location and capacity

| Variables | Chi-square test | Category | Location | Capacity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Green marketing improves the image of their property | Kruskal Wallis Test | 1.283 | 0.952 | 9.418 |
| | Sig. | 0.733 | 0.329 | 0.093 |
| Green marketing improves relationships with the local community. | Kruskal Wallis Test | 0.613 | 0.003 | 7.885 |
| | Sig. | 0.893 | 0.958 | 0.163 |
| Green marketing gives a marketing advantage over the competitors. | Kruskal Wallis Test | 3.276 | 0.441 | 14.532 |
| | Sig. | 0.351 | 0.506 | **0.013**** |
| Green marketing increases profitability. | Kruskal Wallis Test | 4.727 | 5.940 | 10.765 |
| | Sig. | 0.193 | **0.015**** | 0.056 |
| Green marketing increases employee satisfaction. | Kruskal Wallis Test | 5.206 | 0.334 | 7.816 |
| | Sig. | 0.157 | 0.564 | 0.167 |

**Source:** Authors

In regard to hotel location, analysis shows that those located in urban environments make more profit based on GMS implementation, than those in rural environments (Figure no.1).

According to the results, the GMS implementation brings significantly smaller competitive advantage for the hotels of the smallest capacity (less than 50 beds) and the best situation is noticed at hotels of the medium capacity (50-200 beds) (Figure no. 2).

**Figure no. 1:** Differences in hotel benefits of green marketing (profitability) depending on hotel location

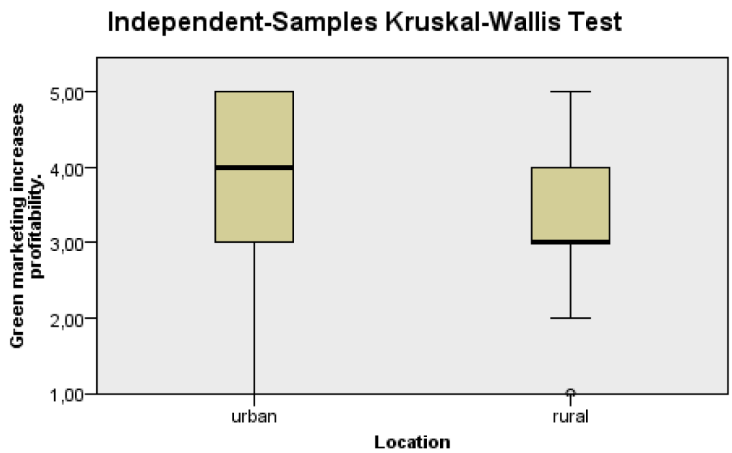
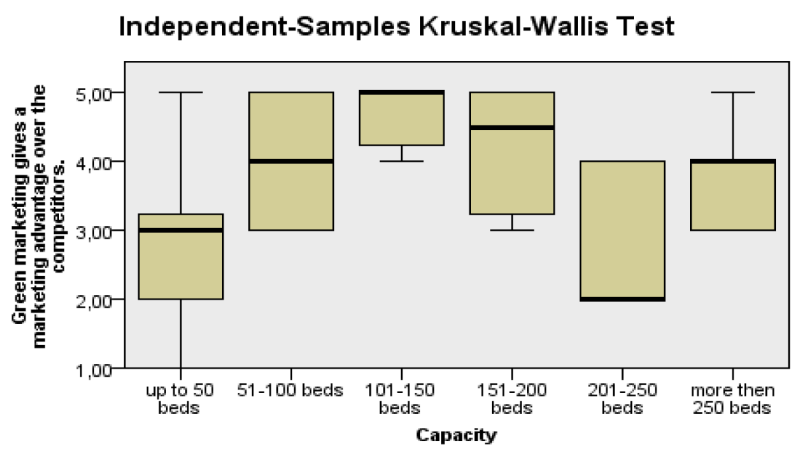



**Figure no. 2**: Differences in hotel benefits of green marketing (advantage over the competitors) depending on hotel capacity.



## 5. Conclusions

The principles of sustainable development and intersectoral partnerships in tourism management are an efficient means of strategic management. By using the positive experience of others, they should contribute to establishing a better position (Jegdić, 2011). It is clear that some time needs to elapse before resources start to lead to an eco-friendly strategy which yealds competitive advantage results and positive financial performance (Leonidou et al., 2013). The adoption of an environmental approach can, on one hand, seriously reduce costs and, on the other hand, attract the contemporary tourist – an environmentaly conscious consumer who appreciates the care and is ready to pay more for a responsible service.

This study has confirmed the assumptions that in Serbia, which is still an underdeveloped tourist destination, little has been done in terms of ecologically responsible marketing in the hotel industry. According to the hotel managers, the main reason for that are insufficient funds and a lack of legal regulations in this field, low ecological awareness of the employees and outdated technologies and objects that had been built before the concept of green architecture was adopted. The results showed that in these hotels which have some sort of green marketing, its implementation is at a very low level (M=2.89).

Therefore, we aimed at discovering if the implementation of GMS has positive impacts on the image of the hotel, better relationship with the local community, competitiveness, profitability and satisfaction of the employees. The results confirmed our assumptions as the implementation of green marketing strategies observed in totality are certainly beneficial for the hotels in the following categories: image (beta=0.469, p=0.001), relationship with the local community (beta=0.478, p=0.001), competitiveness (beta=0.482, p=0.001), profitability (beta=0.580, p=0.000) and satisfaction of employees (beta=0.618, p=0.000). The emphasis should be put on the fact that it is not sufficient to apply only one of the strategies in order to reach results that are satisfying.

As the results show, there are no differences among hotels in terms of GMS implementation regarding the location, categorisation and capacity of the hotels in Serbia, and the benefits of green marketing are better in urban hotels concerning the profitability and in hotels with medium capacity (51-200 beds) concerning the marketing advantage over the competitors.

The major limitation of the study that has been recognized during data collection and interpretation is that of the insufficient number of hotels that have GMS that

would comprise a sample for this study. Efforts should be made to encourage hoteliers to implement GMS in their business so that it could bring benefits for the hotels. Future studies will look at finding the most efficient tools for encouraging hoteliers to implement GMS.

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# PHILATELIC BOOSTERISM: TOURISM STAMPS OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

Ph.D., Stanley D. Brunn [1]

**Abstract:**

*Small island states, because of their small populations and/or territorial size, compete with larger states on the world political map for identity, investment, revenue and visibility. Tourism represents one economic sector where these island states compete for tourist revenues. How they promote themselves internationally can be measured by the images they present of their amenity environments and culture and their hosting of regional religious, sporting and heritage events. Stamps, along with official webpages, are both products the state can/may use to increase its visibility; philatelic boosterism describes this strategy. I investigate the content of tourist stamps of twenty-four island states in the Caribbean, the Pacific, Europe, Africa and Asia. The major images portrayed are colorful, scenic, natural landscapes, festivals and cultural heritage. Few stamps depict maps, colonial histories and environmental uncertainties, including natural hazards. Tourism stamps appeal to international tourist markets, portray positive gazes and provide income for many small states.*

Keywords: Small island economies, tourism, promoting the visible, scenic landscapes, cultural heritages

## 1. Introduction

Of the more than 200 stamp-issuing states, territories and dependencies, more than one-quarter would qualify as small island states either in population and/or in territorial size. These are states that compete alongside medium and large states on the world political map for economic development, cultural pride, geopolitical leadership or, in this case, for international visibility for tourists and potential tourists. In an increasingly knowledge-oriented world, where what is "known"

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about a place is important for income generating purposes, diplomacy and respect, how a state "sees itself" or wishes to "see" itself are important questions for governments, commercial ventures, local media and the travel/tourism industries.

A state can position itself in a regional or global stage using various knowledge strategies. It may accomplish this through its efforts to promote itself as a global or regional center for offshore banking or as a skillful negotiator on regional or global conflicts or as a site for international travelers. In an internationally and electronically networked world, characterized by large and small states seeking to attract or lure tourist monies, some states may choose to promote themselves, subtly or aggressively, as tourist destinations. This objective may be met by appealing to a broad range of potential tourists, for example, the youth or elderly, or as a destination for specific types of tourists, for example, those planning honeymoons or on religious pilgrimages, or ecotourists seeking adventure experiences or those attending specific regional and international sporting events. Whatever the intended focus of tourist initiatives and programs, the states participating in such ventures find themselves competing with many others often with the same environmental amenities. The competing units may be large and wealthy states against other large and wealthy states, large states against small states, or small states against other small states. The competition may also be with neighboring states within the same region, for example, those with similar landscapes or in similar tropical locations.

Competition for tourists, seasonal or year-round, and tourist income is an increasingly competitive enterprise that focuses in large part on visibility. That is, how does the state "sell" or "promote" itself in a knowledge world that is based on "the visual?" Tourism, it could be argued, is considered primarily a "visible economy" and how successful a state is in promoting or advertising itself will be crucial in meeting its objectives as a successful tourist destination and source of revenue. Tourism is basically packaging places, environments and pleasant experiences with familiar and desired natural and heritage settings and physical environments (Skinner and Theolossopoulos 2011). Promoting oneself visually can be attained using various venues, including using the world wide web, publishing colorful and multilingual travel brochures, participating in highly visible global or regional travel conferences and also issuing stamps. An appropriate term to describe this visible promotion in the case of postage stamps is "philatelic boosterism." How small island states "present" themselves with stamps issued to commemorate World Tourism Day and other tourism stamp issues is the focus of this paper. The images, topics and themes that appear are meant to send positive, informative, pleasant and perhaps even seductive messages to potential tourists from within the country itself and those coming from outside its boundaries. Stamps also need to be considered in a wider context of states competing not only to generate revenue,

but as Siemrod (2008) calls it, the "commercialization of state sovereignty." In this light we can include tourist promotions in small states in cyberspace (Brunn and Cottle 1997; Jackson and Purcell 1997; Zook 2000, 2001; Skadberg, Skadberg and Kimmel 2004)and the "selling" of domain names in global cyberworlds (Wilson 2001; Steinberg and McDowell 2003).

In the following sections I provide a literature review on small states geography, cultures and economies; discuss the concept of philatelic boosterism in greater detail; and introduce the databases and methodology used to examine the tourist stamps of selected small island states. In the analysis section I explore and describe the images, topics and themes of tourist stamps of a sample of small island states in the Caribbean, the Pacific Basin, Indian Ocean, Europe and Africa. Following this discussion, which also includes some specific examples of tourist stamp issues, I examine what these "small pieces of paper about national identity and territory" inform us about small island tourism.

**Three intersecting literatures: small island states, tourism and stamps**

This study intersects scholarly contributions in three fields: the study of small island states, tourism and stamps. Scholars who have studied small island states in the past are among those who also study small states within continents (Europe has many; Asia fewer) and also those with short coastlines. Contributing scholars come from different disciplines, including political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, economists, historians and also human geographers. Recent studies have looked at the colonial and post-colonial histories of these states, their role in United Nations and other international organizations, their forms of government (Keohane 1969; Brunn 2000b; Vital 1980; Baker 1992; Elman 1995; Grant and Colum 2000; Nurse, Sem, Hay, Suarez and Wong 2001; Anckar 2004), a series of environmental issues, especially global warming/climate change, sea level rise, and natural disasters and vulnerability (Burns 1997; Lewis 1990; Connell and Lea 1992; Pernetta 2001; Briguglio 1995; Leatherman and Beller-Simms 1997; Pelling and Uitto 2001; Lal, Harasawa and Takahashi 2002; Connell 2003; Gillespie 2003; Baldacchino 2010; Barnett and Campbell 2010, sustainable development (Bass, Bass and Delal-Clayton 1995; Douglas 2006), tourism (Lockhart, Schembri and Smith 2002; Guthunz and Van Krosigk 1996; Scheyvens and Momsen 2008), globalization and world markets (Schwartz 1994; Armstrong and Read1995; Hanf and Soetendorp 1998) and also the unique problems associated with "smallness" (Brunn 1972; Bray 1987; Selwyn 1980; Easterly and Kraay 2000; Grant 2008; Katzenstein 1985, 2003; Baldacchino 2007; Baker 2011; Grynberg 2012). These studies address issues about national identity and awareness, which are also integrated into a state's stamp program.

Tourism, like the study of small states, is also a focus of study by scholars from different disciplines around the world. Among the topics dealt are sustainable tourism (Briguglio, Butler and Harrison 1996; Butler, Briguglio and Harrison 1996; Burns and Briguglio 1996; Butler and Harrison 1996; Gössing, Hansson, Hörstmeier and Saggel 2002; Twinning-Ward and Butler 2002; Meheux and Parker 2006), climate change and tourism (Belle and Bramwell 2005; Barnett and Campbell 2010; Uyarra, Cole and Gill 2005), environmental vulnerabilities and hazards (Britton 1982; Pelling and Uitto 2001; Scheyvens and Momson 2008; Ramgengam, Boedhihartoo, Law, Gaillard and Sayer 2014), ecosystems (Apostolopoulos and Gayle 2002) and economic/management development problems (Britton and Clark 1987; Connell 1988a, 1988b, 1993; Beller, D'Ayala and Hein 1990; Read 2004; McElroy and De Albuquerque 1988; Wilkinson 1989; De Albuquerque and McElroy 1992; Conlin and Baum 1995; Butler, Ledcek and Drakakis-Smith 1993; Croes 2006), and specific problems related to "smallness" (Wilkinson 1987; Milne 1992; Butler, Lockhart and Drakakis-Smith 1993; McElroy 2003, 2006). Some have also focused on tourism issues in specific small island states, which are also highlighted on stamp issues of these countries. These include Tobago and Barbuda (Weaver 1998); Montserrat (Weaver 1995), Pitcairn (Connell 1988a. 1988b, 1991); Turks and Caicos (Connell 1990), Malta (Bull and Weed 1999; Ayres 2000) and Tristan da Cunha (Kelman 2007).

A number of authors have mentioned stamps as an important source of revenue (Faber 1984; Lamour and Barchan 2006; Hernandez-Martin 2008). Some have also identified specific countries (Baldacchino 1993, 2007, 2011; Armstrong and Reed 1995 on Turkish controlled Cyprus; Bray 1997 on Tuvalu; Connell 1988c on Pitcairn with two-thirds of its revenue coming from stamp sales, 1993 and on Tuvalu 2003; de Haas 2002 on Niue; Sathiendrakumar and Tisdell 1989 on Malta; Bull and Weed 1999 on Malta; Kawaley 1999 on eight ministates in the Pacific; Grant and Colum 2002 on Tuvalu; Bertram 2006 on Tuvalu; Meheux and Parker 2006 on Vanuatu; Kelman 2007 on Tristan da Cunha; Turnbridge on Bermuda; Weaver 1995 on Montserrat and 1998 on Tobago and Barbuda.

Research on stamp issues represents a good example of an emerging field of interdisciplinary scholarship; the fact that it emphasizes visual presentations and representations contributes to its importance by scholars who study knowledge economies and worlds in both the social sciences and humanities. Geographers have been among those who look at stamps in regards to state iconographies, images and semiotics (Gottman 1952; Boulding 1959; Scott 1995, 2002). Articles and chapters have examined the history of stamps and stamp policies, including colonial and post-colonial issues (Stamp 1966; Altman 1991), music (Covington and Brunn 2006) and science (Yardley 2014). Some studies have focused on stamp programs of individual countries and regions, including Finland (Raento and

Brunn 2005. 2008; Raento 2006), Iraq (Reed 1993), Japan (Dobson 2002, 2005), Taiwan (Deans 2005); Russia/Soviet Union (Grant 1995; Rowell 2010; Brunn 2011), China (Leith 1971), Korea (Johnson 2005), Sudan and Burkina Faso (Kevane 2008), Australia (McQueen 1988), East Asia (Deans and Dobson 2005; Johnson 2005), the Arab World (Brunn 2002), new Central Asian and European states (Brunn 2000a) and three Catholic European states (Brunn 2015). Some states have focused on their importance their being integral parts of "imagined communities" (Anderson 1991; Billig 1996; Flusty, Dittmer, Gilbert and Kuus 2008) and the growing importance of a state's "visual" messages, along with official maps (especially of new states), webpages, television advertisements and banknotes, as being important mediums to position themselves on the contemporary "world boosterism map" (Panofsky 1982; Mirzoeff 1998; Dodds 2000; Rose 2007).

States may include maps on their stamps that show geographical location, which may be important for those who lack this important geographical framework. Since stamps are issued for insiders, but viewed also by outsiders, the topics and themes are expressions of a state's "philatelic worldview." Those illustrating national heritage themes, contemporary economic livelihoods and noted personalities in music, arts, sports, science, education and government are good examples of "national pride and boosterism." One might include in this same category stamps about the state's flora and fauna, or to be more specific, birds, marine life, wildlife, as well as parks and preserves. These nature themes also promote tourism and eco-tourism. These issues could be accompanied by stamps showing unique physical landscapes, including coasts, bays, mountains, forests, waterfalls, and even islands themselves. Cultural events that may appeal to potential tourists might include cultural and multicultural festivals and regional and international sporting events, especially those that promote some unique event designed for a niche tourist market.

Stamps issued for World Tourism Year or Day or some Asian or European Tourism Year or Day are excellent examples of national boosterism; these images, whether signature landscapes or historic buildings, are worthy of close scrutiny. Tourism Day events are very good examples of the intersections depicted on Figure 1.

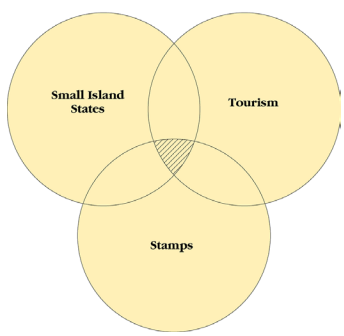


Figure 1.
The intersecting scholarly literatures related to philatelic boosterism.

**Stamps and philatelic boosterism**

The primary objective of any state's stamp program is to inform the users (who are "viewers") about the country's past, present and place in the world. That educating message may be accomplished by commemorating or honoring something about the country's ancient history, recent historical events (independence, post-colonial heritage), signature features about its landscapes, nature, and cultural heritage and noteworthy individuals (well or little known) from the worlds of science, religion, education, literature and politics. The informative messages on these "small colorful pieces of official paper" are also likely to include geographic information, for example, maps that depict where the country is vis-à-vis other countries in a world region such as the Caribbean or Indian Ocean. Maps are especially important for new states and small states seeking ways to gain geographic recognition by viewers and potential tourists unaware or unfamiliar with their location, heritage or environments.

Tourist stamps represent one topic that is important, not only in educating and informing a local, regional or international viewership, but serving as an important revenue source. Monies earned from the sale of stamps may be important income for those that have little other viable and valuable revenue sources. One can think of a number of states and territories that annually issue dozens of stamps on a wide variety of topics that often have little or nothing to do with local or regional history, environmental setting or cultural geography. Examples include stamps of vintage automobiles, Hollywood films and film stars, popular musicians, famous paintings, internationally known sports figures, food and drink, royalty and globally renowned political figures. These generate income for topical and regional stamp collectors locally and worldwide.

What is unknown in looking at stamp issues, especially popular culture themes, of small island states (or any state for that matter) is how much actual revenue the country, territory or possession generates from the sale of stamps. What may provide some insight into this question is close scrutiny on how many stamps have been issued, especially for a state or territory with a very small population. Here, we might contemplate St. Vincent, St. Lucia and Grenada which have from 100,000 to 250,000 residents; Mayotte, Dominica, Marshall Islands, the Isle of Man, Guernsey, Jersey, Seychelles and Aruba which have from 50,000 to 100,000; and Palau, St. Kitts and the Faroe Islands with less than 50,000 inhabitants. The Falklands have fewer than 3,000 residents, Alderney about 4,000, St. Helena about 7,000 and Pitcairn less than 50 inhabitants. The French Southern and Antarctic Territories, a major stamp issuing territory, has a staff of less than 150 scientists and only military personnel reside on the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Many of the small island units listed in the previous paragraph have issued many stamps since 1980. This observation raises two questions: first, how much

money is actually generated by stamps issued and, second, do residents of these states, territories and dependencies ever see or even use them for national or international postage? The first question is difficult to answer, and the second may be equally as difficult. The large number of stamps issued by states with very small populations strongly suggests that stamps, whatever their theme, tourism, sports, nature, heritage or popular culture, are issued primarily to raise revenue.

When considering the themes issued by small island states in particular, one might also look at stamps with a tourist focus. Tourism is an important income-generating source for some states, and in particular some small island states that have few or no valuable resources (minerals or tropical products) to fund the state's schools, health care system, infrastructure and government services. Tourist stamps represent one way in which the state can promote itself or seek to promote its competitive advantage for tourists over other small island states nearby or other small island settings in global markets for regional and/or international tourists. Depictions on tourist stamps are images and topics that are designed (often by outsiders, not residents) to generate positive thoughts and feelings about certain kinds of environments (beaches, mountains, lakes) or places (pilgrimage destinations, honeymoon destinations, religious and heritage sites, famous battlefields) for seasonal or year-long tourists arriving by air or cruise ship. The easily read and subtle messages on tourist stamps are conveyed in colorful and often seductive ways. In this context, "philatelic boosterism" becomes a modus operandi for a state to promote itself on the world tourism stage. The stamps a state issues for World Tourism Year or World Tourist Day and the sets of tourist stamps to mark some important occasion are meant both to attract international visitors and to generate tourism income. World Tourism Day has been the subject of stamps issued by many countries in the Global South and North in the past several decades.

