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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.

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EUROPEAN BIODIVERSITY AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Associate Professor Phd. Andreea Băltărețu¹

Abstract

Despite its small size, Europe has an amazing biodiversity. Much of this is due to the divergent climatic and topographic conditions that are found on the continent. Natural forces, in combination with the human interaction over the centuries, have created a complex mosaic of habitats and natural and semi-collapsible, each containing different plants and animals. Although the number of species cannot reach the other continents, many plants and animals in Europe are endemic and therefore unique on this continent. But Europe's biodiversity is affected by a serious decline. The main pressures and factors underlying this decline are well known. The fundamental cause is the destruction, degradation and fragmentation of habitat due to the land use change. In the last 50 years, Europe has seen a significant conversion of the land, intensification of production systems, urban sprawl, infrastructure development and abandonment of traditional practices (often favourable to biodiversity).

KEYWORDS: biodiversity, ecosystem, threaten species, decline, sustainable development

JEL CLASSIFICATION: Q01, Q50, Q56, Q58

1. Introduction

We ought to leave our children a richer and cleaner nature than we inherited!

The biodiversity, or the variety of ecosystems, species and genes, is the world's natural capital and its conservation is a priority for the EU environment. The biodiversity loss is the most serious environmental threat to the planet which causes substantial losses in the economy and health of people. The illegal trade with endangered species exerts a major pressure on the biodiversity.

The EU has developed its legislation on biodiversity since the early '70s, implementing at the same time, the Convention on Biological Diversity. Currently, one of the six priority areas of the Program of Action on Environment 2002-2012 is represented by nature and biodiversity. In 2006, "Communication of biodiversity loss by 2010 and after 2010: Sustaining ecosystems for human welfare" includes an

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Action Plan which aims to bring together EU actors and resources together with those at national level in order to implement these actions and achieve the proposed target by 2010 (European Commission, 2006)

2. The Reference Situation of the European Biodiversity in 2010

In 2010, **the European Environment Agency (EEA), in collaboration with the European Commission issued a report on the baseline of the biodiversity in the EU for 2010**, which summarizes the latest facts and figures on the status and trends of the biodiversity components and ecosystems in Europe. **The report** concludes that biodiversity in the EU continue to face serious threats:

- Although the decline of species in the EU is not as fast as in the other continents, the proportion of endangered species is still very worrying. Up to 25% of European animal species, including mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds and butterflies, are likely to disappear. The population decline is even higher;
- In 2009, a comprehensive stock of rare and threatened species and habitat types protected under EU nature legislation showed that 65% of the protected habitats and 52% of the protected species are in an unfavorable conservation status. The situation is even more worrying for the species that live in grasslands, agricultural and coastal areas;
- The most recent inventory of the land cover in the EU indicates that artificial areas resulting from urban expansion, industrial development and new infrastructure continues to spread rapidly across Europe. Consequently, the large areas were converted into urban areas or they were isolated by a network of transport development. In the past 15 years, more than 12,500 square kilometers of land were covered with concrete, which is an increase in the artificial areas with almost 8%;
- This expansion is often at the expense of valuable natural areas, especially wetlands and grasslands, which have already experienced large losses in the past;
- The remaining habitats are increasingly isolated from each other, so that approximately 30% of the EU27 is now fragmented into a very high proportion to moderate;
- This can significantly affect the health of ecosystems, many of them unable to provide the optimal quality and quantity, such as providing clean air and water and prevent flooding and erosion. It is considered that most ecosystems in Europe are currently in a state of decay;
- At present, Europeans consume twice as much than can be provided by soil and seas of Europe's natural resources. This creates a pressure on the biodiversity in other parts of the world and in Europe.

3. The Evaluation Indicators of European Biodiversity

The indicators presented below are essential to develop specific policies and constitute a feedback mechanism of the most important information to identify whether EU policies and actions have the desired effect.

The emphasis is increasingly on restoration and more effective management of Natura 2000, to achieve a measurable improvement of the conservation status of species and habitats of interest at EU level in terms of conservation.