**Small island states and tourism economies**

The World Tourist Organization (WTO) annually publishes online a report on the state of world tourism. The publication, UNWTO Tourism Highlights (World Tourism Organization 2014), includes summary tables and graphs of major trends, including the number of tourist arrivals, tourist receipts and major tourist destinations for selected countries. Comparable data are provided for some states for previous years. The 2014 report includes the aforementioned information for 202 political units: North-East Asia (8 units), Southeast Asia (11), South Asia (9), Oceania (20), North America (3), Northern Europe (7), Western Europe (9), Central/Eastern Europe (21), Southern/Mediterranean Europe (17), Caribbean (26), Central America (7), South America (13), North Africa (4) and Sub Saharan Africa (47).

The total number of arrivals in these states was nearly 1.1 billion and income generated totaled US$ 1.1 trillion. The leading countries in tourist arrivals were the U.S. (70 million) followed by China (56 million), Spain (61 million), Italy (48 million), Turkey (38 million), Germany and the United Kingdom (31 million each), Thailand (29 million), Russia (28 million), Hong Kong (26 million), Austria (25 million) and Mexico (24 million). The leading countries in tourist receipts were the U.S. ($140 billion), France ($56 billion), China ($51 billion), Macao ($51 billion), Spain ($60 billion), Italy ($44 billion), Thailand ($42 billion), Germany ($41 billion) and the United Kingdom ($41 billion).

The 202 political units listed in this WTO report, however, do not represent a complete picture of tourist arrivals and receipts on the world political map. Missing from this report are data on small island states and territories, including Aruba, Falklands, Faroes, St. Helena, Tristan da Cunha, Ascension, British Indian Ocean Territory, the four United Kingdom bailiwicks (dependencies) in the English Channel (Alderney, Guernsey, Jersey and Isle of Man), the French Southern and Antarctic Territories, South Georgia, Pitcairn Islands, Mayotte, Nauru and Niue, and St. Pierre and Miquelon. All of these are political island units, many with small populations, on the world political map.

To gain some insights into the stamps of small island states in different regions, I examined two groups. Group A includes twelve small islands attracting the most tourists; data for these are included in the WTO report. Group B includes a number of small island territories and dependencies for which no data are reported in the UNWTO report. Group A includes the following twelve countries: Europe (Cyprus and Iceland), Africa (Seychelles and Cape Verde), Caribbean (Aruba, Cuba and Jamaica), Southeast Asia (Singapore), Indian Ocean (Mauritius and Sri Lanka) and Pacific Basin (Fiji and French Polynesia). When selecting states for Group B, I sought to include those with different colonial histories, for example, I wanted to include stamps from the Pacific Basin and Caribbean that had French, British, Spanish, Dutch and Portuguese heritage, thinking that there might be important contrasts on the tourism stamps issued. Group B includes these political units: Caribbean (Anguilla), South Atlantic (Falklands and St. Helena), North America (St. Pierre and Miquelon), Indian Ocean (Maldives and the British Indian Ocean Territory), Europe (Faroe Islands and Malta), Africa (Comoros Islands), Pacific Ocean (Pitcairn Island, Niue and Nauru) and Southeast Asia (Timor). I initially considered São Tome and Principe as well as East Timor, but neither has issued any tourism stamps.

The data sources I used were Scott's Postage Stamp Catalogue (2013, 2014) a standard source used by philatelists, scholars and dealers. These five regional volumes, issued annually, list the stamps issued for each country, territory, dependency, past or present. Each stamp and denomination is provided a catalogue

number and a value in mint or used condition. For many sets, all stamps are illustrated; for those that are not, brief descriptions are provided. A generic description is provided for each set; for example, wildlife, birds, marine life, historic buildings, festivals, film stars, noted personalities, etc. The recent stamp catalogues include color images.

I went through the stamp pages for each of the countries and territories listed above and developed a list of stamps and sets of stamps with tourism themes. I noted whether the stamps were to commemorate World Tourist Year, World Tourism Day, European Tourist Year or some equivalent; those that depict generic tourist topics, including festivals, international sporting events, historic/heritage sites, scenic landscapes, and those depicting beaches, waterfalls, mountains, valleys, nature preserves and parks.

## Results

The total number of stamps issued from 1980 to 2013 for the states considered varied significantly as did the number with tourist themes (Table 1). In Group A, there were more than 3000 stamps issued for Cuba, 1200, more than 1400 for Bermuda, more than 1100 for Cayman Islands for Singapore and Sri Lanka, 600-900 for Fiji, Iceland, French Polynesia, Cyprus, Mauritius and Jamaica, and fewer than 600 for Cape Verde, Aruba and Seychelles. In Group B, over 2000 stamps were issued for Maldives, 600-900 for Malta, the Falkland Islands, Anguilla, St. Helena, Niue and Comoros Islands, and fewer than 600 for Pitcairn Island, St. Pierre and Miquelon, Faroe Islands, Nauru and the British Indian Ocean Territory. Some island states not discussed here had an exceedingly large number of stamps. For example, Grenada has issued 2973 since 1980.

**Table 1. Number of stamps issued 1980-2013 and number of tourist stamps**

| Group A Islands | Number of Stamps Issued | Number of Sets of Tourist Stamps | Number of Tourist Stamps | Percent Tourist Stamps |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aruba | 506 | 11 | 43 | 8 |
| Bermuda | 1681 | 8 | 61 | 4 |
| Cape Verde | 586 | 4 | 15 | 3 |
| Cayman Islands | 696 | 9 | 61 | 9 |
| Cuba | 3072 | 38 | 161 | 5 |
| Cyprus | 666 | 7 | 35 | 5 |
| Fiji | 878 | 4 | 17 | 2 |
| French Polynesia | 784 | 26 | 61 | 8 |
| Iceland | 806 | 8 | 14 | 2 |
| Jamaica | 635 | 4 | 1 | - |
| Mauritius | 654 | 5 | 16 | 2 |
| Seychelles | 457 | 5 | 12 | 3 |
| Singapore | 1215 | 12 | 74 | 6 |
| Sri Lanka | 1231 | 36 | 124 | 10 |
| St. Vincent | 3315 | 8 | 30 | 1 |
| **Group B Islands** | | | | |
| Anguilla | 840 | 4 | 25 | 3 |
| Br. Indian Ocean Terr. | 357 | 2 | 8 | 2 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comoros Islands | 623 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| Faroe Islands | 563 | 5 | 13 | 2 |
| Falkland Islands | 851 | 10 | 40 | 5 |
| Maldives | 2305 | 5 | 27 | 1 |
| Malta | 992 | 12 | 53 | 5 |
| Nauru | 394 | 1 | 12 | 3 |
| Niue | 634 | 4 | 23 | 4 |
| Pitcairn | 577 | 14 | 63 | 11 |
| St. Helena | 756 | 4 | 14 | 2 |
| St. Pierre & Miquelon | 572 | 3 | 5 | 1 |

The number of tourist stamps varied significantly, from less than 10 for Jamaica, British Indian Ocean Territory, Comoros Islands, and St. Pierre & Miquelon to more than 100 for Sri Lanka and Cuba. Most of Sri Lanka's tourist stamps were for Vesak, an annual religious holiday which was regularly commemorated with a series of stamps. Cuba's colorful tourist stamps depicted parks, beaches, historic sites and wildlife as well as hotels, restaurants, murals and stained glass windows. For most countries tourist stamps accounted for less than 5 percent of all issues since 1980. Notably, Maldives, Jamaica, St. Pierre & Miquelon, Maldives, St. Vincent and Comoros Islands' tourist stamps comprised less than 1% of all stamps. In contrast, Aruba, French Polynesia and Singapore were in the 6-9 percent range and Sri Lanka and Pitcairn were each about 10 percent of all issues. Among tourist stamps, the favorite topics were cruise ships, islands, beaches and sunsets. Much more popular issues were about nature, history and culture or themes about international sports, films, music and conflicts, themes with little ties to local culture and history.

The number of stamp sets issued also had wide variation. Cuba, Sri Lanka and French Polynesia had the most sets (over 25 sets each), followed by Pitcairn, Malta, Singapore, Aruba and the Falkland Islands (10 or more sets each). There were less than a handful of sets issued by Fiji, Cape Verde, Jamaica, Niue, Anguilla, St. Helena, St. Pierre and Miquelon, British Indian Ocean Territory, Comoros and Nauru.

There were some common themes on most of the tourist stamps, regardless of location, population size, cultural diversity or colonial heritage (Tables 2 and 3). The most common were historical landmarks, physical landscapes (beaches, waterfalls, lakes, mountains), nature (parks and reserves), and cruise ships and people (tourists) engaged in various activities. Many of these topics and themes appeared both on stamps for World Tourism Year or Day and in regular tourism sets (Figure 2). Also popular were regional sporting events, biodiversity, cultural and multicultural heritage, heritage sites, entertainment, museums, art and music, and international tourism-related conferences. Maps were not a common feature on tourism stamps.

**Table 2. Examples of official stamps for tourist days of small island states**

| State | Year | Event | Stamp Depictions |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cuba | 1998 | World Tourism Day | Beaches, forests and reptiles |
| Cyprus | 2004 | European Tourism | Amphitheater, family at seashore |
| Faroe Islands | 2004 | Europa issue | Tourists in a boat and walking on coastline |
| French Polynesia | 2006 | World Tourism Day | Dancers, waterfalls, markets, ruins |
| Iceland | 1990 | European Tourism Year | Map of Europe and bird |
| Maldives | 1985 | World Tourism Day | Windsurfing, scuba diving |
| Malta | 2004 | European Tourism Year | Archaeological sites |
| Mauritius | 1985 | World Tourism Day 10th Anniversary | Caverns, islands, landscapes |
| Seychelles | 1980 | World Tourism Congress | Boeing 747, islands, tour bus, cruise ship |
| Sri Lanka | 2011 | World Tourism Day | Buddha, dancers, flowers, leopards, elephants |

World Tourism Day and Year were used by many states to promote their signature tourist environments and attractions. Sri Lanka used that day in 1985 to issue four stamps that showed a Buddhist monastery, tea plantation, conch shell horn and parliament building. The island issued other Tourism Year stamps in 2005, 2007 and 2011. Iceland issued one stamp in 1990 for European Tourism Year that displayed a map of Europe with a bird. Seychelles issued four stamps in 1980 for the World Tourism Conference held in Manila; they showed a Boeing 747, tour bus, ocean liner and tour motor boat. French Polynesia's World Tourism Day issues in 2006 showed ruins, Polynesian women (a common theme on many of its stamps), dancers and a waterfall. Cuba issued three sets of stamps commemorating World Tourism Day from 1998-2000; they showed reptiles, Havana tourist sites and marine life.

**Table 3. Examples of tourism themes on stamps of small island states**

| State | Year | Depiction |
|---|---|---|
| Anguilla | 1999 | Beaches |
| Aruba | 1997 | Caves, reptiles, cactus landscapes, photos |
| Barbados | 1977 | Underwater park |
| Bermuda | 2008 | Landscapes |
| Br. Indian Ocean Terr. | 1991 | Cruise ships |
| Cape Verde | 1987 | Harbors, bays, mountains |
| Cayman Islands | 1978 | Cruise ships |
| Cuba | 2003 | Ecotourism - birds |
| Cyprus | 1985 | Landscapes – forests, beaches, mountains, villages |
| Falklands | 2010 | Coastal landscapes |
| Fiji | 1991 | Scenes: sand dunes, islands, nature reserves, park |
| Jamaica | 1994 | Royal Botanical Gardens, Blue Mt. coffee, waterfalls |
| Niue | 2007 | Local attractions, caves, flowers, whales, etc. |
| Pitcairn | 1993 | Scenic views of mountains, valleys, ridges |
| St. Helena | 2003 | Museums, harbor, sport fishing, yacht clubs, golf courses |
| Singapore | 2007 | Chinatown, Little India, Orchard Road, Kampong Glam |

**Figure 2. Examples of stamps for World Tourism Year or European Tourism Year**

Many regular tourist issues also showed distinctive features, especially scenic natural environments and activities there (Figure 3). Some were specifically related to tourism, such as ecotourism sets by Fiji (waterfalls, birds, mountain trekkers, historic sites) in 1995 and by Cuba (birds) in 2003. Beaches were a theme of stamps issued by Cuba in 1992 and 2000, Falklands in 1994, and Seychelles in 1988; caves by Aruba in 2008 and Pitcairn Islands in 1998; sunsets by Aruba in 2005 and Falklands in 2001; various landscapes by Falklands (islands, coastal landscapes) in 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2012, French Polynesia in 2001, 2003, 2011, and 2012, Cyprus in 1985, and Iceland in 1990 and 2001; scenic views of Fiji in 1991 and Cayman Islands (1991); national parks in Jamaica in 1999 and Iceland in 1986 and 1999; and mountains in Mauritius in 2004. Festivals and carnivals were themes depicted on stamps by Malta in 1998 and 2001 and St. Vincent in 1980, 1982 and 1997.. Singapore in 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2010; Sri Lanka (most years since 1983 celebrated the Vesak Festival); Jamaica 2004 (Caribbean Bird Festival); Aruba (carnivals) in 1989 and 2004; Cuba (ballet festivals), French Polynesia (arts festivals), and Malta (religious festivals).

Some states issued stamps to commemorate their hosting specific, and often unique, sporting events, including French Polynesia's stamp for a canoe race in 1994, a World Outrigger Canoe Championship in 2002, and FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup Tournament in 2007; Fiji the South Pacific Games in 2003; Cyprus the Games of Small European States in 1989 and 2009; Malta the same games in 2001 and 2009; Cuba a number of regional sporting events in the 1980s-2000s; Aruba the Hi-Winds Windsurfing Regatta in 2006; Sri Lanka the First South Asian Beach Games in 2011; Mauritius the Second Annual Indian Ocean Games in 1985; Cyprus the 10th Youth Under 16 European Soccer Tournament in 1992; and French Polynesia the First International Tattoo Festival in 2000.

Other tourist venues that appeared on stamps were national museums and heritage sites (Cuba), sites and monuments (Mauritius), hikers (Faroe Islands), regattas (Aruba and Malta), golf courses (Jamaica), Napoleonic sites (St. Helena), churches on the World Heritage Site (Cyprus). Other tourist interests included entertainers (Faroe Islands), touring vehicles (French Polynesia), cruise ships (Aruba, Bermuda, British Indian Ocean Territory, Falklands, Maldives, Malta and St. Vincent) skyline panoramas of Hamilton (Bermuda), hotels (Anguilla and Pitcairn Island) and museums, festivals and horse racing (Barbados).

In regard to hotel location, analysis shows that those located in urban environments make more profit based on GMS implementation, than those in rural environments (Figure no.1).

According to the results, the GMS implementation brings significantly smaller competitive advantage for the hotels of the smallest capacity (less than 50 beds) and the best situation is noticed at hotels of the medium capacity (50-200 beds) (Figure no. 2).

**Discussion**

Based on the small island tourism stamps examined above, we can identify five distinctive features. First, what the stamps depict is basically a pleasant, attractive and colorful gaze at these islands' physical and cultural environments, especially physical features. The stamps in many ways can be seen as "pieces of paper art" like a landscape painting or photograph one might see in a museum or art gallery or in a travel brochure or website. These are objects that one might wish to see in real life, hence, plan a trip to see it, or photograph when there to show friends how beautiful the scene or setting was. Stamps in these categories promote the visible and generate tourists for specific site visits or generic visits. It is worth noting that most of the island states and territories discussed in this paper are in tropical settings, have similar island landscapes and compete with each other for the many international tourists coming from the mid-latitude locations in Europe, North America and East Asia. European island states and territories, except the four bailiwicks in the English Channel, have issued few tourist stamps, perhaps because they do not perceive stamp issues as a means to attract tourists.

**Figure 3. Examples of generic tourist stamps issued by various countries.**

Second, the number of stamps issued with tourist themes, as noted above, varies greatly, from several states and territories that issue many to some that have issued less than ten in the past several decades. Cuba, French Polynesia, Aruba, Malta, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Pitcairn are among island states with the most issues. Very few were issued for Mauritius, Fiji, Iceland, Jamaica, Cape Verde, Faroe Islands, Comoros, St. Pierre and Miquelon and British Indian Ocean Territory. One could argue that those producing few tourist stamps are

not popular tourist destinations, which may be true only in part, as Jamaica (with 2 million tourists), Iceland (808,000) and Fiji (658,000) would qualify as receiving many tourists in 2013. For whatever reasons, tourist themes were not an extremely popular stamp topic.

Third, one theme dominates the tourist issues and that is landscapes, especially physical or natural landscapes. Scenes of coastlines, beaches, mountains, waterfalls, bays, caves and parks are found on most stamps at some time in the past several decades. Many were very attractive and colorful. Festivals were another popular dominant theme, especially those commemorating religious holidays or multicultural events in the state's history. Another frequent theme commemorates the hosting of regional or international games and sporting events. In these categories most issues were included in a set of three or four stamps.

Fourth, there were relatively few stamps reflecting the cultural and colonial heritage, colonial architecture and historical monuments. The underrepresentation of cultural heritage is surprising, considering that most of the island states have long colonial histories. Perhaps states did not consider heritage a high priority in promoting tourism. Cuba, Cyprus, Mauritius and Sri Lanka, however, were among those states with heritage stamps.

Fifth, it is also worth noting is what is not on tourism stamps. There were almost no tourist stamps with maps showing the island's location. Perhaps location is not considered important to tourists, but tropical environments are. There were also few stamps that included people; the scenic landscape stamps were mostly devoid of people. Except for Sri Lanka's Vesek stamps and a few faceless athletes engaged in national or regional sporting events, people seldom appeared on stamps. City skylines were rarely illustrated. Indigenous games, music, foods, drinks, religion, gambling and some significant events in colonial histories were not common themes, although most of these small island states and territories were European possessions at some time. Finally, while there is extensive scholarly literature on environmental problems of small island states, especially their vulnerability to natural hazards and being negatively impacted by global warming, these are not topics on stamp issues. Rather the philatelic "gaze" is one of pleasant, attractive and appealing "windows" of beaches and mountains and tropical birds, butterflies, reptiles, marine life and familiar features of island cultural heritage.

**Summary and Conclusion**

Tourism and tourism-related stamps represent a small but important component of the stamp program in many small island states and territories. This observation is based on the number of stamps and sets issued with themes about scenic physical landscapes, cultural histories, museums, festivals and events. Some stamps illustrate signature physical features, such as a famous mountain or beach, waterfall, park our beautiful sunset, while others promote culturally important features and holidays. That some states, especially some states with very small populations, issue a very large number of stamps on a somewhat regular basis suggests that their stamp issues are an important promotional effort, but also a potential source of income for internal development projects.

This study raises a number of additional questions about the stamps issued by small island states and territories that are worth exploring. I suggest five. One would be to learn more about the importance of stamp sales to the national economy. This question will likely be tricky to answer, but would be worth exploring, especially for some of the very small states and territories in the Caribbean, South Indian Ocean and Pacific Basin. Palau, Micronesia, Seychelles, St. Vincent and Grenada come to mind. If one could obtain sales data, perhaps one could also prepare a map showing the destinations of most out-going mail. One might suspect that these specific stamp-issuing territories and countries – the Cayes of Belize, Nevis, Barbuda, and Caribbean Netherlands , all which are not individual UN members, but are with others, such as Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis – would generate a good amount of revenue from stamp ales as would those listed in Table 1. This same statement could apply to these English Channel stamp-issuing territories, the Isle of Man, Guernsey, Jersey and Alderney, each which has issued from 300-800 stamps since 2000 and also Rarotonga, Niuafo'ou, St. Martin and Tokelau. Definitely stamps are an income generator for these islands. Second, it would be worth knowing something about the designers of these stamps. What were their sources of information and inspiration? Were they using photographs, films, documentaries or websites or written narratives? Did they ever visit the island whose stamps they designed? One has the impression from studying many of these small island stamp issues that they could be representing a beach or a waterfall or a mountain almost anywhere in the tropics, since most small island states are in the tropics. The designers of stamps have not been the subject of scholarly stamp research to date. Perhaps that most of these tropical islands had predominant populations of color was a reason, which would be a likely sharp contrast rom the mostly white population tourists from the Global North.

Third, for tourists visiting small island states and territories, it would be

interesting to know what are the major themes and topics of the stamps they purchase and then place on postcards to send family and friends. One would assume if tourists purchase stamps at post offices or tourist shops that there would be some selection. One could speculate not only on what stamps they purchase, but also what are the most popular postcard themes and topics. Sending a special postcard to a loved one, family friend or colleague and affixing a special stamp is almost saying "I want you to enjoy this experience with me." If one landed on a small island by aircraft, one might select a postcard with an urban skyline or a famous beach or possibly even a map. If one came on a cruise ship in a holiday season, one might purchase stamps with cruise ships and dances, foods and events associated with a national holiday or religious festival or some unique island event. It would be worth knowing what proportion of post cards for sale and sold had local residents on them.

Fourth, it would be useful to examine the stamp issues of other small island states and territories, for example, those in the Caribbean (St. Maarten, Grenada and St. Vincent), in the English Channel (Alderney, Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey), in the South Atlantic (Ascension, South Georgia and Tristan da Cunha), and the Pacific Basin (Vanuatu, Marshall Islands, Palau, Micronesia, and Kiribati). My guess is that probably many of the same themes described above would apply to these island states.

Fifth, it would be interesting to compare the images and contents of tourist stamps with the images on the official webpages of small island states. Questions that merit scrutiny are whether there are similarities in subject matter, such as scenic landscapes, festivals and heritage, whether maps are included on webpages as well as images (photographs) of cultural events and people, including tourists, attending these events. One would expect that official webpages would also show cruise ships and schedules, hotels, restaurants, and calendars of events of upcoming festivals and holidays. Related to a point above, it also would be worth knowing if the webpage designers resided within the country for which they are prepared the webpage or if they resided some distance away.

The study of small island tourism is one that merits further study by scholars focusing on "the visual," which is a very important feature of promoting the visiting of places. Stamp issues represent one component of the tourists' gaze, but so do seductive web pages of states and territories, cruise lines, popular magazines and television advertising. The label "small island state" itself can serve as a vehicle to promote a place's tourist landscapes, cultural histories and hosting of sporting events. Stamps are one part of this "visual message" which informs tourists and brings visitors, recognition and revenue.

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The author declares no conflict of interest in regard to publication of this manuscript.

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# THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION OF NATIONALITIES ALONG THE MURA (MURAMENTI NEMZETISÉGI TERÜLETFEJLESZTÉSI TÁRSULÁS) IN THE CROATIAN-HUNGARIAN CROSS BORDER COOPERATION WITH A SPECIAL ATTENTION ON TOURISM

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**Abstract:**

*Despite the intensification of cross-border relations, it has been experienced that Euroregions were not able to achieve effective cooperation so far. The main reasons can be detected due to multi-heterogeneity, plural recruitment of interests and disinterest due to the lack of resources. To solve this problem, Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, thus the organization of EGTC have been created (MARTÍNEZ, A. A. 2014). The analysed local government association made continuous efforts in the last 25 years to develop the Croatian and Hungarian areas. This cooperation was based on trust as well resulting in the creation of the Mura Region EGTC which we believe will result in a quality change in terms of economy and tourism development as well. This is possible because the EGTC functions as a quasi-enterprise, being a legal entity as well and so it is able to tender not only the national sources but directly from Brussels. It is also a unique situation at this organisation that while in the Carpathian Basin the cross border relations are mainly based on Hungarian-Hungarian relations, in this case the Croatian-Croatian partnership is dominating. In addition, size and existing daily inter-ethnic relations contribute to the high level of success (BALI, L. – FITOS, G. 2012). The Mura Region EGTC was registered by the Croatian and Hungarian partners in June 2015 to strengthen the social-economical cohesion with the improvement of accessibility on the micro level and the evolving of eco-touristic developments for less environmental impacts. The Mura Region provides unique natural environment and a rather complex potential for tourism (CSAPÓ, J. 2014).*

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*Unfortunately the quantity and quality of the infrastructure demands further investments to satisfy different needs of the tourists. Creating a good relationship for cooperation and permanent search for financial resources are essential tasks for local governments. This study aims to demonstrate the formation, programming activity and future potential of the Mura Region EGTC pointing out recommendations of further development directions by presenting past and relevant present projects and analysing their multiplier effects. The research is completed with detailed legal analysis and interviews with municipal leaders.*

Keywords: River Mura, EGTC, Croatian-Croatian relations, sustainable tourism development

**Introduction, the role and importance of the EGTCs**

Since border areas have always been sensible regions through history – and this is especially valid for the Central-European countries – now we have a chance to create cooperation instead of emphasizing and deepening the already existing negative effects of the border land areas (AUBERT A. – CSAPÓ J. 2015, AUBERT A. ET AL 2015, HARDI, T. 2002, 2004; DE SOUSA, L. 2012; BUFON, M. – MARKELJ, V. 2010; HALÁS, M. 2007; SOKOL, M. 2001). As preliminary documents for this research we have to mention the documentary accepted in 2006 by the Committee of the Regions in which strategic directions were proposed for regional co-operations and for the adaptation of institutional tasks in EGTC's operational framework. Many changes took place in the past six years; almost all of the EU-countries have incorporated EGTC regulations into their legal systems, thus the earlier established organisations have more successful projects [4].

Hungary was one of the first countries that has adopted EGTC regulations. In countries such as Germany and Austria where strong provincial system operate, adaptation processes were held up by disruptions. Today these countries also solved the regulatory compliance of the EGTC. After the establishing of the first EGTC, Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, the circle of EGTCs has expanded. Co-operations are being established for expansion, employment, education, culture, heritage, tourism, environment, healthcare, public transport and administration. Until the summer of 2012, 28 cross-border organisations were registered and 16 member states joined the programme. Most of the EGTCs were funded in France, Hungary, Spain and Slovakia. The secondly established Ister-Granum EGTC is a good example for the initiative readiness in Hungary (HARTL, M. 2010). 51

[4] 137th meeting of the Bureau of the Committe of the Region: The EGTC. Prospects for 2020. Accessed: 2013. 04. 29

Hungarian and 38 Slovakian settlements around Esztergom are located in the border region of Hungary and Slovakia. The main task of this EGTC is to realize cross-border co-financed programmes and projects and representation. The current line-up is characterized by indefinite and long-term agreements. The co-operative organisations are mostly local governments, governments, committees, advisory bodies etc. A further characteristic is that there is hardly any EU-funding for an adequate and professional functioning.[56]

However, we can see new opportunities appearing in the period between 2014-2020. The Committee of the Regions will continue to promote territorial cohesion in accordance with the objectives of cross-border, transnational and interregional co-operations. EGTC is an instrument for 2020 which is given concrete expression of multilevel governance and foresees a greater role of local democracies. The supervision of EGTC regulation makes clear the conditions and creates legal certainty. The importance of this process lies in the accelerated establishing of new EGTCs (BALI, L. – FITOS, G. 2012).

## Methodology

During the research we used both primary and secondary sources for our investigations. The majority of the secondary data base was provided by the KSH (Central Statistical Office of Hungary) and the official databases of the researched tenders.

Primary information was gathered during field trips and also interviews and in-depth interviews were undertaken with the local stakeholders (mayors of the settlements and leaders of tourism organisations) of the economy and the tourism industry. During the investigations we analysed the international network and its intensity based on the thorough analysis of the tendering activity. The structure of the presented development plan follows the regular sequence of such tourism development plans.

## Theoretical background, literature review

In the 21st century the tourism global market creates an organic and interdependent system in which the supply and demand side experiences significant changes both in time and space and also from the perspectives of the

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[5] 2011 report on the follow up of EGTCs https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/SiteCollectionDocuments/EGTC%20monitoring%20report%202011/EXECUTIVE%20SUMMARY%20EGTC%20MR%202011_hu.pdf Accessed: 2014-04-20.

[6] http://cesci-net.eu/tiny_mce/uploaded/EGTC-Snapshot%2803%292012-10-03.pdf Accessed 2015. 12. 20.

quantitative and qualitative aspects or components (LEW, A. A. – HALL, C. M. – WILLIAMS, A. M. 2014). As newer and newer regions and tourism products will be involved in the international and domestic tourism trends only such a tourism destination or tourism actor can survive which or who can provide an ever growing standard of quality (COOPER, C. – HALL, C.M. 2008, AUBERT, A. – MARTON, G. 2013, GONDA, T. – RAFFAY, Z. 2015).

According to recent changes in tourism trends it is obvious that visitors are more strongly involved in cultural activities than earlier, although we have to highlight that the role of the 3S (or 4S as sun, sand, sea and sex) in mass tourism will still be (very) dominant (CLAVER-CORTÉS, E. – JOSÉ F. MOLINA-AZORI'N, J.F. – PEREIRA-MOLINER, J. 2007). On the other hand as the new generations of visitors appear on the tourism market, now we can talk about a new 3S group or generation of tourists now mainly motivated by sport, spectacle and satisfaction. Also we have to stress that one of the most important motivations for a tourism visit is getting (more and more, and as diverse as possible) experiences (CLAVERIA, O. – MONTE, E. – TORRA, S. 2015, MARIANI, M. M. – BUHALIS, D. – LONGHI, C. – VITOULADITI, O. 2014, GONDA, T. – MINORICS, T. 2014).

The punctual spatial impoundment of the analysed region is significantly influenced by the political aspects of the border which was constantly changing through history. The strength of the attraction through the state border also depends on this factor in terms of cross border cooperation building. Apparently we can see a strengthening of the relations in the last 15 years which can confirm the planning of common projects and tenders in the present and in the future also (ŠIMIĆ, A. 2005, HANSEN, N. 1983, NEMES NAGY, J. 1998, NOVOTA, S.-VLAŠIĆ, I.-VELINOVA, R.-GERATILEV, K.-BORISSOVA, O. 2009). Since the strength of the mentioned attractions between the borders is changing, from the point of view of the Hungarian-Croatian cooperation we have to distinguish between two kinds of relations: along the border and cross border. Due to the incomplete texture the attraction of the border can only hardly be detected by statistical methods so we cannot speak in this respect about classic cross border relations. However, the macro and mezo regional centres of the neighbouring areas have a certain amount of connections. In this respect the cooperation is not a bottom-up initiative, the cross border connections create a greater, more comprehensive system and they constitute real cross border relations. (MARTINEZ, O. J. 1994, MAGAŠ, D. 2013, GRUPE, C. – KUSIC, S. 2005).

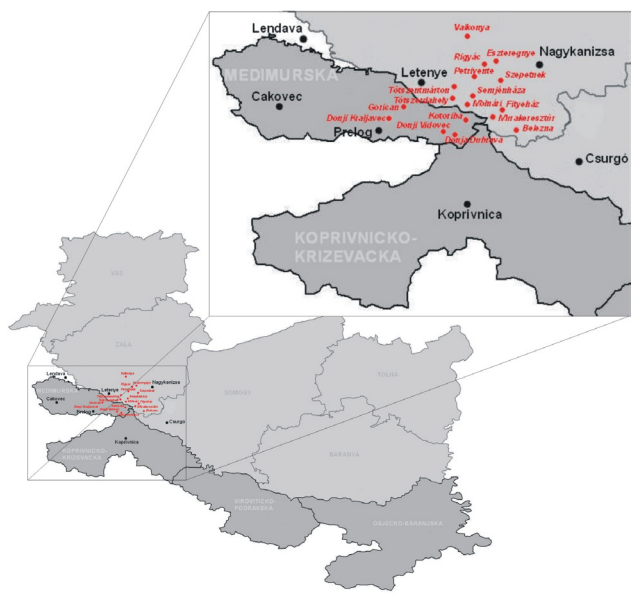
Taking into consideration the cross border situation in Hungary, we can assume that in many cases only weak contact zones were developing, while with the more central parts of the country more significant connections were created. This is in relation with the so called 'effective state area' an ongoing situation in

the Drava River bordering area at the southwestern parts of Hungary, since the change of the regime. Besides these rather negative processes we could experience a kind of positive development procedure in the las two decades as well. The relation between Hungary and Croatia is politically stable and the development of the interactions are also strengthened by the comparative social-economic possibilities. However, the highest degree of cooperation is still not achieved, we can only see initial phases of the expected development (HARDI, T. 2009). It is also worth mentioning that the altering economic circumstances can also actuate the activity of the certain cross border areas and their centres and in certain economic areas (such as tourism) a kind of specialisation can also set off (NIEBHUR, A. - STILLER, S. 2004, RECHNITZER, J. 1999, MARTINEZ, O. J. 1994).

**An introduction to the Mura Region EGTC**

The Mura Region EGTC is located in Western Transdanubia, in the south-eastern part of Zala County along the Hungarian-Slovenian-Croatian triple-border.

Figure 1: The location of the Mura Region EGTC (joined settlements highlighted with red)




Source: Edited by the authors 2014

By the examination of the establishment of the Mura Region EGTC we actually observe the reintegration opportunities of some parts of the historical Zala County. With the EU member state Slovenia and with the joining of Croatia, the interstate, regional and local governmental relations constantly smartened up. This process is supported by the increasing available EU-funds promoting cross-border relations. Of course the economic development of the Mura territory depends on successful co-operation of local governments, local NGOs and regional social-economic organisations on a great extent.

Since the change of the regime, several local governmental associations have been established, operating despite the economic downturn, following the political change and the current economic crisis. The project leader is the Muramenti Nemzetiségi Területfejlesztési Társulás (Regional Development Association of Nationalities Along the Mura) which is an active participant of regional development processes for 19 years. The organisation and its partners, Donja Dubrava, Goričan, Donji Vidovec already implemented several successful projects in the past 15 years, however they only reached significant results on minority, cultural, sport and educational interactions with the lack of effective economic effects (BALI, L. – HEGEDŰSNÉ BARANYAI, N. – GÓR, A. – FITOS, G. 2015).

## The former tendering activity of the region as a scale of interaction and cohesion in tourism and regional development

Important conclusions of interactions can be drawn from the assessment of the tendering activity of the IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) projects which could justify the raison d'etre of the establishment of the organisation (Mura EGTC) in addition of historical aspects. It was the only credible source which had a detailed database about the interactions. Here we have to say that the Croatian-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry which has offices in both countries and existed for more than 2 years did not even have appropriate data regarding the bilateral mutual investments (GULYÁS, L. – BALI, L. 2013).

From the results of the first calls for projects a particular situation emerges: the most successful projects were from the field of education-training and 'interpersonal' relations (Table 1). A wide range of settlements realized educational projects like Murakeresztúr and Csáktornya (Čakovec). In half of these cases the co-operation was based on existing and operating partnerships between settlements and 'interpersonal' relations where small towns along River Mura (and Drava) like Čakovec, Križevci, Letenye which were the most successful. In the topic of 'Cross-border business partner searching' on priority 'Co-operating economy' only one project was realized which de facto aimed to deepen economic co-

operation. The beneficiary was the Enterprise Development Foundation of Zala County (Zalaegerszeg) (BALI L. – HEGEDŰSNÉ BARANYAI, N. – GÓR, A. – FITOS, G. 2015). The results of the second calls' winner projects outlined a former tendency as well where local governments replaced their lack of resources from funds addressed for cross-border co-operation (Table 1). On priority 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 the following projects were realized: 'Development of the sewage plant of Letenye and canalization of south-western part of Prelog', and 'Technical documentary of canalization in Bázakerettye, Donja Dubrava, Donji Vidovec and Kotoriba'. In both projects the strengthening effect of social-economical cohesion along the borderline are questionable, especially in Bázakerettye. On the second priority there are no such tendencies. Previous experiences showed that the density of cross-border interactions depended on spatial structural, transport and ethnic issues. Co-operation which can exclusively be interpreted as a cross-border co-operation has been barely present, e.g. Letenye (HUHR/1001/2.2.2/0012), Tótszerdahely (HUHR/1001/1.1.2./0004). In each of these projects the ethnic aspect had a strong influence also since the existing micro-regional relations have revived with the support of EU funds (BALI, L. – FITOS, G. 2013).

The third call of projects show a totally different condition (Table 1). Most of the projects were realized in the main topic 'Sustainable tourism in the river area of Mura-Drava-Danube' within the topic of active and ecotourism. In addition, projects about coherent touristic image and active tourism had priority in front of the decision makers. In the first and second turns only one project was realized, while in the third turn altogether 26. In the topic 'Co-operation in economy' was a significant, about 50% reduction in the amount of projects submitted. An even greater setback of winner projects can be seen in the topic 'Inter-community human resource development': in the first turn 11, in the second turn 31, while in the third turn only three projects were realized (GULYÁS, L.-BALI, L. 2013).

***Table 1: Priorities/Intervention areas/Activities Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme (Overview of the first, second and third turns)***

| **Priority 1 : Sustainable environment and tourism** | **Number of winner projects by turns** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.1. Sustainable and attractive environment** | **1st** | **2nd** | **3rd** |
| 1.1.1. Landscape development on the area Mura-Drava-Danube | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| 1.1.2. Environmental planning tasks and small scale communal actions for the improvement of natural areas: habitat restoration | 4 | 6 | 1 |
| **1.2. Sustainable tourism on the river area Mura-Drava-Danube** | | | |
| 1.2.1. Elaboration of regional touristic product plan | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 1.2.2. Active- and ecotouristic infrastructure development: visitor centres, forest schools, water sports, bicycle paths, hiking trails, rental services | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| 1.2.3. Development of cultural heritage and thematic routes | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| 1.2.4. Popularization of the river area as an unified touristic product | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| 1.2.5. Private investment incitement | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| **Priority 2: Co-operating economy and inter-community human resource development** | | | |
| **2.1. Co-operating economy** | | | |
| 2.1.1. Searching for cross-border business partners | 3 | 6 | 0 |
| 2.1.2. Promotion of cross-border labour mobility | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 2.1.3. Joint R&D&I | 8 | 6 | 3 |
| 2.1.4. Joint local planning, strategies, programmes | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| **2.2. Inter-community human resource development** | | | |
| 2.2.1. Cross-border educational, training and exchange programmes | 7 | 12 | 3 |
| 2.2.2. People-to-people relations | 7 | 16 | 0 |
| 2.2.3. Bilingual facilities | 4 | 3 | 0 |
| **Total number of winner projects** | **40** | **60** | **39** |

***Source: Gulyás, L. – Bali, L. 2013***

Before analysing some specific programmes, it is worth having a look at the aims and purposes of the CBCs, so simply, a word cloud helps us identify the keywords. According to these programmes, the following words were put in priority: development, cultural values, competitiveness, nature, border, co-operation and sustainability (Figure 2.).

***Figure 2. The word cloud for the aims and purposes of the Hungarian cross-border, transnational and interregional co-operations (2007-2013)***

***Source: own editing with www.wordle.net***

If we have a look at the word cloud for the project titles of the Hungary-Croatia cross-border co-operation programmes (2007-2013) we can clearly identify the keywords and hence the most important calls and priorities for tourism development. According to this, the word "development" is the most important, but we can also clearly identify the geographical space these projects were allocated: "Drava", "Danube". The most important activities that were planned to be developed are mainly connected to active tourism ("bicycle", "routes", "cycling") and ecotourism ("routes", "river ", "preserve", "park"). In the next step we needed to have an authentication from the scientific/academic background in order to prove or disapprove the tourism product or topic choice of the project writers. Based on earlier researches on the tourism products of the area (CSAPÓ, J. 2014; AUBERT, A. – CSAPÓ, J. – PIRKHOFFER, E. – PUCZKÓ, L. – SZABÓ, G. 2010.; AUBERT, A. – CSAPÓ, J. – MARTON, G. – SZABÓ, G. 2012), these projects were correctly emphasizing the major advantages (leading tourism products) and also the backwardness or problems of the region, so we find the problematic fields of "infrastructure", "marketing" and "stimulation" for example (Figure 3.).

***Figure 3. The word cloud for the project titles of the Hungary-Croatia cross-border co-operation programmes (2007-2013)***

***Source: own editing with www.wordle.net***

**Case study: The Tourism Development Plan of the Regional Development Association of Nationalities Along the Mura**

This chapter is introducing a local tourism development plan created by one of the authors of this article (CSAPÓ, J. 2014) intending to take into consideration these new trends in tourism being adapted to the domestic and regional characteristics.

It stands here as a practical example of the tendering and tourism development approaches focusing on the Mura region.

***Figure 4: The spatial allocation of the settlements of the Regional Development Association of Nationalities Along the Mura***

***Source: http://muramenti.eu/index.php?pg=terkep***

## The structure of the development plan

The major point of focus and so the structure of the development plan are the following:

- Analysis of the international and domestic tourism trends;
- The thorough social-economic analysis of the settlements of the Regional Development Association of Nationalities Along the Mura (the situation analysis of the basics of the tourism sector);
- The tourism supply analysis of the settlements of the Regional Development Association of Nationalities Along the Mura;
- The tourism demand analysis of the settlements of the Regional Development Association of Nationalities Along the Mura;
- The tourism SWOT analysis of the researched area;
- Developing-outbreak possibilities, the strengthening potential of the tourism industry of the region.

## Results

### The pillars of the tourism development plan

The major decisive factors for the competitiveness of the destinations are marketing, product development (based on quality rather than quantity), diverse supply and the special segments. In order for a region to become a tourism destination, the following criteria have to be fulfilled:

- The presence of a well-identifiable and dominant tourism attraction;
- Should have tourism products based on the dominant tourism attraction;
- It should possess a regional knowledge of identity;
- It should possess a regional tourism organisation and management system;
- Financial sources should be detached to product development and marketing (Aubert A. 2007a; b)

It is also very important to add that the border regions represent a separate category in regional tourism policy having a unique role in the creation of the integrated Europe and cross border co-operations. So in this respect also the tourism development of the Regional Development Association of Nationalities Along the Mura cross border allocation should play a highlighted role.

Further trends and tendencies influencing the creation of the tourism development plan were:

- the increase of the absolute number and share of the individual travellers
- the increase of the absolute number and share of the travels characterised by shorter stays;
- the increase of the interest towards special tourism products;
- the more frequent use of the internet;
- the further development of the budget airlines;
- the strengthening of the late reservations;
- increased price sensibility.