The climate change affects also the biodiversity. This is one of the causes of biodiversity loss. At the same time, the climate change will increase further if biodiversity and ecosystems are not adequately protected.

Protecting and restoring biodiversity provide some cost-effective opportunities for adaptation or mitigation.

The European biodiversity indicators relate to (European Commission, 2010):

A. Status and evolution of biodiversity components

1. Abundance and distribution of selected species (birds, butterflies, etc.)
2. Changes in the status of threatened species
3. Changes in the status of protected species of European interest
4. The surface ecosystem evolution
5. The development of habitats of European interest
6. The evolution of genetic diversity of domesticated species (anime livestock, crops)
7. The protected area at national level
8. Sites area of Natura 2000

B. Threats to the biodiversity

9. Critical changes of the excess nitrogen deposition
10. The development of invasive alien species in Europe
11. Effects of climate change on species sensitive to temperature variations

C. Integrity of ecosystem, goods and services

12. Marine Trophic Index in Europe
13. Fragmentation of natural and semi-natural areas
14. Fragmentation of rivers
15. Nutrient levels in transitional waters, coastal and marine
16. Quality of fresh waters

D. The sustainable use

17. Forest areas sustainably managed
18. The amount of dead wood in forests
19. The nitrogen balance in the agriculture
20. Areas potentially subject to positive biodiversity management
21. Status of commercial fish stocks in Europe

22. Effluent quality farms
23. Footprint of European countries on the rest of the world

E. Other indicators

24. Patent application based on genetic resources
25. Financing the management of biodiversity
26. General public awareness and participation

Placing the issue of biological diversity in environmental priority level, the 27 EU Member States have set a target to reduce the biodiversity loss on their territory and reducing the sensitive global biodiversity loss.

Since it is impossible to measure all aspects of the biodiversity, the indicators are therefore more useful. They help to the synthesis of complex scientific data and often disparate, simple and clear. The biodiversity indicators are a quick and easy tool, the underlying formulation of key messages and present the general trends of biodiversity. At the same time, these underlying indicators are a key element in the development policies. Allowing collection of a complete set of facts and figures about different components of biodiversity and ecosystems in the EU, indicators contribute not only to assess the effects of specific EU policies and actions on biodiversity in Europe, but provide equally, information on how in which the policy can be adapted and improved to better meet the needs of biodiversity.

The 26 indicators are developed and selected to provide a range of interconnected information on various features of biodiversity. Some of them allow direct monitoring of the evolution of biological diversity element (such as abundance and distribution of selected species) while others reflect the greatest threats to the biodiversity (such as the development of invasive exotic species), sustainable use (amount of dead wood in the forests, for example) or the integrity of the ecosystems (water quality, for example).

4. The Eu Action Plan Concerning the Biodiversity

In its policy on Biological Diversity, the European Union addresses to the following areas (*European Union, 2010*):

Policy 1: Biodiversity in the EU.

Objectives:

1. Protect the most important species and habitats of EU;
2. Preserving and restoring the biodiversity and the ecosystem services in the unprotected rural areas of EU;
3. Preserving and restoring the biodiversity and the ecosystem services in the unprotected marine areas of EU;
4. Increased compatibility of regional and territorial development and biodiversity in the EU;

5. Substantially reduce the effects of invasive alien species and alien genotypes on biodiversity in the EU.

Policy 2: Biodiversity in the EU and on international level

Objectives:

6. Significantly improve the effectiveness of the international governance for the biodiversity and the ecosystem services;
7. Substantially strengthen the support for biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU external assistance;
8. Substantially reduce the effects of the international trade on biodiversity and ecosystem services worldwide.

Policy 3: The biodiversity and the climatic changes.

Objective:

9. The support of the biodiversity adaptation to the climate change.

Policy 4: Knowledge Base.

Objective:

10. Significant improvement in the knowledge base for the conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity in the EU and globally.