In order to create the tourism development plan of the Association we intended to strongly take into consideration the regional (tourism region) aims and objectives of tourism development in order to find and create concordance with each other. The strategic objectives of the Western Transdanubian Tourism Region were the following:

1. The strengthening of the competitiveness and market share of the region;
2. The creation of the possibilities for sustainable development;
3. The strengthening of the tourism attraction with product development and attraction organisation, image creation in order to develop separate tourism landscapes;

4. Human resources development, the creation of entrepreneurship advisory boards, strengthening the co-operations;
5. Improving accessibility. (A Nyugat-Dunántúl Turisztikai Régió turizmusfejlesztési stratégiája 2007-2013)

The Tourism Development Strategy of the Western-Transdanubian Tourism Region (2007-2013) contains information about the area of the Mura region also. In the strategy the text refers to River Mura and its connected tourism products. It also proves that from the point of view of the general development of the region the covered area proves to be a periphery. Nevertheless the strategy highlights that the role and importance of cross border allocation plays a very important part in the region's development aspects. The mentioned leading tourism products of the region are:

- active tourism (waterside and cycling)
- wine tourism and gastronomy
- ecotourism
- rural tourism

**The need for conscious development**

In this chapter we clarified the main possible drivers for the development of tourism in the settlements of the regional development association. Our main conclusion was however, that they can only be carried out sufficiently and efficiently in the case of efficient cooperation and partnership. Therefore without spatial cooperation, the dislocation of the resources and disadvantageous allocation of the financial sources will be implemented so there will be no chance to be able to carry out the needed investments effectively. One of the most important topics in this sense is the case of the construction of a new bridge on the Mura for which a great lobby activity and a strong approach is needed. Nevertheless, with the strengthening of the public road transport and connections, a long term dynamic development could be generated which could also mean a stronger flow on capital and tourism movements, promoted also by Croatia's joining of the EU.

**The creation of a sustainable but competitive tourism in the region**

One of the most important aspects of tourism planning in recent years is strongly connected to sustainability, but on the other hand also to competition and competitiveness. A major question is how these seemingly opposite aspects can be accommodated with each other. In an area carrying out sustainable tourism, the management and all the other players of tourism, mainly on the supply side, have

to take into consideration that they can only create a continuous developing, long term functioning and operation when they fulfil the needs and aspects of financial liquidity and profit orientation. So in this respect a common connection point between sustainability and competitiveness is the competitive (service and tourism) product deriving from sustainable activity being tested on the market based on its price, quality, market research, marketing and promotion activities and by the follow up service possibilities.

**The process of tourism development**

In this chapter we highlighted the process of tourism development stages and the role of the management. Of course the management will coordinate the tasks formulated through the planning period. This management can be a tourism organisation or a municipality or, such as in our case, a regional development organisation or association. It is further very important that their decisions should be authoritative to the internal actors (population, local governments, local enterprises) since they are the ones who represent the program to the external actors (financial institutions, external firms, state administrative institutions etc.). During the implementation period, emphasis should be placed on the physical environment in order to minimise the negative effects that can emerge during the creation of the tourism destination. One of the most important attractions of the Mura region is the "untouched" environment providing a strong basis for the strengthening of water tourism, hunting tourism, angling and walking tourism, but if an adequate infrastructural background would be created (cycling routes) cycling tourism could appear as well. This natural environmental basis should only be changed with moderately limited actions in order to implement the former plans and studies projected. Accordingly, the major viewpoint of the tourism development plan is long term thinking and planning:

1. The first step is the creation of a plan for complex tourism integrated into the local economy.
2. The marketing activity should accentuate the long term, environment protecting approach. This should be defined in an image and a mission for the internal and external actors alike.
3. The strengthening of an economy based on local products.
4. Such a destination should be created besides the already existing ones which match with the above mentioned viewpoint system and regional development ideas.

**The concrete development ideas based on the local potential**

In the next step we elaborated the concrete development ideas based on tourism products established on local potentials and marketing activity. We can determine the following statements:

1. It is inevitable to increase the image and the notoriety (mainly inland but in the international scene also) of the area with the analysed tools;

2. It is inevitable to involve the local population into tourism development;

3. It is inevitable to strengthen the approach of the local population to tourism;

4. It is inevitable to much more utilise the cultural-economical potential of the local Croatian population also in tourism;

5. It also should be a priority to utilise the EU's CBC programmes as much as it is possible;

6. It is necessary to strengthen the tourism infra and suprastructure and the cross-border transport relations;

a. Lack of adequate tourism accommodations;

b. Introduction of qualifying or labelling systems in tourism.

c. The increase of cross border points.

7. In order to develop and strengthen tourism a regional organisation system should be created;

8. The tourism of the region should basically be built around active and ecotourism.

**The major types of determined tourism products**

Based on the local resources and characteristics, the development plan also pointed out the most important tourism products of the researched area which are the following:

1.Ecotourism
2.Cultural tourism
3.Hunting tourism
4.Angling and water tourism
5.Rural tourism
6.Wine tourism
7.Cycling tourism

**Possible directions of tourism development**

The development plan determined the most important possible directions of tourism development:

1. The need for conscious development;
2. The creation of sustainable but competitive tourism;
3. The creation of a complex tourism industry integrated in the local economy;
4. The marketing activity should emphasize the long term approach;
5. The strengthening of the local economy based on local products;
6. Such a destination should be developed which is adequate to the approach of the above mentioned aspects and to the aspects of regional development.

**Summary**

The Mura Region EGTC is a border region of Hungary with unique social relations where not the Hungarian-Hungarian but the Croatian-Croatian relations are dominating. In Central-Europe, after the change of the regime, the development of border areas has been going through a revival, in spite of the lack of former experience. Taking advantage of new EU organizational structure and with the help of EU funds, the opportunity for long-term operating of such organisations have increased. This had been proven by the local political elite with a willingness for co-operation. We believe that tourism is only an additional development method in the area offering a good opportunity for the social-economical participants to recognize this economic development chance in a greater extent.

The Mura region has an outstanding and unique environment and potential for tourism, providing a premises of its successful development. However, the non-adequate infrastructure (both concerning quality and quantity) necessitates significant investments in order to fulfil the differentiated needs of the tourists. For this cooperation, partnership and an increasing tendering activity is needed from the side of the local governments and the entrepreneurs as well. It is obvious that the limited frames do not allow the realisation of the needed investments, sometimes not even the realisation of the own share of the tendering process. It is also a disappointing sequel further on that the different planning programmes were stuck and remained on the level of planning. These include different development possibilities among which the development of tourism could be promoted as well. Such investments could be a new cycling route or the establishment of a new bridge on the Mura. Besides infrastructure development, the implementation of such investments is also strongly needed in order to promote the development of accommodation. All in all, besides the preservation of the natural values and attractions, we

propose the creation of sustainable tourism development plans for the region as a possibility for both domestic and international visitors. One of its first step should be the creation of a unique, distinguishable image reflecting the historical, minority and cultural traditions. The economic part should be based on this together with the local products of the local bio and village producers. A selling place or a market should be created for these products in the centre of the region. The shop with local products could serve the accommodation units as well. Parallel with this, an adequate accommodation structure should be created in order to make visitors stay for longer periods of time. In this case, the framed processes could strengthen each other with the domestic and external demand relatively independent from seasonality. We also accentuate that tourism is not the only chance for development in the region, but it is among the possibilities of a multi-dimensional economy together with agriculture, industry and services other than tourism. Even if tourism cannot be the primary priority of economic development, but it could serve as a tool for economic complexity in the Mura region too.
Through this article we aimed to describe the past and present realities and a little bit the future of a cross border region of Hungary and Croatia, where the peripheral and bordering spatial allocation could have both negative and positive impacts. However, we believe that given its potential and the more and more punctual planning processes, with a proper realisation of the proposed ideas, the region could make a further and very important step towards its social and economic development.

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# LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANNING PROVISION OF POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR EVENT MANAGEMENT: AN IRISH PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:**

*This paper examines the role local authorities play in planning for event management on a global scale. More specifically it focuses on assessing the local authority planning provision of policies and guidelines to responsibly manage the process of event management in the Republic of Ireland. This research utilised a quantitative methodology in the form of a content analysis approach. This approach allowed for a valuable cross representation of results in relation to local authority planning for event management in Ireland. Analysis revealed a lack of adoption and integration of planning policies and guidelines within local authorities nationwide. This has implications for the sustainability and longevity of the event industry in Ireland. As such the need to understand the importance of developing and implementing sustainable planning systems for the event industry in Ireland by local authorities cannot be ignored. This paper concludes that while the lack of adoption of planning systems by local authorities in Ireland is worrying, regulating and implementing sustainable planning systems nationwide can improve it.*

Keywords: Event Management, Guidelines, Ireland, Local Authorities, Policies

## Introduction

Research into local authority planning for event management has been well documented in event management research worldwide (Pugh & Wood, 2004; Wood, 2005; Wood, 2009; Bowdin, O'Toole, Allen, Harris & McDonnell, 2012; Holmes, Hughes, Mair & Carlsen, 2015). However few studies have addressed the role local authorities play in providing planning policies and guidelines for event management globally (Damster & Tassiopoulos, 2005; Wood, 2005; Wood, 2006; Whitford, 2009; Dredge & Whitford, 2010; Dredge, Lamont, Ford,

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Giang, Whitford & Wynn-Moylan, 2010; Dredge & Whitford, 2011; Bramwell & Lane, 2013). Yet the importance of providing effective planning systems such as policies and guidelines for guiding the process of event management cannot be underestimated. In particular the need to understand the difficulties faced when working with or alongside local authorities and associated planning systems for event management is essential. This is significant considering a lack of effective planning systems for event management may have implications for sustaining future event industries (Fredline, Deery & Jago, 2006). This study aims to bridge this gap in research by examining the importance of providing local authority planning policies and guidelines for event management, while providing an insight into the difficulties faced by event managers when using planning systems to plan for event management. It aims to do this by primarily focusing on assessing the local authority provision of effective and sustainable planning systems such as policies and guidelines for event management with a geographic focus on Ireland.

An examination of local authority planning has shown that local government authorities play a central role in the organisation and authorisation of licensing events on a global scale (Raj & Musgrave, 2009; NSW Government, 2011; IRO, 2013; Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2014). This local authority function seems to be critical in planning for event management. This may be due to local authorities having a legal remit to license events and ensure they are conducted in a way that is safe for event stakeholders (Government of Western Australia, 2009; NSW Government, 2011; Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2010). In addition to this, local authorities play a crucial role as policy makers in providing policies and guidelines for a sustainable event industry (UNEP, 2005). As such, the focus on planning policies and guidelines within this study centers on examining the guidance and best practice advice provided within such local authority planning systems for implementing responsible and sustainable events. However polices and guidelines specifically for event management are often unavailable within local authorities at a national or international level. Therefore this study aims to identify the availability and provision of local authority planning policies and guidelines for event management in Ireland.

The provision of local authority planning policies and guidelines to sustainably administer and guide the process of event management seems more important now than ever before. This may be as a result of the global increase in the provision of festivals and events and a realization of using events of varying types to generate benefits and impacts (Raj & Musgrave, 2009; Shipway & Fyall, 2012; Page & Connell, 2012; Getz, 2013; Ziakas, 2014). Event industries on a global scale have become valuable counterparts of worldwide tourism industries. There are on average 5-6 million regularly occurring festivals and events held throughout the world each year. This global popularity is estimated to have an economic impact that reaches

more than $1 trillion (International Festival and Event Association, 2009). This is significant considering the global development and maturity of the event industry has resulted in events becoming the fastest growing type of tourism attraction (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Taylor & Shanka, 2002; Thrane, 2002; Gursoy, Kim & Uysal, 2004; Cibinskiene, 2012). As a result they now figure prominently in the development and marketing plans of most destinations (Getz, 2007). For this reason, governments are using events as an integral part of their policies for regional development (Whitford, 2009) and are subsequently supporting and promoting events as part of their strategy for economic development, nation building and destination marketing (Hall, 1992; Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell, 2012; Finkel, McGillivray, McPherson & Robinson, 2013). Aside from the economic development events bring to respective regions, they also contribute positively to social and environmental developments in host regions by facilitating growth and social cohesion, enhancing cultural identity and encouraging environmental conservation (Shanka & Alamiyo, 2004; Berneman & Petit, 2005; Léime & O'Shea, 2008; Ruhanen & Whitford, 2011; Richards, 2014) to mention a few. However there is also a growing recognition of the existence of negative economic, social and environmental impacts that are often overlooked. These negative consequences include a loss of authenticity, access issues, crime generation, resource consumption, pollution, land degradation and impacts to ecological systems (Fredaline, Deery & Jago, 2006; UNEP, 2007; Hornsby, 2011; Holmes, Hughes, Mair & Carlsen, 2015). As a result of this, the need to plan for and manage such potential negative impacts is essential and requires planning that is sustainable. Similarly, the need to maintain event growth and further develop and advance event industries requires planning that maximises tourisms positive contributions while minimising tourism costs (Global Sustainable Tourism Council, 2013). For this reason, the adoption, utilization and implementation of sustainability tools and indicators within local authority planning mechanisms such as policies and guidelines integrated into relevant legislation can facilitate the responsibility and sustainability of long lasting event industries.

Thus, this baseline comparative assessment sets forth to address the current state of authority driven planning for event management in Ireland. It examines and assesses the integration of sustainability indicators within local authority planning systems in Ireland. As well as this, it highlights the need for solutions and regulated planning tools to be implemented within local government at global, national and local level to facilitate the process of event management, suitable and applicable to events of all types, size and scale. This study presents a contribution to knowledge by providing an insight into the necessity of planning for event management on a global scale and the current level of Local Authority planning provision for event management in Ireland.

## The role of Local Authorities in Planning for Event Management

The role local government authorities play in planning for event management can vary on a global scale. Research has shown that the support of local authorities seems to be crucial in hosting events worldwide (Eardley & Vincent, 2011; NSW Government, 2011; Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government, 2012), so much so that local authorities around the developed world have a legal responsibility to ensure events are conducted and operated in a way that is safe for event stakeholders (Government of Western Australia, 2009; Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2010; NSW Government, 2011). However, Dickenson & Arcodia (2010) claim that no investigation has been conducted into how professional associations including local government provide information on sustainable events and how to encourage event operations to become more sustainable. This may explain the lack of information on local authority sustainable planning systems on a global level for event management. Yet, governments realise the potential of events to generate positive benefits (Mair & Whitford, 2013) and have realised the importance of using events within their region to achieve a diverse range of economic, environmental and social objectives (Wood, 2005). These objectives include combating social exclusion and poverty, maximising attractiveness of key locations, maximising economic activity and performance, protecting and enhancing the environment through principles of sustainable development and promoting and supporting economic development. Alongside the positive benefits events bring to a region, they also bring negative social, economic and environmental impacts including land degradation, waste and pollution, increased resource demands, interruption of normal business, and inflated price of products and services (Raj & Musgrave, 2009). Therefore in order to achieve and sustain such positive objectives and minimise negative consequences requires a comprehensive and robust local authority planning approach, which adopts and promotes the use of policies and guidelines. This can effectively support and facilitate the future development of event industries in a sustainable manner both internationally and nationally in Ireland.

The relationship between Local Authorities and planning for event management can be quite complex globally. The strategic preparation of an event as well as the planning and coordination for the execution of the event require professional handling in order to guarantee the optimal interplay between all participants (Thomas, Hermes & Loos, 2008). For this reason, the necessity of facilitating the planning and coordination of an event through local authorities cannot be underestimated. Despite this, little attention has been paid to the way different levels of government collaborate and the quality of government arrangements in place before, during and after the event (Dredge et al, 2010), at an international level. Yet local government involvement is noted to be increasingly

vital to the provision of quality events (Pugh & Wood, 2004). As such Local Authorities in the developed world play a variety of roles in event management from event manager to consent authority (Carnegie, 1997). These functions in relation to local authority planning for event management can be viewed below in Table 1.

***Table 1***
***Local Authority functions in Planning for Event Management***

| |
|---|
| Licensing and Authorizing Events<br>Implementing state laws governing safety aspects of event planning and management |
| ➢ Road closures<br>➢ Grant temporary trading licenses to ensure<br>➢ Building Control to ensure safety for the erection of structures |
| Providing supporting materials and conditions to be complied with<br>Implementing sustainability in Event Management |
| ➢ Water supply and sewage<br>➢ Health and Welfare<br>➢ Waste Management and removal<br>➢ Resource Management |
| Developing Policies |
| Providing advice and guidance (Consultations) |

Source: adapted from: Thomas & Wood, 2004; Damster & Tassiopoulos, 2005; Event Scotland, 2006; NSW Government, 2011; DECLG, 2012; Bowdin, Allen, Harris, O'Toole, & McDonnell, 2012).

It is important to note that the above local authority functions for event management can vary worldwide and not all local government authorities implement the same planning process or functions. However a commonality of local authorities at an international level and a primary role local government authorities play in relation to event management around the developed world is licensing and authorising events. This is a legal requirement for local authorities throughout the developed world (Government of Western Australia, 2009; NSW Government, 2011; Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2010; South African Consulate General, 2013; Government of British Columbia; 2015). Event licensing ensures events are planned in a way that is safe for event stakeholders as it outlines the regulations and delivery of services for the event development process (Damster & Tassiopoulos, 2005). It also allows for the application and implementation of state laws governing the safe implementation of various aspects of events. Such aspects include the handling of food, sale of liquor, erection of temporary structures and road closures to mention a few. However licensing events and issuing permits for hosting events is dependent on a number of variables including audience size, event type and scale. On a global scale, licensing dependent on crowd size varies with some local authorities outlining statutory obligations to license events where the audience exceeds 3000 spectators whereas in Ireland licensing is required for events exceeding 4999 spectators with the exception of sporting events. However licensing events on a global scale should apply to all events irrespective of type, size and scale since any gathering of people can generate safety concerns and impacts such as overcrowding,

increased waste, land degradation, increased crime levels, vandalism and noise, and resident exodus (Raj & Musgrave, 2009). The lack of planning processes for event licensing taking into consideration overcrowding for example, can create devastating safety concerns and incidents. Therefore it seems tighter planning systems, rules and regulations are required for promoters and event organisations when applying for event licenses. Additionally the issue of unlicensed events and gatherings of people occur on a global scale, which potentially can create many safety concerns, yet these informal activities are not documented or effectively planned. Therefore to manage event licensing and prohibit the occurrence of unlicensed events requires an improved integrated development approach to be implemented and regulated within local authorities globally and nationally.

Additionally local authorities generally provide supporting materials and conditions that must be complied with to ensure that facilities are designed, built and operated in ways that minimise harm (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). This is applicable in both an international and national context since supporting materials and conditions contain guidelines outlining the procedures for event safety, erection of structures, road closures, health and welfare, and the application of temporary trading licenses at events to mention a few. The provision of supporting materials, documentation and legislative compliance conditions are necessary to support event organisations and provide assurance in planning concerns (CCMA, 2012). Subsequently the provision of supporting materials such as planning guidelines can promote best practice at every stage in the development management process (Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government, 2007) and can assist with the effective management of events. As such, the provision of supporting materials, documentation and compliance conditions cannot be underestimated and are essential. For this reason, it should be within the local authorities remit to determine a comprehensive planning approach to the distribution of event licensing and documentation provision on a global scale. Thus aiding the development of a planning process with effective and sustainable supporting materials, guidelines and compliance conditions for event management.

Subsequent to this local authorities around the developed world now have a responsibility to ensure events are conducted in a way that is sustainable, taking into consideration economic, socio-cultural and environmental developments (NSW Government, 2011; UNEP, 2012; DECLG, 2014). This may be due to events requiring great amounts of resources such as water and energy. As such, the areas of waste, water, air, transport, food and energy can impact the use of resources, cause pollution and land degradation, contribute to carbon emissions and affect the longevity and quality of the event (Raj & Musgrave, 2009; David, 2009; Jones, 2014). Local authorities throughout the developed world have a function in resource management, waste management and removal, water supply and sewage and health

and welfare, which is significant in achieving sustainability in event planning to manage the impacts that can generate. For this reason, the necessity of planning for and implementing sustainability in the event industry worldwide is vital. In fact the responsibility of ensuring events are planned in a safe and sustainable manner falls to a number of departments within local authorities, which have a close association with the event planning process. These departments include the fire department, planning department, building control and environmental services (Event Scotland, 2006; NSW Government, 2011). They are responsible for a spectrum of services, including planning, building control, developing infrastructure, car parks, signage, roads and road closures, environmental protection, water supply and sewage, waste management, agriculture, health, welfare, recreation facilities and amenities (Council of Europe, 2000; Shone & Parry, 2004; LGMA, 2012; Bowdin et al, 2012). The management of each of these services and resources is detrimental to the quality and health of the environment, society and the economy as well as to the quality of the event. Conversely it has been noted that public sector departments responsible for event provision tend to have limited resources in terms of funding, time and staff expertise (Thomas & Wood, 2004; Wood, 2009; Health Service Executive, 2014). Yet the provision of staff and funding within local authorities for event planning is necessary to support and guide the process of planning for event management. For this reason, the provision of staff, allocation of funding and development of proactive sustainable planning systems for event management implemented within international and national legislation can facilitate efficient planning for successful event industries both at an international and national level in Ireland. It may also safeguard the protection of a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable event industry. Therefore maintaining the quality of the event tourism product.

Another local authority function in planning for event management includes developing and implementing policies and strategies for the development of respective regions in national and international development plans. The necessity of providing policies outlining strategies for the development of events in respective regions cannot be underestimated. At a national level in Ireland, the provision and implementation of local authority policies are legally required in County Development plans (CDP's) under the planning and development act 2000 and 2010. This act ensures the impacts and issues effecting tourism related developments such as events are addressed (DEHLG, 2010). Similarly the development of policies outlining the development for other tourism and event locations is also a requirement at an international level. Development plans and strategies outline planning objectives for the sustainable development of respective regions. They also outline a plan of guidance and procedures for the development of a region to prioritise various economic, socio-cultural and environmental developments of the region. This supports the importance of integrating sustainable planning policies

for event management since events have become critical aspects in the development and economic regeneration of many communities throughout the world. Therefore the necessity of integrating guidelines and policies within local authorities for event management cannot be underestimated and may be beneficial for local authorities at a global level. This would be key in facilitating sustainability in event industries since they can provide valuable guidance on how to achieve sustainability in event management. For this reason, the central role events play in national and international developments require the formation of polices and guidelines to facilitate the development and advancement of the event industry and also to facilitate planning and development for a sustainable and high quality event industry.

Local authorities also provide general advice and guidance (Office of the Ombudsman, 2013), which is essential in clarifying event managers concerns. Providing advice, guidance and a consultation process together with supporting materials containing information to assist in the interpretation of prescribed legislation is fundamental in planning for event management. As such it is a responsibility of local authorities to decide on criteria for the provision of planning for event management, which details the information to be provided by applicants, the level of assessment and the level of consultation required (Health Service Executive, 2014). This will provide local authorities with the ability to set best practice standards in the role they play in event planning. Thus by adopting international best practice tools and indicators to aid sustainability in planning for event management, local authorities may facilitate a transition towards a sustainably viable and responsible event industry both internationally and nationally.

## Tools and Indicators to aid Sustainability in Planning for Event Management

Having recognised the importance of tourism activities such as events and the need to plan sustainably for such tourism activities, a number of sustainable planning and management tools and indicator systems have been developed. These tools were developed to aid planners in achieving a sustainably viable event industry. These regulatory instruments include the UNEP/UNWTO 12 aims of sustainable tourism (2005), the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (2013), the European Tourism Indicator System (2013) and the DIT ACHIEV model of sustainable Tourism and event management (2008). They were developed as solutions to the problems and issues associated with planning for tourism. Yet these tools can be adopted and utilised to achieve desirable levels of sustainability for event management around the world. The UNEP/UNWTO 12 aims of sustainable tourism are a set of aims used in tourism planning, management and monitoring processes which provide accurate results for decision makers (UNWTO & Ministry of Tourism and Environment, 2007). They were initially developed to provide governments with guidance and

a framework for the development of policies for sustainable tourism and tourism activities (UNEP/UNWTO, 2005). These aims are based around two principles. Firstly it minimises the negative impacts on society, the economy and the environment. Secondly, it maximises tourisms positive contribution to local economies and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage as well as the quality of life of hosts and visitors (UNEP, 2005). The GSTC is a tool for managing sustainability in tourism. It strives to achieve best practice in sustainable tourism through the adoption of universal sustainable tourism principles. The indicators from this tool are guiding principles for measuring and monitoring sustainability, which offers an opportunity to reduce and mitigate negative consequences, which may occur. The European Tourism Indicator System also measures performance and monitors results while enhancing sustainability performance (EC, 2015). It identifies areas for improving and managing risks effectively and is based on a concept of shared responsibility and the principles of joint decision-making (EC, 2015; Torres-Delgado & Palomeque, 2014). It encourages tourism development that balances economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts while ensuring the longevity of the tourism industry. Therefore it can be beneficial to local authorities in getting improved data for informed decision making and establishing an intelligent approach to planning for sustainability in event management. The DIT ACHIEV model of sustainable tourism indicators, which can be adapted for sustainable event management is a management system developed for an Irish context (Griffin, 2009). It focuses on ensuring a sustainable future for Irish tourism. It recognises that the tourism industry and its counterparts are an important source of revenue, investment and employment throughout Ireland. According to Griffin (2009) the implementation of sustainable development principles in the events industry and the integration of indictors from the DIT AVHIEV model can assist in the development of an overall policy/plan for the management of sustainable events, however it requires local administration. Overall these four tools are useful and reliable tools for policy makers as they offer an opportunity to measure, monitor and assess the impacts of events. More specifically they were designed to facilitate government agencies and tourism managers in making informed decisions about future developments. Therefore the consideration and implementation of such tools in event management processes within relevant international and national legislation for event management can aid in the sustainable development of event industries worldwide. It can also aid in maximizing the positive contributions of events and safeguarding against the negative consequences events may generate. Hence, for the purpose of this study, the content analysis tool integrated the above tools and indicator sets to assess which local authorities, if any adopted or were compliant with such management systems in national local authority planning policies and guidelines in Ireland.

## Research Method

This nationwide baseline comparative analysis involved extensive data collection and investigation into Local Authority planning provisions, guidelines and policies for event management in the Republic of Ireland. In particular, this study aims to determine the provision of guidelines, policies, and event personnel for administering the process of event management in local authorities. As well as this, it focuses on examining the integration of sustainability tools and indicators for planning and managing events within Irish local authority event planning guidelines and policies. Local authorities in the Republic of Ireland have a legal remit to license events and ensure events are conducted in a way that is safe for event stakeholders under the licensing at outdoor event regulations 2001. To effectively ensure events are produced in a safe manner requires guidance from local authorities through planning systems such as supporting materials like guidelines, policies and consultations with designated local authority event personnel. Similarly, local authorities in Ireland have a legal remit under the planning and development act 2000 and 2010 to plan for economic, environmental and socio-cultural developments in their respective regions. This is achieved through the development and implementation of County Development Plans (CDP's). As such the importance of providing planning guidelines and policies within CDP's in local authorities nationwide to guide the process of event management cannot be underestimated. This is significant considering the event industry in Ireland is of national and local importance to both the Irish economy and society. It generates up to €450m to the Irish economy (Fáilte Ireland, 2013) and generates in excess of two million accommodation bed nights from the domestic market alone annually. Their significance attracts 300,000 overseas holidaymakers each year (Fáilte Ireland, 2014). For this reason the importance of planning sustainably and providing sustainable planning systems to maintain this Irish growth is fundamental to an event industries longevity and success.

In order to determine the level of local authority planning provision of policies and guidelines for event management, it was necessary to identify the documents to assess for the purpose of this study. The type of documents chosen for analysis analysed all 32 local authority event management-planning guidelines. Furthermore it incorporated all local authority County Development Plans (CDP's). CDP's are intended to provide a strategic framework and policy context for all planning decisions in respective regions (DEHLG, 2007). They set out strategies for sustainable development giving precedence to environmental, economic and socio-cultural considerations and objectives. Specifically the findings from this study provided a valuable insight into the provision of policies and guidelines for event management by local authorities and the integration of sustainability indicators within such planning processes in Ireland. In order to facilitate an examination

into the level of planning provided for event management in Ireland by local authorities, criteria were compiled which were then used to develop two assessment frameworks "Local Authority provision of planning guidelines and policies" and " Local Authority event planning guideline and policy compliance" were developed. The criteria within these frameworks incorporated the principle guidelines, tools and indicator systems from international best practice including the UNWTO/UNEP aims of sustainable tourism (2005), the DIT ACHIEV model of sustainable tourism indicators (2007), the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (2013) and the European Tourism Indicator System (2013). This enabled an assessment and examination of the specific level of local authority planning provided in Ireland and the degree of sustainability incorporated within the policies and guidelines.

**Research Instrument**

To achieve the aim of this research a content analysis approach was applied to assess and highlight the variations and gaps on the level of local authority provision of planning guidelines and policies for event management in Ireland. This approach also assessed the integration of sustainability tools and indicators within local authority policies and guidelines. The content analysis approach was the primary quantitative analysis tool utilised in this study as it represents quantification on a limited scale and is still anchored in the quantitative research paradigm. This approach may be considered a kind of reliability of the measures and a validation of eventual findings (Sellitz, Jahoda, Deutsch & Cook, 1967). Therefore quantification in content analysis tends to emphasise the procedures of analysis (Berg, 2007). Additionally quantitative research tools take an analytical approach to understand a number of controlled variables. Therefore tourism researchers are increasingly using content analysis as a means of critical investigation when faced with textual forms of data like written documents such as tourism strategies, policies and guidelines. As such this approach was considered ideal in examining the level of local authority planning provisions as it allowed for a valuable cross representation of results in relation to the provision of policies and guidelines and the integration of sustainability tools within such policies and guidelines for event management in Ireland. However this approach is not without its limitations. A content analysis approach is a purely descriptive method and can struggle to provide explanations for particular findings (Rose, Spinks & Canhoto, 2015). The data analysis from the quantitative content analysis is also limited by the availability of document material, which is necessary to conduct a content analysis. This was an issue with this research since the availability of documents in local authorities was limited. As well as this, the content analysis approach can lead to questions about data reliability and validity of the data coding process (Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012). Yet, this approach is flexible and can cope

with large quantities of data therefore was beneficial for the purpose of this research. It can also be used to investigate a topic longitudinally. Therefore this research approach would perhaps benefit from other approaches in future, in particular from qualitative interviews in phase 2 of the research.

In order to facilitate the constant comparison throughout the research process and to highlight the variations between local authorities, data was inputted into content analysis tools. This particular approach enriched the research in technical communication by identifying the frequency of themes and patterns. It can be applied to all kinds of written texts (Rose, Spinks & Canhoto, 2015) therefore it was particularly useful in examining local authority planning processes, guidelines and policies. The analysis within the content analysis approach centered on 39 criteria based on existing theory and incorporated various models, tools and indicators developed by industry which have been identified above. These tools can be applied to achieve desirable levels of sustainability when planning for event management. The data from each category was then analysed and discussed in light of international literature. The criteria assessed within the content analysis tool are outlined below in Table 2.

Table 2
Criteria for assessing LA planning provision of guidelines and policies for Event Management

| **Table 2** |
|---|
| *Criteria for assessing LA planning provision of guidelines and policies for Event Management* |

| **Assessment Criteria** |
|---|
| Local Authority events financially supported (2013 figures) |
| Local Authority event planning guidelines provided |
| Year of guideline publication |
| Local Authority event manager provided |
| Local Authority online planning system provided |
| Local Authority event policy provision in County Development Plan (planning and development act 2000 & 2010) |
| **Local Authority event planning guidelines and policies compliant with legislation and Best Practice Standards:** |
| Planning and Development act 2000 & 2010 |
| Planning and Development act (licensing at outdoor events) regulations 2001 |
| **Local Authority event planning guidelines and policies compliant with GSTC 2013** |
| ➢ Demonstrate effective sustainable management |
| ➢ Maximise economic benefits to the host community and minimise negative impacts |
| ➢ Maximise benefits to communities, visitors and culture and minimise negative impacts |
| ➢ Maximise benefits to the environment and minimise negative impacts |
| **Local Authority event planning guidelines and policies compliant with ETIS 2013** |
| ➢ Destination management |
| ➢ Economic value |
| ➢ Social and cultural impacts |
| ➢ Environmental impacts |
| **Local Authority event planning guidelines and policies compliant with the DIT ACHIEV Model 2007** |
| ➢ Heritage |
| ➢ Infrastructure |
| ➢ Enterprise |
| ➢ Communities |
| ➢ Visitors |
| ➢ Administration |

| **Local Authority event planning guidelines and policies compliant with UNWTO 12 aims of sustainable tourism 2005** |
|---|
| ➢ Economic Viability |
| ➢ Local Prosperity |
| ➢ Employment Quality |
| ➢ Social Equity |
| ➢ Local Control |
| ➢ Visitor fulfillment |
| ➢ Community Wellbeing |
| ➢ Cultural Richness |
| ➢ Physical Integrity |
| ➢ Biological Diversity |
| ➢ Resource Efficiency |
| ➢ Environmental Purity |

Source: adapted from (UNEP/UNWTO, 2005; Fitzgerald, Flanagan, Griffin, Morrissey & Kennedy-Burke, 2008; GSTC, 2013; EC, 2013; Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2015).

Utilising the content analysis investigative tool to assess the above criteria was an effective and fitting way to accumulate the necessary data. The above variables are essential aspects necessary in the formation and implementation of sustainable guidelines and policies for event management not only in Ireland but worldwide. Therefore the use of the above criteria to assess local government authority planning provisions can also be applied in international cases and ideally should be given priority in the integration of local authority planning processes for event management at a global scale. Yet for the purpose of this study, an assessment of the integration of the above criteria in local authority planning provisions such as guidelines and policies in the Republic of Ireland was the primary focus of this study. This approach allowed the authors to assess each individual local authority County Development Plan and event planning guideline for event management. The use of a content analysis approach to assess these variables allowed for the constant comparison of results throughout the research process. The results are discussed in light of relevant literature. In order to provide valid results the authors carefully considered the sampling techniques for this study.

## Sampling and Selection

To achieve comparative nationwide perspectives on the national levels of planning provided for event management by local authorities, the authors identified and analysed 32 local authorities and city councils in the Republic of Ireland using the above criteria. The current system of local government in the Republic of Ireland comprises of 31 local authorities in total. There are 26 local authorities who are responsible for local government in twenty-four geographical counties including the County of Dublin. However County Dublin has 3 Local Authorities – South Dublin County Council, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and Fingal County Council. In addition to this, there are 2 City and County Councils who are

responsible for local government in Limerick (Limerick City and County Council) and Waterford (Waterford City and County Council). Also there are three City Councils who are responsible for local government in the cities of Dublin, Cork and Galway. This study focuses on the 31 local authorities in the Republic of Ireland, however, one Local Authority "Tipperary" is separated into "Tipperary North" and "Tipperary South". Therefore 32 local authorities are assessed in total giving a complete population of all local authorities and City Councils in the Republic of Ireland. The sample was chosen carefully to allow for a constant comparison and analysis of local authority planning provisions.

**Data Analysis**

To facilitate the constant comparison of results throughout the research process and to highlight the variations and gaps between local authorities, data was inputted into content analysis tools. This highlighted the relationship between local authority planning and the integration of sustainability tools and indicators in policy and guideline implementation in Ireland. This structured approach allowed the authors to examine and clearly identify and illustrate the level of planning provided by local authorities in terms of planning guidelines and policies for event management. This flexible and unobtrusive approach was also used to determine the degree of recurring data throughout the research analysis process. The analysis primarily centered on a range of criteria already outlined and assessed their incorporation within local authority planning documents such as event management planning guidelines and policies for event management. The provision of planning guidelines for event management are crucial in providing guidance for event organisers and local authorities in planning for a responsible event industry. Planning guidelines highlight the key areas of consideration essential in planning for event management. The research then focuses on the provision of policies for event management within County Development Plans (CDP's). Therefore it is necessary that sustainable best practice indicators be considered and integrated within such polices and guidelines to aid the development of responsible and sustainable event industries. As such, the importance of developing policies in CDP's and guidelines detailing essential socio-cultural, economic and environmental sustainability considerations for event management cannot be underestimated. The analysis of findings from the content analysis approach provided a valuable insight into the provision of guidelines and polices taking into consideration sustainability variables within planning documents for event management by local authorities. The comparison of results allowed the authors to clearly identify and illustrate the levels of planning provided by local authorities for event management in Ireland under the various categories

assessed. The data generated was inserted into the analyses matrix to assess the Local Authority provision of planning for event management. An example matrix of the content analysis framework is illustrated and explained below.

Table 3
Example of matrix from content analysis framework

| Local Authority (LA) Provision of Planning Guidelines (G) and Policies (P) for Event Management | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criteria assessed for LA Planning | CW | CN | CE | CK | Cc | DL | D | SD | Dr | F | G | Gc | KE | KK | KY | LS | LM | LK | LD | L | MH | MO | MN | O | R | S | Ts | Tn | WD | WH | WX | W W |
| LA events financially supported (2013) | 33 | 47 | 64 | 34 | 22 | 41 | 22 | 12 | 26 | 23 | 62 | 29 | 32 | 27 | 46 | 20 | 29 | 58 | 31 | 36 | 35 | 112 | 29 | 37 | 53 | 47 | 31 | 28 | 56 | 36 | 48 | 27 |
| LA Planning guidelines provided | | | | | | | x | | | | x | | | | | | | x | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Year of guideline publication | | | | | | | 12 | | | | 12 | | | | | | | 13 | | 13 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LA Event policy Provision in CDP | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Note: x – Local Authority provision made

The above table provides a brief outline of some of the findings. As can be seen above, the first and last letter of the County they represent abbreviates the local authorities displayed in the matrix. For example, "CW" abbreviates the first and last letter of County Carlow. Table 3 clearly highlights the comparison between each local authority and how local authorities varied on the categories assessed. For Example, County Carlow Local Authority (CW) financially supported 33 events in 2013 however they had not provided Local Authority event-planning guidelines for such events. As well as this, they did not develop or provide policies outlining the future development of the event industry within their County Development Plan. This lack of planning guidelines and policy provision may have implications for the way the event industry will be planned and managed in the future, which may be with little or thought given to sustainability or the need to plan for the maximization of benefits and the minimization of negative consequences. The further comparison of results is discussed further in detail in the context of current theory in the subsequent section.

**Results and Discussion**

The event sector is one of the fastest growing counterparts of tourism industries worldwide (Crompton & McKay, 1997). As such, adequate planning is required to ensure its sustainability. With this in mind, practical up to date planning systems, guidelines and policies are needed not only at national and local level but also at an international level to manage this process and facilitate sustainability in planning for event management. The focus of this study was to provide nationwide perspectives on the level of planning provided by local authorities for event management in Ireland. The content analysis approach applied to this study allowed the authors to firstly comparatively examine the provision of policies, guidelines and event personnel for guiding the event management process within local authorities (Table 4) and secondly, the incorporation of sustainability indicators within local

authority planning policies and guidelines (Table 5). To firstly determine the level of local authority planning provided in terms of policies and guidelines for event management, every local authority and city council in the Republic of Ireland was assessed. This determined which local authority, if any, provided guidelines and policies to plan sustainably for event management. The results from the provision of guidelines and policies by local authorities are illustrated in table 4, below.

Table 4 Local Authority event planning guideline and policy provision

| Local Authority (LA) Provision of Planning Guidelines (G) and Policies (P) for Event Management | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criteria assessed for LA Planning | CW | CN | CE | CK | Cc | DL | D | SD | Dr | F | G | Gc | KE | KK | KY | LS | LM | LK | LD | L | MH | MO | MN | O | R | S | Ts | Tn | W D | W H | WX | WW |
| LA events financially supported (2013) | 33 | 47 | 64 | 34 | 22 | 41 | 22 | 12 | 26 | 23 | 62 | 29 | 32 | 27 | 46 | 20 | 29 | 58 | 31 | 36 | 35 | 112 | 29 | 37 | 53 | 47 | 31 | 28 | 56 | 36 | 48 | 27 |
| LA Planning guidelines provided | | | | | | | x | | | | x | | | | | | | x | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Year of guideline publication | | | | | | | 12 | | | | 12 | | | | | | | 13 | | 13 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Local Authority event personnel in place | | | | | | | x | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LA Event policy Provision in CDP | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Analysis has highlighted the variation of results from the nationwide assessment of local authority planning provision of policies and guidelines for event management. In particular, the results have revealed the overall lack of planning provision within Irish local authorities. The variation of results illustrates that the provision of planning processes for event management have not been fully embraced by local authorities in Ireland. In relation to the provision of guidelines for event management, analysis revealed that just 4 out of 32 local authorities assessed, provided planning guidelines for event management in Ireland. This was an interesting and concerning observation considering the substantial increase in the provision of festivals and events throughout Ireland and considering local authorities are using events as catalysts for destination marketing, economic development and community builders I respective regions (Pugh & Wood, 2004; Raj, Walters, Rashid, 2009). Therefore the provision of planning processes and guidelines should be a priority in national legislative planning. Specifically planning guidelines can provide a baseline for incorporating and prioritizing significant aspects necessary in planning for event management and can ensure events are planned and organised in a responsible and safe manner, which cannot be underestimated. Of the local authorities that provided planning guidelines, they supplied information on a range of planning concerns including event safety, overcrowding and marketing communications. However no information outlined the importance of ensuring the longevity of event industries for future destination marketing and economic enhancement. Despite this, the planning guidelines provided, offered clarity on how to apply for an event license, the basic planning considerations for events and the requirements to comply with. Additionally the provision of event planning guidelines is quite recent (2012-2013), however their implementation in all local authorities is needed to encourage the operation of

event planning by local authorities. In particular it is important to keep guidelines up to date to comply with any changes in planning legislation. Consequently, the guidelines provided did not clarify the extent of planning required for various type, size and scale of events. However it has been noted that a possible reason for local authorities not considering the significance of the need to provide and implement planning guidelines for event management may be due to the increase in legislation and "red tape" (health and safety, licensing, fire safety, insurance, environmental health, waste management and traffic management) surrounding the event industry (Maguire & Hanrahan, 2016). Yet regardless of the regulations surrounding events the implementation of planning guidelines within local authorities is essential to facilitate a responsible and sustainable event sector. As such, a consistent statewide approach to event planning with comprehensive planning guidelines for events irrespective of size and type is incremental within local authorities in Ireland.

The authors then examined how many if any local authorities provided event personnel to provide clarity and guidance on event planning processes. The provision of event personnel in event planning is vital since local authorities have a common law duty of care towards persons involved with events. Therefore event management personnel within local authorities are required to ensure event safety procedures are followed and provide guidance for various incremental aspects of event management. This is significant in local authorities since they are legally obliged to license events. In fact, it has been noted that the implementation of a managerial system within local authorities can enable planning (Andersson, Getz & Mykletun, 2012). For this reason, local authority involvement in the planning process of event management is required for the coordination and conduct of an event. Subsequently there is now a mandatory requirement in Ireland for event promoters and managers to consult with relevant local authority event personnel prior to organising and hosting events (Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations, 2015). Analysis here has highlighted just two local authorities (Dublin City Council and Fingal County Council) provided a primary designated event planning-management position. This small percentage raises concern as to who fulfills this role within local authorities and what their background and expertise is. Arcodia and Reid (2004) conducted research, which identified the need for more fully professionalised events with staff that are well-educated and experienced professional event managers. However due to austerity measures implemented by government at national level to overcome the economic crisis effecting economies at a global scale, public sector funding in local authorities has been significantly reduced. As a result, the provision of a local authority budget to fund dedicated event roles or commit to maintaining events in the long term may not be possible. Conversely to address the challenges and concerns of event

management, event personnel are a necessity. As such it has been noted that working closely with stakeholders to generate innovative ideas and processes may generate new sources of financing (Quinn, 2013). Nevertheless it is essential for local authorities to provide designated event personnel to facilitate education and advancement of event management professionals working in the industry and to facilitate the development of sustainable planning for event management at a national and local level.