The support measures relate to:

1. Ensuring adequate financing;
2. Strengthening the EU decisions;
3. Creating partnerships;
4. Improving education, awareness and participation.

Although there have been significant developments, the overall objective to stop the decline of the biodiversity in the EU by the end of 2010 was not accomplished and either the overall target.

5. The Attitude of Europeans Towards the Term “Biodiversity”

In accordance with Article 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the “**Biological diversity** is defined as the variability among living organisms from all categories including those that are terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and ecological complexes, all these include diversity of species, between species and ecosystems” (European Commission, 2010).

On January the 19th, 2010, the European Commission marked the opening of the International Year of the Biodiversity with a document in which they presented the options specific post-2010 of the biodiversity policy. For this purpose, it was made a Euro barometer on attitudes of the Europeans towards the biodiversity.

This Euro barometer survey aimed to clarify the degree of familiarity of EU citizens with the terms “biodiversity” and “biodiversity loss”.

Other issues were clarified with this occasion, as follows:

- the extent to which EU citizens feel informed about the term “biodiversity”;
- the favorite sources of information used to improve the knowledge of the biodiversity loss;
- opinions about the major causes of biodiversity loss;
- degree of perception of the importance of the biodiversity loss at national and global level;
- foreseeable impact of the biodiversity loss;
- personal efforts to conserve the biodiversity;
- the importance of Natura 2000;
- perceptions about the important roles of the protected areas.

The Euro Barometer in question took place in February 2010 and was published in March 2010. There were interviewed over 27,000 people with age over 15 years, of the 27 EU Member States, mainly by telephone, approximately 1,000 people in each Member State. In Romania there were surveyed 1187 people.

This survey consisted of 12 questions that were added five identification questions (i.e. sex, age, education, occupation, place of origin).

■ **Are you familiar with the term “biodiversity”?**

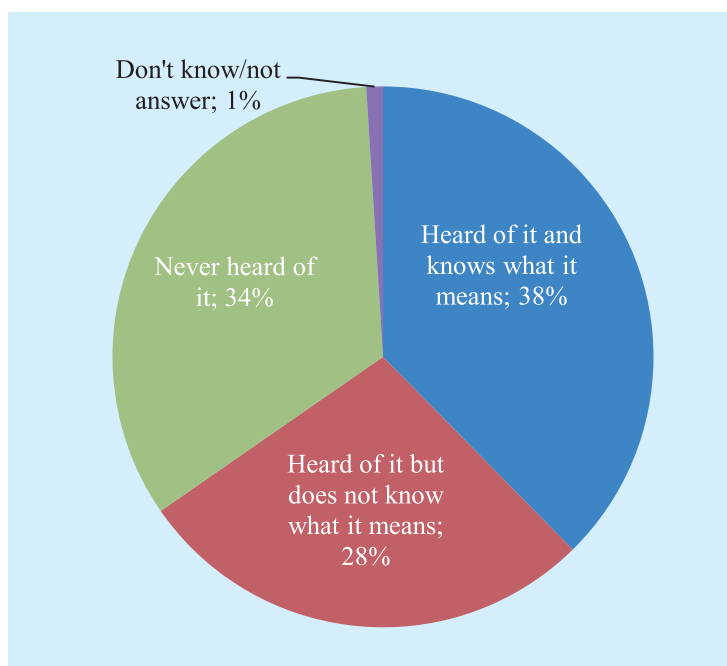


Figure 1. The percentage of EU respondents familiar with the term of biodiversity

In the EU, only 38% of respondents have heard of the term “biodiversity” and known its significance. However, a fairly large percentage of 34% belongs to those who have never heard of this concept.

The individual results on countries show a great diversity of responses in terms of familiarity with the term “biodiversity”. It is practically unknown to Cypriot citizens, only 27% of them heard of this term and of these, fewer than half know the meaning of this term (13%). The highest rates were recorded in Austria and Germany (87% and 88% have heard of this concept and know what it means). High percentages were registered in Estonia (79%), France (78%), Sweden and Bulgaria, each with 77%.