It was then necessary to assess the provision of policies within local authority County Development Plans. Planning for tourism and tourism activities are given priority in national legislation through the provision and implementation of CDP's. The County Development Plan is intended to provide a strategic framework and policy context for all local planning decisions. The plans set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the planning authority's region through the objectives included in the plan for a 6-year period. It also outlines the policies, strategies and objectives to achieve specific aims for regional development of tourism and events, housing, planning etc. The responsibility of CDP generation predominantly rests within local authorities across Ireland (DECLG, 2012). It has been noted that high quality development plans lie in the heart of a high quality planning system (DECLG, 2007). Therefore local authorities in Ireland have the potential to develop a more dynamic, objective and inclusive planning system to structure future development that meets wider economic, social and environmental objectives (DECLG, 2007), especially in the context of planning for event management. However a content analysis of Local Authority CDP's discovered no Local Authority had a dedicated section within the plan specifically for events in Ireland with the exception of Kilkenny who provided policies for events within their tourism policies. Thus it seems the importance of implementing event policies are not a priority in any CDP in Ireland. It is worth noting that if events are to be considered an important industry for the Irish economy; a sustainable detailed approach to their development is needed within CDP's. However to safeguard the longevity of the event industry policies should be adopted and implemented in CDP's by local authorities for event management in Ireland now that the event sector is an important component of the national tourism industry.

The authors subsequently assessed the compliance of guidelines and policies with relevant national legislation and the integration of tools and indicators within local authority planning policies and guidelines. These best practice tools and indicators have been identified and discussed in the literature and include the UNEP/UNWTO aims of sustainable tourism, the DIT ACHIEV model of sustainable tourism management, the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria and the European Tourism Indicator System. These tools and indicator systems can be applied to the event management context since events have become an integral element of

tourism industries worldwide. The integration of such sustainable indicators can be beneficial for government at local and national level since they have become a popular tool for measuring and monitoring the sustainable development of tourism related activities. In fact the United Nations World Tourism Organisation has been promoting the use of sustainable tourism indicators since the early 1990's as essential instruments for policy making planning and management procedures for destinations. As a result indicators have become the main recognised evaluation tool used to support sustainable tourism policy implementation (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Tanguay, Rajaonson & Therrien, 2011; Rajaonson & Tanguay, 2012). Thus having established the use of events in any given economy as increasingly valuable, it is important to improve its development in a sustainable manner to ensure the long-term success of the industry. Therefore adopting and utilising indicators in guideline and policy making for event management may facilitate sustainability in events and contribute to local authorities achieving its long-term social, environmental, economic and cultural leadership objectives. The results from assessing the integration of sustainability indicators within polices and guidelines are shown in table 5 below.

Table 5 Local Authority event planning guideline and policy compliance

| Local Authority (LA) Planning Provision of Guidelines (G) and Policies (P) for Event Management | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criteria assessed within LA guidelines | C W | CN | CE | CK | Cc | D L | D | S D | Dr | F | G | G c | K E | K K | K Y | LS | L M | LK | L D | L | MH | MO | MN | O | R | S | Ts | Tn | WD | W H | W X | W W |
| **Local Authorities compliant with legislation** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Planning and Development act 2000 & 2010 | | | | | | | x | | | | x | | | | | | | x | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Planning and Development licensing at outdoor event regulations 2001 | | | | | | | x | | | | x | | | | | | | x | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **G & P compliant with GSTC 2013** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrate effective sustainable management | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maximise economic benefits to the host community and minimise negative impacts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maximise benefits to communities, visitors and culture and minimise negative impacts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maximise benefits to the environment and minimise negative impacts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **G & P compliant with ETIS 2013** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Destination management | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Economic value | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social and cultural impacts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Environmental impacts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **G & P compliant with the DIT ACHIEV Model 2007** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Heritage | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Infrastructure | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Enterprise | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Communities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Visitors | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Administration | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **G & P compliant with UNWTO 12 aims of sustainable tourism 2005** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Economic Viability | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Local Prosperity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Employment Quality | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Equity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Local Control | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Visitor fulfillment | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Community Wellbeing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cultural Richness | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Physical Integrity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Biological Diversity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Resource Efficiency | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Environmental Purity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Source: adapted from (UNEP/UNWTO, 2005; Fitzgerald, Flanagan, Griffin, Morrissey & Kennedy-Burke, 2008; GSTC, 2013; EC, 2013; Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2015).

The relationship between local authority planning systems and their compliance with legislation and international best practice has highlighted that local authorities who provided guidelines and policies all acknowledged compliance with the planning and development act 2000 and 2010 and the planning and development licensing at outdoor events regulations 2001. The planning and development act 2000 and 2010 outlines the regulations for planning and development at a national level in Ireland while the planning and development licensing at outdoor event regulations 2001 highlights the preconditions and regulations for applying for and obtaining event licenses and permits. Compliance with such national legislation is essential for event organisations and local authorities to ensure events are conducted in a safe manner by abiding by relevant statutory requirements outlined in legislation. However it is important to note that while only 4 out of 32 local authorities acknowledged compliance with these acts, it is a legal requirement for all local authorities to abide by such statutory requirements in relation to planning for event management. With this in mind, it is essential to encourage local authorities nationwide to provide planning processes outlining compliance with planning systems and regulations in Ireland.

The integration of sustainable indicators from international best practice within local authority planning guidelines and policies was then assessed. Firstly, the incorporation of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria was assessed. The GSTC and related performance indicators have been recognised as tools for managing sustainability in tourism. They can be adopted as a guide to become more economically, environmentally, socially and culturally sustainable while focusing on maximising economic, environmental and socio-cultural benefits and minimising negative consequences. Therefore the GSTC would be beneficial in event planning processes to achieve a balance between the benefits and costs of such tourism activities. Results from the content analysis revealed no local authority integrated indictors from the GSTC best practice tool within event planning guidelines and policies. However the adoption of the GSTC by local authorities may be useful in achieving and demonstrating effective sustainable event management by incorporating important socio-cultural, environmental and economic considerations in national event planning processes. Following this the integration of indicators from the European Tourism Indicator System within local authority event guidelines and policies was assessed. Similar to the GSTC, the ETIS focuses on the protection of economic, environmental and socio-cultural values of tourism activities such as events. In fact they were developed to tackle social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges. Therefore implementing indicators from the ETIS within local authority planning processes provides an opportunity to measure performance and monitor results thereby enhancing and improving sustainability performance (EC, 2015). The examination revealed no local authority in Ireland integrated any indicators

from this tool. Nevertheless adopting and utilising the ETIS in planning processes for event management may be valuable in measuring performance in relation to sustainability thus promoting best practice in event management at a national scale.

The integration of indicators from the DIT ACHIEV model of sustainable tourism management, which has been suggested as a tool for sustainable event management was then assessed. This tool again focuses on indicators, which focus on heritage, communities, visitors, enterprise, infrastructure and administration. All aspects necessary in planning for event management. Yet no local authority planning guideline or policy was complaint with any of the variables from the DIT ACHIEV model. Considering this model has been developed specifically for the Irish setting and can be applied specifically to events, it is important to note that no local authority at a national level in Ireland has implemented it. However the adoption of this Irish integrated management approach could perhaps aid in the mitigation of negative impacts of events and maximise the positive impacts of events thus aiding a transition towards sustainability in event management nationally. Finally aims from the UNEP/UNWTO aims of sustainable tourism were assessed. This tool aims to engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making for future developments (UNEP, 2005). It also focuses on fulfilling the experiences of visitors while outlining the importance of protecting cultural richness and heritage, conserving resources and protecting biological diversity. Aside from this, it ensures the economic viability of the tourism activities. However again, no local authority has prioritised any of the aims from this tool within event planning guidelines or policies. Still it is a valuable tool for local authorities to integrate in planning processes for event management and therefore should be incorporated within national planning processes to encourage sustainable event planning and management.

The potential of these tools to contribute to the sustainable development, growth and advancement of the event industry is essential and thus should be incorporated in local authority planning processes. Likewise the implementation of such tools may be considered important blueprints for local authorities to utilise in conjunction with legislation in planning. In particular these tools and indicator systems have been essential instruments in tourism planning and management (UNWTO and Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, 2007). They can act as an early warning system to initiate improved planning and management strategies (Griffin et al, 2012). The usefulness of indicators for measuring progress can also stimulate a learning process to enhance the overall understanding of environmental and social problems, facilitate community capacity building and help in identifying sustainable development goals and sustainable management strategies (Miller & Twinning-Ward, 2005; Reed, Fraser & Dougill, 2006). Therefore indicators have been promoted as useful, reliable and as an easily comprehensible assessment and

communication tools for decision makers (OECD, 2003; UNWTO, 2004). With this in mind it may be important to develop and integrate guidelines and polices that meet such international best practice standards and act as a guide to become more environmentally, economically, culturally and socially sustainable in event planning and management. Hence local authorities in Ireland can benefit for adopting and utilising sustainable indicators in identifying potential problems and issues event activities may generate at local level. The lack of planning provisions suggests that local authorities have not realised that the use of sustainable indicators in policies and guidelines in planning for events, which can be a particularly useful and cost effective means of preventing irreversible impacts created as a result of hosting events. Overall this study has found that national planning provision of policies and guidelines for event management has a low adoption rate by local authorities yet local authorities are in an ideal position to set best practice in sustainable planning for event management. In essence it is clear that there is room for nationwide improvements in relation to local authority planning for event management. Hence the development of planning solutions such as guidelines and policies can act as a mechanism in regulating and managing the impacts and issues associated with events and can contribute to sustaining the sector and growing its potential in a responsible way.

## Conclusion

This paper has examined the complexity of the relationship between events and local authorities. More specifically this paper has examined the extent of planning provided nationwide by local authorities in the Republic of Ireland for event management. It raises the issue of the lack of planning provided by local authorities, which highlights the need for planning solutions for event management within local authorities. To investigate the planning provision by local authorities, a content analysis approach was employed. The results from this nationwide comparative analysis revealed the dearth of planning for event management in terms of the scarcity of guidelines, lack of policies and lack of implemented event personnel by local authorities. This clear lack of planning, guidance and support by local authorities highlights the difficulties event organisations, managers and promoters face when planning for event management. Yet in order to plan responsibly for event management and ensure events are organised and operated in a way that is safe commands the adoption, utilisation and implementation of guidelines, policies, event personnel and online planning systems within local authorities, to guide the process of event management. Therefore the realization of the need to integrate

such planning processes within local authorities has not been recognised by local authorities globally and nationally but is essential.

Subsequently analysis from local authority planning provision of guidelines and policies demonstrated that few local authority planning processes were compliant with national legislation such as the Planning and Development act 2000 and 2010 and the Planning and development act licensing at outdoor events regulations 2001. However in terms of assessing local authority planning guidelines and policies and the integration of sustainability indicators and aims from international best practice such as UNEP/UNWTO 12 aims of sustainable tourism, the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, the European Tourism Indicator System or the DIT ACHIEV Model, guidelines and policies were found not to reflect or be complaint with such sustainable tools. The lack of sustainability indicators in event planning processes prohibits sustainability in planning for event management. However these four tools offer an opportunity to monitor and manage the impacts of events while maximising benefits and minimising costs. Therefore it may be beneficial for guidelines and policies to reflect international best practice tools when planning for environmental, social and economical sustainability in event management. Thus the development and implementation of planning tools such as policies and guidelines which integrate sustainable indicators and aims can effectively and responsible facilitate a transition towards sustainability in the event sector at a national level for events irrespective of type or scale. This can also aid in the responsibility and longevity of event industries worldwide and in particular, Ireland.

In conclusion the growth and popularity of the event sector in Ireland and the impacts this growth may generate on the economy, society and environment calls for nationwide improvements in relation to planning sustainably for event management. The absence of event planning guidelines and policies with sustainability indicators within local authorities to deal with impacts and issues events may generate is a concern for the future longevity of the event industry. Therefore if the event sector is to be further developed and maintained, the development of polices and guidelines with integrated sustainability indicators within legislative regulations in local authorities can act as a mechanism to aid sustainability in event management. Likewise considering local authorities have a legal obligation in the area of planning enforcement and in particular granting permission for event licenses, a greater emphasis should be placed on providing comprehensive and robust guidelines and policies to support sustainable planning of event management not only in Ireland but worldwide. This paper facilitates an opportunity for future research in the area, which enables a longitudinal analysis.

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# A MODEL FOR THE TRANSITION TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN IRELAND

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## Abstract

*Tourism destinations depend upon complex development, planning, management and stakeholder involvement. The sustainable management of tourism requires consideration due to the contribution it makes to environmental, cultural/social and economic issues. However tourism destination management is not a straight forward process. Organisations tasked with developing tourism need to be aware of the sensitive issues which may affect the local community. This papers draws on previous doctoral research into both the demand and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. Additional analysis from research into the levels of sustainable management of tourism destinations in Ireland was also used to construct a model to help in the transition towards sustainable management of tourism destinations (SMTD). Future tourism policy making may be enhanced by the implementation of the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.*

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Management, Sustainable Management, Destination Management, Ireland*

## Introduction

Tourism planning certainly holds the key to the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The tourism literature contains a widespread discussion of sustainability. However there has been little connection to sustainability issues or approaches in tourism planning models (Moscardo, 2011). Planning by the Local Authorities is necessary to consider the interaction between impacts (Schianetz, Kavanagh and Lockington, 2007). Consequently, it was emphasised by Koeman, Worboys, De Lacy, Scott, and Lipman (2002:319) that: "travel and tourism destinations are an appropriate scale for considering sustainable tourism

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management, planning and development". For the purpose of this study and the subsequent development of the Sustainable Management of Tourism Destinations (SMTD) model, it is necessary to have a connection to both tourism planning and sustainability issues with an ideological commitment approach conforming to Hall's (1970:4) definition that: "planning is concerned with anticipating and regulating change in a system to promote orderly development so as to increase social, economic and environmental benefits. Planning is an ordered sequence of operations". At this early stage in 1970 it was recognised the need to have orderly development of the social, economic and environmental benefits. Gunn spoke of how these could be obtained in 1988 (1988:238) as: "planning as a concept of viewing the future and dealing with anticipated consequences is the only way that tourisms advantages can be obtained". Therefore, fundamental to strategic planning is a vision of what the future should be in order to define the appropriate steps for action as well as a strategy to enable a destination to achieve the vision (Laws, 1995). To make tourism more sustainable, the impacts and needs of tourism have to be taken into account in its planning (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005). Therefore the development of a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations may be more effective if mapped upon a specific planning process.

The model utilised in this study (Figure 2) was developed with the intent to assist destinations in the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism at destination level. It is a model that has international significance given its strong theoretical basis on which it was built, conforming to (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012; ETIS, 2013) as well as the empirical data it integrated from research conducted in Ireland. Realistic implementation was also taken into consideration so that it may be integrated within the legal binding process under Irish planning guidelines (2007), namely the County Development Plan (CDP). The model will assist in the management of tourism destinations in Ireland and could potentially be adapted for Pan-European use.

However, it is important to recognise that there are restricted resources in Ireland to fuel the SMTD. Taking this into consideration, this critical contextualisation (Figure 1) outlines where the model for the transition towards the SMTD fits within the destination, how the model will be implemented, identifies who does what, where the funding will come from and how tourism stakeholder participation is included within the process. As such it can be gathered that the Local Authority is best placed to act as the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) to lead and co-ordinate the SMTD.

The role of the DMO is to appoint and empower a destination manager to lead the SMTD. A destination manager outside of the Local Authority structure could be criticised as being relatively powerless and reliant on the Local Authority planners and management for many of the SMTD decisions. The destination manager employed as a Local Authority manager will enable the position to be

empowered legally. This will be obtained through their senior advisory role working with key decision makers over the Local Authority functions as they sanction the licensing of events, permits, planning permission, and health and safety.

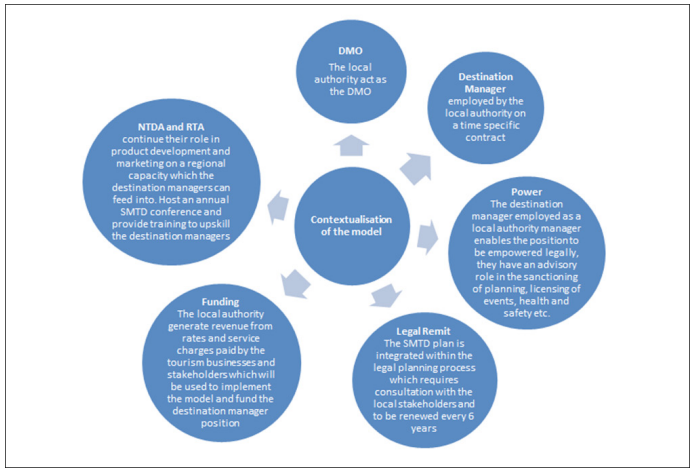


**Fig 1 Contextualisation of the model within Ireland at county level**

**In order to ensure the model is complied with in Ireland, it could be criticised for not having some form of a statutory obligation. As it is not possible to draw up new legislation for this model, it has been superimposed into a Local Authority legal required county planning process. Therefore, the model is designed to provide an integrated management approach within the legal binding process under Irish planning law (2007), the County Development Plan (CDP). In compliance with the planning law, the destination manager must consult with the local stakeholders throughout the formulation and implementation of the SMTD plan. The SMTD plan is integrated within the legally binding CDP which is renewed every six years. A possible weakness here would be the six year term as a shorter term may be more adaptable to macro changes. However, this is traded off to secure the SMTD within the legal framework.**

**Funding may be a challenging task to implement the model and to fund the destination manager position with an attractive salary. However, a funding stream already exists from the rates and service charges that the tourism businesses and stakeholders pay to the Local Authority. The use of this funding for the SMTD and a professional position salary will provide the tourism stakeholders with value for money while ensuring they buy into the process as they are literally paying for it.**

**Similarly, it is important that Failte Ireland (NTDA) and Regional Tourism Authorities (RTA) maintain their role and this is supported by the model. The NTDA and RTA continue their role in product marketing and development to**

**ensure seamless management at a national and regional level. As the destination managers are under a performance based review, the NTDA will facilitate annual training and up skilling of the county destination managers. The NTDA will continue to monitor the management and associate plans to align the nationwide management efforts. The stages of the model will be discussed in further detail.**

## Methodology

Traditionally the tourism domain has adhered to the master paradigm of quantitative research. This was based on the opinion that an economically driven industry requires statistical sophistication as a necessary condition for progress (Reid and Andereck, 1989; Riley and Love, 2000). This paper forms part of a Fáilte Ireland (NTDA) funded doctoral research thesis focusing on the sustainable management of tourism destinations in Ireland. Results here were instrumental in identifying any significant areas needed for consideration when managing tourism sustainably. As a result, the authors developed a model to aid tourism managers in the transition toward the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

Previous research into both the demand and supply of sustainable tourism in County Clare (Conaghan, Hanrahan and McLoughlin, 2015ab) provided the authors with new material and understanding on sustainable management of tourism in Ireland. Both these studies utilised electronic mail surveys in order to gather the views of both holidaymakers and local tourism businesses. Surveys are a popular research method for investigating attitudes and opinions (Denscombe, 2007; Connolly, 2008). According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachinias, (1996) and later Miller (2001) self-administered surveys are inexpensive, quick to administer and provide a good opportunity to obtain the largest possible response from a limited time and financial budget. There were a total of 4740 holidaymakers email addresses collected. This took place over a ten day period in high season of late August through to early September 2013. For the tourism business survey, the businesses email addresses were obtained from the NTDA master database. The survey was emailed to 2360 of the 2847 tourism businesses operating in Ireland that were on the Fáilte Ireland master database. This accounted for approximately 15% of the total tourism businesses in the country.

Also, this research utilised the results of a content analysis performed on County Clare's tourism management organisations operations, strategies and plans. This was done in order to examine the sustainable management of tourism in this area. This particular methodological approach involved a complete population whereby all the current strategies and plans available for the management of tourism in Clare were carefully examined. As such this procedure yielded a high success rate. There was however, some difficulty in obtaining certain strategies and plans. There can be several reasons for this, such as some management

reports were not available at the time etc. The content analysis was analysed and discussed in the context of current international literature. Data was then connected to the results of the responses from the key stakeholder interviews.

The aim of qualitative research here was to gain an understanding into the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare. The interview approach facilitated the depth of inquiry required, for example; it contained open-ended questions, allowing the interviewee to elaborate on their particular point of interest. The advantage of this style of interview is its flexibility. This helps to ensure the interview unfolds in a conversational manner, while offering both participants the chance to explore issues they feel important (Clifford and Valentine, 2003; Skinner, 2006). The initial source of stakeholders was selected through those who co-operate with the RTA of the study area. Some were chosen as a result of their expert knowledge on the subject of tourism management. This was beneficial as there was no need to explain various aspects and concepts although occasionally clarification had to be made.

## A model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations

Much of the model approach utilised in this study is evolutionary, that is, it was built upon models already present in addition to current theory, criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of tourism (Acerenza, 1985; Inskeep, 1991; Pearce, Morrison and Rutledge, 1998; Jamieson, 1999; Swarbrooke, 2000; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Australian Government, 2004; UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Jamieson, 2006; UNWTO, 2006; Tourism Queensland, 2008; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Ladeiras, Mota and Costa, 2010; Moscardo, 2011; Rieder, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012; GSTC, 2012; EC, 2013). For the functionality of the model, it has been split into two distinguishable stages. Each of these stages and components of this model are connected to the theory and data generated from previous studies focusing on sustainable management in Ireland (Conaghan, Hanrahan and McLoughlin, 2015ab). Stage one is a process where the transition to the SMTD is considered. Stage two is a cycle for the SMTD. To better appreciate the model, each stage needs to be discussed; however, it is first necessary to discuss the contextualisation of the model within Ireland at county level.

### Stage One: Decision to consider the transition to the SMTD (Steps 1-6)

Stage one of the model is a six step process. The steps will guide the decision whether or not to commence the transition to the SMTD. The steps of each section are labelled on the right hand side of each box in the model (Figure 2). These are discussed in chronological order.

**Step 1: Decision to consider the transition to the sustainable management of tourism destinations**

The decision to consider a transition to the SMTD begins by identifying the key stakeholders, establishing a destination development group and partnerships (Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; European Commission, 2013). An initial consultation among the industry and stakeholders is essential to consider the transition to the SMTD. It is outlined that stakeholder inclusion is important for the development of tourism in a sustainable manner (Ap, 1992; Gunn, 1994; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Gursoy, Jurowski and Uysal, 2002; Andriotis, 2005; Byrd, Cardenas and Dregalla 2009). Ideally, it would be best if this process was initiated, funded and co-ordinated by the NTDA. This would demonstrate a national commitment to the SMTD for all regions and ensure a funding stream to facilitate the process. It is important to note that some destinations will not want any form of tourism even if sustainable and that this stakeholder opinion must be respected.

**Step 2: Destination parameter**

A clearly defined tourism destination parameter is vital for the SMTD. The need to define the parameter was highlighted by previous research (Conaghan et al, 2015ab). A formal definition is critical as all the sustainable management practices that follow relate directly to the destination as it has been defined (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). For the sustainable management of a destination, a parameter too large is problematic (Lee, 2001) while a parameter too narrow is not practical (Schianetz, Kavanagh, Lockington, 2007). A division by county is what Timothy (2001) would classify as a 'third-order' border. A suitable scale so that the management is meaningful and practical. A county parameter would be beneficial as it is recognised as a natural boundary by stakeholders. The parameter needs to be defined and agreed upon with all stakeholders.

**Step 3: Decide on a Destination Management Organisation**

The presence of a DMO that involves different stakeholders is required for the planning and management of tourism (Heath, 2002; Page, 2003; UNWTO, 2007; TSG, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). A proliferation of tourism management organisations causes confusion which may be prevented by having one DMO to lead and co-ordinate the process of the SMTD (Conaghan et al, 2015ab). Therefore, it is necessary for the DMO to outline a simple organisation and management structure that is clearly communicated to the stakeholders.

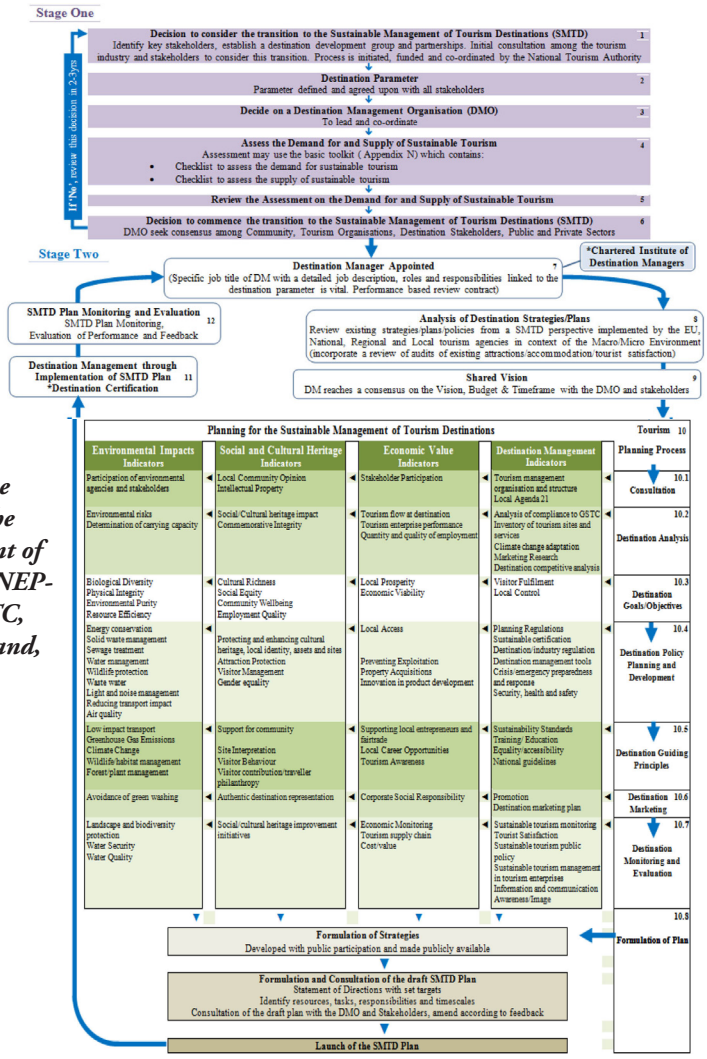


***Fig. 2 a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012; ETIS, 2013)***

## Step 4: Assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism

As with all forms of travel, sustainable tourism must be viewed by focusing on both the demand and supply (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Getz, 2008; UNEP, 2013; Conaghan et al, 2105ab). It is paramount to assess demand and supply perspectives in order to understand and facilitate the sustainable management of tourism. Sound management of tourism requires evidence of changes in impact over time so that adjustments to policies and actions can be made (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). The baseline assessment conducted by the DMO can be used for future longitudinal analysis.

**Step 5: Review the assessment on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism**

The data from the assessment on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism must be analysed and compiled into a report. A review of the assessment will enable the DMO to identify the demands of the market. Furthermore, it will assist the DMO in making an informed approach to the SMTD and respond to the demands of the market through the tourism planning process. Tourism planning should strive for a balance between the demands and supply (UNESCAP, 2003). However the decision of whether or not to commence the SMTD must be confirmed.

**Step 6: Decision to commence the transition to the sustainable management of tourism destinations**

The decision to commence the transition to the SMTD must be finalised in this step. Decision-making should be transparent and open to the participation of all local people interested (Herremans, 2006; ETE and UNESCO MaB, 2007). The DMO is to seek a consensus in the decision among the community, the tourism organisations, destination stakeholders and the public and private sector. There are two options, if they decide 'no', this may be reviewed in two to three years, otherwise, a decision to commence allows them to continue onwards to stage two.

**Stage two: Cycle for the SMTD (Steps 7-12)**

Stage two of the model is comprised of six clearly outlined steps (7-12) that play a crucial role for the SMTD. Under Irish planning guidelines (2007) the County Councils are entrusted by law to make a County Development Plan (CDP) every six years. For the realistic implementation of this model, this cycle could be integrated within this legal binding process. As a result, stage two would be a six year process.

**Step 7: Destination manager appointed**

A key to the cultural change toward sustainability is leadership (Doppelt, 2010). Destination managers are employed in an increasing number of destinations (Howie, 2003; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). Previous research identified that a destination would benefit from having one destination manager appointed (Conaghan et al, 2015b). This will also allow for the more effective use of state spending. It is vital to appoint this position with the specific job title of destination manager and a detailed job description. Furthermore, the destination manager roles and responsibilities should be aligned to the destination parameter. A destination manager is typically from within the Local Authority (Enterprise DG Publication, 2003). A performance based review is required coupled with a time specific contract linked to the timeframe of the CDP. This would be central to ensure the effectiveness of the position. Also

theory has outlined that challenges are often encountered when attempting to move toward sustainable tourism development. These challenges include high costs, lack of information, skills, knowledge, expertise and time (Salina Sulaiman, 1996; Wilkinson, 1997; Graci and Dodds, 2010). In order to professionalise and regulate the position of destination managers, it would be ideal if there was a representative body for professionally qualified destination managers, akin to the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. Through this, the CIDM could maintain a register of destination managers from around the world with the necessary skills, knowledge and expertise.

**Step 8: Analysis of destination strategies/plans**

Analysis needs to be completed from a SMTD perspective despite claims that more destinations are adopting sustainable, strategic perspectives towards tourism development (Ritchie and Crouch, 2000; Ruhanen, 2004). The analysis also needs to be carried out in the context of the macro and micro environment. According to Wray et al. (2010) by undertaking this analysis the destination manager can gain an enhanced understanding of the destination. It is suggested that a review is undertaken of existing audits of attractions, accommodation and tourist satisfaction. For example, in Ireland, this would include a review of the National Tourism Development Authority strategies and plans including the visitor attitude survey.

**Step 9: Shared vision**

To ensure consistency of the vision, alignment throughout the tourism management organisations namely the UNWTO, EU, to NTDA, Regional Tourism Authority and the Local Authority of the destination will be required. The lack of stakeholder awareness of tourism visions, budget and timeframe indicated the need to reach a consensus on these aspects with the DMO and stakeholders. With such a diversity of tourism stakeholders, it is challenging to find common ground among the various agendas (Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010). It is suggested that surveys, meetings and votes may be used to create a "common issue of concern" and the conception of a common vision (ETE and UNESCO, 2007). Once a shared vision is agreed upon, it is important for the DMO and destination manager agree on a structured and realistic budget. This will provide an opportunity to review the potential cost savings from green technologies and effective sustainable management. It is recommended that the vision timeframe runs parallel with the County Development Plan which is required by law. The planning for the SMTD must be carefully co-ordinated before the implementation of the SMTD plan.

**Step 10: Planning for the sustainable management of tourism destinations (conforming to UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Fáilte Ireland, 2012; GSTC, 2012; EC, 2013)**

Imperative to the SMTD is the integration of a planning process. For example, Getz (1986) reviewed more than 150 tourism planning models and Hall (2005) suggested that little has changed in practice since then with many tourism plans still embedded in economic approaches. The planning process proposed in this model differentiates as it feeds into four pillars focused upon the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The four pillars (destination management, economic value, social and cultural heritage and environmental impacts) conform to the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism, GSTC criteria for destinations (2012) and the EC ETIS (2013) for sustainable management at destination level. The tourism planning process is aligned to the four pillars. The process integrates each pillar at each step of the planning process and onwards to the formulation of strategies. The tourism planning process commences with a consultation on destination management.

**Tourism Planning Process (TPP) 10.1: Consultation**

Destination planning is made difficult by the variety of stakeholders (Jamieson, 2006) however it may be co-ordinated through the help of an organisation and management structure. This is the first aspect for consultation. Establishing the organisation and management structure is often fundamental to success (Jamieson, 2006). Local community opinion is incorporated within the social and cultural heritage pillar which can contribute to the protection of intellectual property. Stakeholder participation is essential for the consultation of economic value. Theory outlining the achievement of sustainability initiatives has been hampered at times by a lack of collaboration (Lovelock and Boyd, 2006; Wilson, 2010; Lovelock, 2011). Inter-organisational collaboration is becoming increasingly common in both the public and the private sector (Devine, Boyle and Boyd, 2011). As a result, the participation of environmental agencies and stakeholders has been integrated within the environmental impact pillar. The consultation step follows onward to the destination analysis.

**TPP 10.2: Destination analysis**

Previous research focusing on County Clare in Ireland (Conaghan et al, 2015b) identified destination analysis as a weak component despite this being a common step in tourism planning models (Moscardo, 2011). A destination analysis should be undertaken to further understand the destination in terms of its management (Wray, Dredge, Cox, Buultjens, Hollick, Lee, and Pearlman 2010). The analysis will enable the DMO and destination manager to adequately anticipate and respond to

the particular aspects identified. The analysis initiates with an examination of the destinations compliance to the GSTC as well as an inventory of tourism sites and services. An analysis of climate change adaptation would be beneficial to identify challenges and opportunities associated with climate change (GSTC, 2012). The market research will help inform the destinations competitive analysis essential to maintain a good position in the market. Positioned within the environmental impact pillar are environmental risks and determination of carrying capacity, tools of sustainability which are required to conduct the analysis (Mowforth and Munt, 2009). The destination's tourism flow, tourism enterprise performance and the quantity and quality of employment is an indicator of the destination's economic value. An analysis of the social cultural heritage impact will interlink to the analysis of commemorative integrity.

**TPP 10.3: Destination goals/objectives**

Destination goals and objectives are vital to guide the SMTD. The operational objectives of regional tourism organisations have often been geared towards marketing, with little focus on sustainable tourism (Dredge et al., 2011; Lovelock, 2011). The destination goals and objectives have been mapped upon the UNEP-UNWTO (2005). These should be included for the scope of effective sustainable management of tourism (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Flanagan et al., 2007). The aims are segmented and placed within the appropriate pillars.

**TPP 10.4: Destination policy, planning and development**

Destination policy, planning and development is required as it seeks to improve the sustainability of a destination (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Presenza, 2006). Effective tourism policy and planning should be structured, formulated and implemented (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). Destination management requires a destination to develop products to meet market demands, cultural, natural or intangible in nature (Jamieson, 2006). Central to good practice in tourism planning is that product development must be carefully co-ordinated (Inskeep, 1993; Laws, 1995). The model has included sustainable tourism certification alongside planning, destination regulations and management tools for the effective management of the destination. The management of security, health and safety will compliment crisis and emergency preparedness and response. Policy and planning specific to the prevention of exploitation, local access and innovation in product development are significant for economic value. As cultural heritage is fragile and may be easily damaged if not taken care of (IFT, UNESCO, 2007), protecting and enhancing cultural heritage, local identity and assets is pivotal. Attraction protection, visitor management and gender equality is also essential for social and cultural heritage. The attributes collectively addressed will contribute towards maintaining the environment.

Hudson and Miller (2005) suggested that in the tourism industry managers need to recognise environmental improvement as an economic and competitive opportunity. Policy and planning for light and noise management, energy conservation, sewage treatment, solid waste management as well as water management will not inhibit costs however these will provide an opportunity to reduce spending in the long term. The destination guiding principles will further contribute to the management of the destination.

**TPP 10.5: Destination guiding principles**

Destination guiding principles are beneficial in operationalizing the SMTD. This stream of the planning process has been primarily mapped upon the global guiding principles of the GSTC (2012). Sustainability standards are the initial guiding principles to be developed which are followed by accessibility, training and education. The economic value pillar includes local career opportunities, supporting local entrepreneurs and fair-trade. This is a fundamental aspect due to tourisms economic significance (UNWTO, 2000; Cooper et al., 2008; Tourism Research Australia, 2010; Moeller, Dolnicar and Leisch, 2011). Sourcing products and services locally is a means to enhance economic linkages and promote the benefits of tourism to the local economy (Telfer and Wall, 1996; Torres, 2003; Soler, 2008). Furthermore using low impact transport will contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Tourism awareness aims to generate the consciousness essential to facilitate the stakeholders to participate in the sustainable management of tourism (Thiengkamol, 2009, 2011; Sangsan-anan, Thiengkamol and Thiengkamol, 2012) and make tourism more sustainable (Dolnicar, Crouch and Long, 2008). Guidelines specific to wildlife, forest and plant management will generate awareness of environmental protection. The social and cultural heritage guiding principles will provide site interpretation thus contributing to visitor behaviour and how they may support the community. Much of this information may be communicated through destination marketing.

**TPP 10.6: Destination marketing**

Promotional messages are to be accurate with regards to the destination products, services and sustainability claims (GSTC, 2012). In respect to marketing the destinations social and cultural heritage, authentic destination representation is required. This takes into consideration community values goals and needs, rather than as in previous marketing which concentrated on the potential customers' needs and desires. The marketing of an organisations corporate social responsibility should allow recognition that may enhance economic value. This aspect merits ongoing monitoring.

**TPP 10.7: Destination monitoring and evaluation**

Destination monitoring and evaluation is important for the SMTD in order for the planning process to identify changes. Furthermore, sustainable tourism is a continuous process, and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing preventative and corrective measures whenever necessary (Edgell, 2006). To ensure the viability of the destination for tourism, both economic monitoring and monitoring of the tourism supply chain and value are necessary. It is vital to monitor and evaluate social and cultural heritage improvement initiatives to ensure there is no damage inflicted upon the destinations. It is also important to ensure the tourism industry is protecting the quality of the environment. This requires monitoring of the landscape, biodiversity protection, water security and quality. The involvement of the environmental agencies from the consultation stage is vital. This demonstrates how the planning process and sustainable management pillars are integrated throughout from consultation onwards to monitoring. The pillars have been arranged in a way to provide greater understanding, transparency and a functional process feeding onwards to the formulation of the plan.

**TPP 10.8: Formulation of plan**

The SMTD plan is initiated by the formulation of strategies which will make up the plan. It is important to establish a multi-year strategy for the destination suited to its scale. A problem with most tourism strategies is that they are still being written from a destination marketing perspective (Local Government New Zealand, 2004; Lovelock, 2011). It is important that the chosen strategy is detailed with a strong sustainability element reflecting the sustainable management pillars. This should be developed with public participation even though public participation has been reiterated as a difficulty in piloting sustainability initiatives (Griffin, Morrissey and Flanagan, 2010; Fitzgerald, Flanagan and Griffin, 2011; EC, 2013). It is imperative for the strategies to be made publicly available and these will feed into the formulation of the draft SMTD plan.

To combat any possible implementation gap between the sustainability rhetoric within the strategies and reality at the destination level, the plan will include a statement of directions with set targets. For the destination plan it is important to identify resources, tasks, responsibilities and timescales (Fáilte Ireland, 2012). Therefore, it is imperative for consultation to be carried out with the DMO and stakeholders on the plan and for this to be amended according to feedback prior to the launch of the SMTD plan. The launch of the plan conforms to the legally bound process of the CDP in compliance with Irelands National Planning and Development Act (2010). The launch is an integral mechanism for outreach to the tourism management organisations and destination stakeholders, necessary to generate awareness of the SMTD plan.

**Step 11: Destination management through implementation of SMTD plan**

The management of the destination is to be conducted through the implementation of the SMTD plan. The destinations management is a prerequisite for satisfying the tourist's needs and changing demands as well as ensuring the sustainability of the industry. This section of the cycle has the timeframe of the accepted norm, three to five years (Australian Government, 2004). Similarly to good practice in tourism planning, the destinations management must be carefully co-ordinated, this needs to be monitored. With the probability that destinations will be certified in the future, it is at this step that the destination should seek to become certified on their SMTD efforts.

**Step 12: SMTD plan monitoring and evaluation**

The SMTD plan monitoring and evaluation of performance is pivotal to ensure the achievement of the vision is pursued. It is recommended that a virtual tourism observatory (online) (EC, 2010; Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, 2011) is established to enable stakeholders to view the process. This will also be beneficial to disseminate information and feedback to the destination stakeholders. This information will contribute to a transparent system which will be beneficial for the performance based review of the destination manager position which subsequently leads to the renewal of the cycle for the SMTD. The model provides a coherent picture of how the SMTD may be conducted. However, as tourism destinations evolve in their development, so too, will the natures of their tourism management. In order to facilitate the implementation of the sustainable management of a tourism destination, it is recommended that support mechanisms are put in place.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper presents a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations that conforms to the criteria and indicators endorsed by the industry internationally and at a European level. The implementation of the model could bring a completely different position for the tourism industry of Ireland. This will, however, need significant support. The following recommendations are designed to support the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

It would be beneficial if a user friendly web tool was funded and developed by the NTDA such as a virtual tourism observatory (EC, 2010; Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, 2011) or a data warehouse. This would provide the destination manager with an outlet to communicate developments to the stakeholders. This could be fine-tuned to the destinations needs and be a system to engage and empower the destination stakeholders. This in particular may be beneficial to combat the recognised difficulty in obtaining public participation.

This study also highlights the need for funding to be allocated by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTS) to create specific budgets for the NTDA to support the sustainable management of tourism destinations at county level. It would also be beneficial if the NTDA support an annual conference specific to the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The conference may be used to showcase destinations efforts in the effective sustainable management of tourism, create opportunities for knowledge transfer and identify industry best practice. For example, in terms of training and education, it is recommended that agreements are facilitated between the higher education institutes in order to integrate the sustainable management of tourism with current tourism courses. Thus generating graduates with the necessary skills and expertise who as a corollary may integrate the sustainable management of tourism throughout the industry. The capacity of Irish tourism students may be used to represent sustainable tourism so as to focus on the promotion of sustainable management in academic environments and the industry. It is also recommended that systems are put in place to mentor the tourism stakeholders to progress with the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

Finally, given there is a demand for sustainable tourism certification, it is recommended that the NTDA facilitate support to encourage the tourism industry to implement certification which conforms to the GSTC. These recommendations will require budgetary supports.

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# Building brand awarness in the medical travel market

**APOSTU Iulia-Maria**

**Abstract**

*The research work has as objective to determine the factors that contribute to the construction of the e-Reputation of a medical tourism business. The research tries to propose to medical facilitators methods and in particular Web marketing strategies, to help improve the ergonomics and the effectiveness of their web sites in order to meet the expectations of potential patients (medical tourists). The first part of the thesis exposes fundamental theories on medical tourism, its history and the issues it represents, the segmentation of the world market and the flow of patients to different destinations, the role of the medical facilitator in the patient experience, the internet and e-Reputation. The second part is based on a research with a twofold objective: on the one hand determining the motivations of medical tourists and the information they need in order to be reassured to seek treatment abroad. On the other hand, to determine which is the best approach used by the medical facilitators to meet the needs of these tourists and understand how they can build their image on the Internet (e-Reputation). The results of the analysis will help formulate marketing messages to meet the needs of the new patterns of medical tourists, who are now Internet users.*

**Keywords:** *Smedical tourism, e-reputation, brand, motivation, medical facilitator*

**JEL classification: M31 Marketing**

## 1. Introduction

With the growing trend of travelling outside the country to have access to medical services, often referred to as "medical tourism", medical facilitators are faced to challenges, as the problem of attracting foreign patients who seek treatment in the destinations that they promote. Marketing has the key role to convince and get patients to trust the foreign healthcare systems and hospitals. The internet is now the main source of tourist information and medical facilitators realized the key role they play in their activity. With the growth of the power of the Internet, I find that knowing how to manage its reputation on the internet is extremely important, especially when talking about the fragile medical tourism activity.

Medical tourism, defined as the fact of leaving his main residence (country of origin) for the main reason of being treated, is not a new phenomenon; it exists since Antiquity, when it was linked to the quality of the thermal waters: the pilgrims were travelling around Greece to take advantage of the virtues of the thermal waters. Today, the growth of medical tourism is not anymore bound to spas, but to differences in cost of care depending on the country and the length of the waiting lists for some interventions[1].

Before, only the richest people in the world, anxious to receive the best care, had the luxury to be treated away from their homes. Today, this form of medical tourism is about to be supplanted by another, which pushes patients with little money to seek good care abroad that is cheaper than in their own country[2] . This raises the question on migration flows of patients, because with the globalization and the standardization of the rules in the European Union, we observe today reciprocal changes between North and South, on one hand and West - East flows, on the other hand. At the global level, the medical tourism market is organized by country segmentation: Hungary, Poland and Romania are champions in dental surgery, while India specializes in heart surgery and Thailand in cosmetic surgery.

With the growth of Internet use, it is likely that the phenomenon of medical tourism is just at its beginnings. This type of approach will become more and more natural: patients who are looking for care are consumers increasingly accustomed, via the Internet, to have an eye on the world and go where the offer is attractive. It is to this cause that the professionals from the world of medical tourism should be brought to think about how to create and manage their image/reputation on the Internet, how to position themselves to meet the challenges that these new behaviors will raise.

## 2. Literature review

Medical tourism has experienced several definitions, but the easiest is "the process to leave their country of residence for treatment elsewhere (in a foreign country)". Medical tourism does not refer to the fact that someone needs emergency care when abroad, because the key is the intention: the patient must actually intend to go elsewhere for care. Engage in tourism activities such as the recovery in a hotel is part of the experience of medical tourism. Indeed, there is no consensus on the proposed definitions. Medical tourism refers to a multitude of health care, ranging from heavy surgery to wellness care, and even acts related to artificial procreation developed in some countries.

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[1] Tourisme médical, Cahier Espaces n° 106, Septembre 2010

[2] Nicolas Brun, Xavier Deau et Jean-Luc Roffé, « Tourisme médical : la médecine low cost », Médecins. Magazine de l Ordre national des médecins, 2008.

If we look at the literature of specialty, the authors used several forms to refer to tourists who travel to get treatment abroad. Loïck and William Menvielle use the term 'tourist-patient', a neologism they created, and which refers to a patient requiring surgery, more or less important, and eager to go abroad to receive care[3].

Medical tourism is necessarily linked to the history of civilization with which it shares many points in common. Today there is more and more significant growth of this phenomenon, popularity explained by the increase in the cost of care in the industrialized countries, while that it is ridiculously low in the developing countries. This helps the healthcare to become competitive at the global level. In a second time, with the rapid increase of medical technologies, patients no longer have to fear of going to seek treatment abroad[4]. Thirdly, through medical tourism, patients from countries such as the United States, the Canada or the United Kingdom, where waiting lists are very long, can have access to healthcare immediately. Fourthly, the acceleration and the democratization of the means of communication allow clinics to market their offerings outside their country of residence, through their web sites.

However, the field of medical tourism is increasingly becoming a subject to examination and debate, because of concerns about ethical and regulatory issues or general health issues. If we think that for years, medical systems, like that of India, were perceived by Westerners as inadequate, now things have changed and India is positioned as a specialist in heart surgery. Increasingly, patients are beginning to change their image about exotic destinations, such as Thailand (known for sex-change operations), Brazil (known for cosmetic surgery), and Bulgaria (known for dental care). However, ethical issues arise about fairness, if we think of the vast majority of citizens, who live in developing countries where medical tourism grows, who have generally not, themselves, access to the most „ordinary" care. For example, "India is now ready to heal the world, but the majority of its population remain at the rear of the queue"[5].

Today, there is a logic of specialization by countries or regions. Thus, we can identify throughout the world, different specific areas in South America, Eastern Europe, North Africa or South Africa and Southeast Asia. We can therefore speak of the so-called "branding of the destination": some countries on the world stage were distinguished from others by offering a specialized offer in surgery or healthcare. Then, countries of the Eastern Europe, such as Poland, Hungary, Romania or Czech Republic propose a variety of clinics and dental offices that offer very competitive

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[3] Loïck Menvielle et William Menvielle, « Le tourisme médical – une nouvelle façon de voyager », Téoros, vol. 29, 2010

[4] Catherine Le Borgne, « Le tourisme médical : une nouvelle façon de se soigner », Les Tribunes de la Santé, 15(2), 2007

[5] John Connell, « Medical tourism : Sea, sun, sand and … surgery », Tourism Management 27 (2006), 1093-1100

services. "Belgium has other assets on hand, including a very competitive offer of retirement homes for elderly and dependent and home for autistic children, two rare foodstuffs including centers in our country. Spain attracts customers for dental care, offering - always in Alicante - poses of implants at lower rates at half of the price of those charged in France."[6] Around the Mediterranean basin, Tunisia specializes in cosmetic surgery. Southeast Asia (and particularly India) will appear as a leader on the global market of medical tourism. Latin America turns to the surgery of comfort such as plastic, dental surgery or general care analyses and health check-ups.

Outside of the medical facility itself, the most usual provider of arrangements and accompanying support services is a new member of the tourism profession, called a "medical tourism facilitator". This facilitator may be located in either the traveler's home country or the host country, and firms offering these services have arisen across the globe[7].

In order for the medical tourism industry to flourish, the international promotion of its services is needed. Marketing materials, such as websites or brochures, inform patients about potential tourism opportunities or treatment options. Facilitators / medical tourism agents in the countries of origin of the patients, in countries of destination and in third countries are doing the promotion. These agents often specialize exclusively in medical tourism and help patients interested in selecting hospitals abroad, visa applications and other documents, and sometimes also with the organization of the follow-up care at home. Normally, these agencies work with websites, which are translated into several languages (depending on the audience they address) and suggest the presence of a staff member speaking the language of the patient during care in the host country. There are specialized operators who offer luxury packages and special care at attractive prices. They position themselves as advisors and not as health travel agents: they help customers find the best health care according to their needs and requirements, with "all inclusive" packages[8].

**The main role of a medical facilitator is to provide the customer a very positive medical trip experience.**

William and Loïck Menvielle conducted a study[9] of 235 websites specializing in medical tourism having as purpose the evaluation of business strategies used by clinics and medical facilitators. They offer "all inclusive" packages (surgery and

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[6] Catherine Le Borgne, « Le tourisme médical : une nouvelle façon de se soigner », Les Tribunes de la santé, 15(2), pp. 47-53, 2007

[7] Dan Cormany, Seyhmus Baloglu, « Medical travel facilitator websites : An exploratory study of web page contents and services offered to the prospective medical tourist » Tourism Management 32 (2011) 709-716

[8] Medical Tourism Association, « Workbook : Certified Medical Tourism Professional »

[9] « Se faire soigner à l'" étranger : le Web au service du tourisme médical », Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.

holidays) to their customers. The findings of the researcher, the vast majority of identified websites offer an ergonomic interface, facilitating the identification and navigation. "In 84% of cases, the sites provide general information about the services offered by the institution. A small lot (8%) even shows television reports. Nearly three quarters of the sites offer a platform of expression to customers, by heading comments and complaints. A large proportion of sites also provide Internet users with tools to communicate with the service provider. Some companies also offer free discussion sites to tourists-patients." They also found that some clinics compare their prices to those offered elsewhere in the world and make promotional discounts. About half of the analyzed clinical sites display pictures inside or outside of the institution or photos with the medical team. They found that the specifics of the hotel infrastructure are less presented on websites, because clinics emphasize more on the medical aspect of their services. The authors also recommend that medical tourism companies must develop websites culturally appropriate Internet, "which would be an improvement track interesting from a marketing perspective".

## 3. Empirical study: the exploration of the services offered by medical facilitators platforms and how they built their image on internet

### 3.1. Aims

The research tries to offer to medical facilitators methods and in particular Web marketing strategies to help improve the usability and effectiveness of their websites in order to meet the expectations of potential patients (medical tourists). The study has two objectives:

a – on one hand to determine the motivations of medical tourists and information they need to be reassured to seek treatment abroad

b – on the other hand to determine what is the best approach used by medical facilitators to meet the needs of tourists and how they can build their image on the Internet (e-reputation).

### 3.2. Hypothesis

The internet plays a central role in the business of the medical facilitators, as it has become the primary source of information. Potential patients are now users who not only seek information on the Internet, but also influence the image of the company. Doing marketing for the international patient, in the world of medical tourism is not obvious. Finding how to manage the reputation of a brand to convince patients to seek treatment in another country, and without being too oppressive, is essential. Potential customers (medical tourists) need to be reassured to trust medical facilitators to organize their medical stay abroad. They will want to find interactive web sites, secure platforms and patient testimonials.

### 3.3. Methodology

3.3.1. Quantitative analysis

Initially, we have chosen to undertake a quantitative analysis. The main instrument for this research will be a survey addressed to a personal target. According to Malhotra, there are four major methods of applying a questionnaire: the telephone survey, face to face, by mail or Internet. We can collect data over the Internet by two different directions: by e-mail or using a Web site. Because the method of the attached questionnaire to an email underlies for vulnerabilities regarding the diffusion process and the return rate of the survey, we selected the administration of the questionnaire on a website. We used an online form designed with Google Docs. A sample consisting of a personal target was chosen because this is the way to get quick answers. The questionnaire includes questions about the motivations of medical tourists to seek treatment abroad and the information they need to trust the medical tourism. Most responses will be codified and measured by Likert scales.

3.3.2. Qualitative analysis

Secondly, the qualitative study will be conducted toward professionals and experts in the sector of medical travel. Thus, we prepared interviews with medical facilitators. We were able to get interviews with a French medical facilitator and a Romanian one. The qualitative study's role is to deepen our knowledge on the issues of medical tourism activity and its online presence. The interview guide used to conduct this exploratory phase of the study was structured around six main steps: - The introductory phase is intended to assess the perception of medical tourism company on the medical system of the country where it operates and also the positioning it wants to promote about its customers; - The second phase is the company's reputation management - Thirdly, we discussed the online presence of the company of medical tourism - The fourth phase is dedicated to the role of the community manager in the company of medical tourism - The fifth phase evokes the online community - Finally, the last part is intended to ethics and social responsibility in medical tourism sector.

### 3.4. The query stage

TMost respondents live in Romania (52%) and France (34%) and 5% are Dutch. The others live in Austria, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates or in Nepal.

Regarding the age of the respondents, 42% are between 25 and 39 years and another large category were under age 25 (32%). 60% of respondents were women and 40% men.

We consider that the answers are relevant, because 49% of those interviewed said they have already thought about traveling abroad for medical care. For those

who have not yet thought about medical tourism actions must be taken to educate and persuade them.

Initially, we studied the factors for which people will want to choose a country as a destination for medical tourism. When it comes to motivation, a Likert scale was used to analyze the results. The data was then analyzed and aggregated around the overall average. The factor with the highest average is the professionalism of the doctors and dentists (4.88), followed by the quality of clinics and hospitals (4.73). The factors with the lowest average are "similar cultures and beliefs" (with 2.62), the availability of flights (3.49) and customized accommodation (3.55). That is to say, people seek qualitative medical services, and they are even willing to travel to remote locations, without the same culture or without the availability of flights or tailor-made accommodation. At first it was thought that waiting lists were also a deciding factor for some people. But that factor has obtained a relatively low average (3.99), demonstrating that the interviewees do not necessarily seek to have immediate access to care. This is perhaps related to the culture of the respondents.

Regarding the organization of the medical travel, 61% of respondents said they would organize it themselves, directly with the clinic and the hotel, and 34% said they would appeal to a tourist agency medical to look after. Only 2 people (Romanians) responded that their employer will probably organize the medical trip, a fact that is supported by the nationality of the respondents (the self-funded companies are more common in the US).

All the factors that count in the relationship between people and medical tourism agency obtained a high average (over 4). The professionalism of the staff (4.66) and understanding of staff to their needs are the most important (4.65) for future patients. So, medical facilitators must be all the time listening to their patients, to reassure them and show that they are professionals and that the safety of their patients is the most important. The treatment of all issues, communication, and responsiveness to questions also received a very high average. On the other side, the technology they use to connect patients and doctors scored the lowest average: 5% of respondents said that this factor is not at all important or not important, while 18% gave a neutral importance to this factor.

The respondents consider that the most important factor in deciding to seek care abroad is that their treatment is only available abroad. They could also choose it because of the existing nosocomial infections in hospitals in their countries. The long waiting lists are also a factor which may contribute to the decision of medical treatment abroad. The least important factors influencing respondents to seek care abroad is that they wish to have treatment without their families knowing it (74% of respondents said that this factor is not important) and the association of treatment with holidays (only 16% of respondents concluded that this factor is important).

We considered some important factors that influence the choice of the medical facilitator, hospital, clinic, doctor or dentist abroad and we asked respondents to indicate the importance of each factor. Thus, it was found that people choose their doctor abroad because of his professionalism and his reputation (it is the factor with the largest average - 4.84). It is considered that medical facilitators should emphasize the quality of the doctors, their biographies, and their experience. The quality of health facilities received the second highest average (4.78), as well as certification of the clinic/hospital (4.44). Medical facilitators must educate prospective patients on this aspect too. The website of the medical facilitator, reviews and comments on the internet and the ability of people to speak the patient's language got the lowest average. Which is explained by the fact that only 34% of respondents said they will contact a medical tourism agency to arrange their medical trip abroad.

There are 61% who will recommend to a friend or someone in the family to seek treatment abroad. But this score is not important enough, relative to the fact that only 21% consider that the recommendation of a friend is very important.

The channels the most used to obtain information on medical tourism are the Internet and friends/relatives of the family. 66% of respondents reported that the channel they use the most often is the Internet. Therefore, medical facilitators must be present on the internet and not only manage a website. They must be attentive to their potential patients, communicate and educate them on the benefits of medical tourism, quality of care and professionalism of doctors. They must facilitate social networking and answer any question/need of the potential patient.

35% of respondents are more reassured if medical facilitators have accreditations and 29% of respondents need testimonies of patients to trust medical tourism facilitator. Other 21% need prior experience to trust in medical tourism, which means that medical facilitators should maintain a close relationship with the medical tourist, even if his medical experience is over.

The overall quality of the services offered by the medical facilitator is the most important factor that generates a good image of the company. As seen before, accreditations obtained by the company are also important from the potential patient's perspective. The third most important factor is communication and interaction on social networks, a fact which confirms again our hypothesis.

### 3.5. The interview stage

We interviewed two professionals from the medical tourism world: a French medical facilitator and a Romanian one. The purpose of these interviews is to determine the role that Internet plays in their business. We chose the same questions

for both actors, because I would like to review responses from the cultural point of view too.

The interviews were structured into 6 different themes:

- The company's image

- Corporate reputation

- Internet presence

- The community manager and its role in a medical tourism company

- Online community

- Ethics and social responsibility

Results of the interviews

The two actors do not have quite the same activity. Surgery France is a medical facilitator, who handles flows of patients who come to France for surgery or their medical treatment (INBOUND Medical Tourism). As for Bbook, they are a business travel agency, which also deal with flows of tourists that go abroad (OUTBOND) but also flows of incoming tourists (INBOUND).

Both players would like to position themselves as partners of trust, representing medical excellence. The quality, accessibility, transparency, confidentiality and accountability are the major points promoted by the two professionals.

The 2 companies differentiate from their competitors because they are among the only companies that offer medical tourism services in their countries. As for France Surgery, they are the only ones who represent so many clinics; they know very well the French healthcare system, because they have personal relationships with French surgeons, enabling them to generate greater trust. Bbook realized the extent of medical tourism in the world and especially the importance that medical tourism could have for Romanian tourists. The healthcare system in Romania is still not reformed. In the recent years, there has been investment in the private system. Several private clinics that offer similar services to European standards have been

built all over the Romanian territory. But the public healthcare system is still ill and patients have trouble trusting it.

When talking about reputation, the two actors interact differently. Although both want to deploy a high end reputation, France Surgery uses a different argument in B2B from that of B2C. As they seek to deploy B2B partnerships with structures that will have the same communication strategy and the same quality level as them. They use social networks to the destination of patients to reassure them, to guide them step by step in order to have a process which is consistent with their image, but also to the destination of partners to provide the tools to better sell their services to maintain the reputation. On the other hand, Bbook doesn't think the reputation management must be done differently in the B2B than in B2C. Ways to control their reputation would be: the way they respond to all complaints, the customer feedback.

Both actors recognize the importance of the Web in their business. As both of them are small structures, the Internet easily allows them to have a larger presence in the world that can touch many customers, that is very economically in time and budget. The priority is to be present on all social networks and all the forums that can be interesting for them.

France Surgery and Bbook think to dedicate someone from their team to community management. The two believe that the key role of a community manager is to be present on all the social networks, to interfere and participate in conversations. Bbook highlights the creation of content for social networks by the community manager (his EDITORIAL ability), as France Surgery highlights its adaptability to change, to the new tools and to be always on the lookout for what will be new either in terms of tools or in terms of communities. A community manager is someone who will help develop the brand visibility on the Internet. It will have to develop strategies and goals for community. The two talked about the analytical capacity of the community manager and customer support (respond to comments, manage conflicting relations, to reverse the situation. Even if there are negative comments, somewhat aggressive, you have to get the situation at the company's benefit).

Regarding the patient approach, the 2 companies consider that the best way is to be advisors, not salespeople. The two believe in offering customized services for each client and this cannot be done unless the communication reflects the feeling advice, the presence, and the patient and not to force him to make a decision.

The 2 players see ethical questions a little different, thanks to their culture. France Surgery focuses on French professionalism and the quality of medical services (they do not want to be confused with a company that offers low cost medicine). Bbook thinks the biggest risk is the confidentiality of medical data, while in Romania data security is not always guaranteed. They also think that in terms of social responsibility, medical tourism offers many opportunities to increase online reputation through affiliation with various social causes.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to understand and analyze the factors that contribute to the construction of the e-reputation of a medical tourism company. The study was conducted by two main approaches: from the point of view of the final consumer and from the point of view of professionals (medical facilitators).

The study has two objectives:

a – on one hand to determine the motivations of medical tourists and information they need to be reassured to seek treatment abroad

b – on the other hand to determine what is the best approach used by medical facilitators to meet the needs of tourists and how they can build their image on the Internet (e-reputation).

The research has provided results that support this goal. Data analysis showed that the most important motivational factors to choose a country as a medical tourism destination refer to the quality of medical services (doctors professionalism, quality and reputation of the clinics and hospitals), and the respondents are willing to travel even in remote locations, without the same culture or without availability of flights or tailor-made accommodation. That is to say, to build their online reputation, medical facilitators must position on medical destinations promoting quality.

Regarding the relationship between the medical facilitator and people, staff professionalism and understanding of people's needs are the most important for future patients. So, medical facilitators must be all the time listening to their patients, to reassure them, to have a sense of relationship and communication, but without being too abusive.

The decision to seek treatment abroad is supported by the fact that medical treatment is only available abroad, the risk of nosocomial infections and too long waiting lists in the country of residence. This fact is supported by the country of residence of respondents, taking into account that 52% of respondents live in Romania.

The most important result that came out of the research is that the Internet is the most frequently used channel for people to learn about medical tourism. Therefore, medical facilitators must be present on all the digital communication

channels and all the forums that may be interesting for communicating in both B2C as well as B2B. They must create a relationship of trust with their patients and maintain the relationship with the patient, even if his medical experience is over. Potential customers need testimonies of previous patients to trust the medical tourism facilitator and they are more reassured if medical facilitators possess accreditations.

Following the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis, we recommend to medical facilitators to adapt their websites to cultural particularities of internet users. In addition, integrate a secure platform that enables virtual consultation with patients will help patients to trust in the services offered by the medical facilitators. The website must have a user-friendly interface, easy navigation, so potential customers arrive more easily to the desired information.

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