In Romania, 25% of respondents have heard of this term and have known its meaning, 25% have heard of this term but did not know what it means and 45% have never heard of this term.

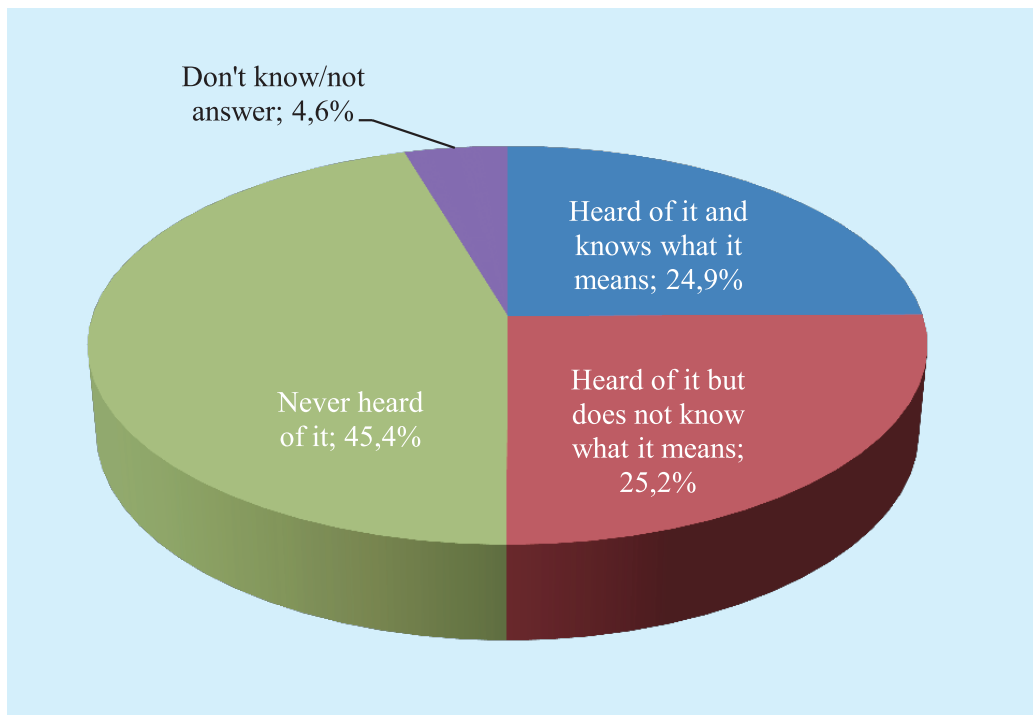


Figure 2. The percentage of Romanian respondents familiar with the term of biodiversity

■ **Can you tell me what does the phrase „biodiversity loss” means for you?**

When they explained the term “biodiversity”, the majority was able to define the “biodiversity loss” in their own words and many of them said some aspects of this multidimensional term. On average, 19% of the respondents could not explain the meaning of the sentence discussed.

Czech citizens were better able to define the loss of the biodiversity; only 8% of them could not give any response. In countries such as Lithuania, Estonia, Luxembourg and Spain, 10% of respondents were able to define the loss of biodiversity. In contrast there were those in Ireland who gave answers such as “I don’t know” - 43% - , followed by Denmark (35%) and Malta (33%).

In Romania, only 19% from the participants said they don’t know the answer, the other answers being as follows:

- 24% - animals and plants are disappearing/will disappear;
- 19% - animals and plants are/will be in danger;
- 29% - the decline of the natural habitats in general;
- 24% - forests will disappear/will suffer a decline;
- 12% - loss of natural heritage and natural parks;
- 23% - changes in climate;
- 17% - air and clean water issues.
- **How informed are you concerning the loss of biodiversity?**

A minority of EU citizens feel informed about the meaning of the phrase “biodiversity loss”. Thus, 32% of the respondents feel well informed and 5% say they feel very well informed about this issue. Six out of ten EU citizens are not considered well informed about the biodiversity loss and 25% reported that they are not informed at all about this aspect.

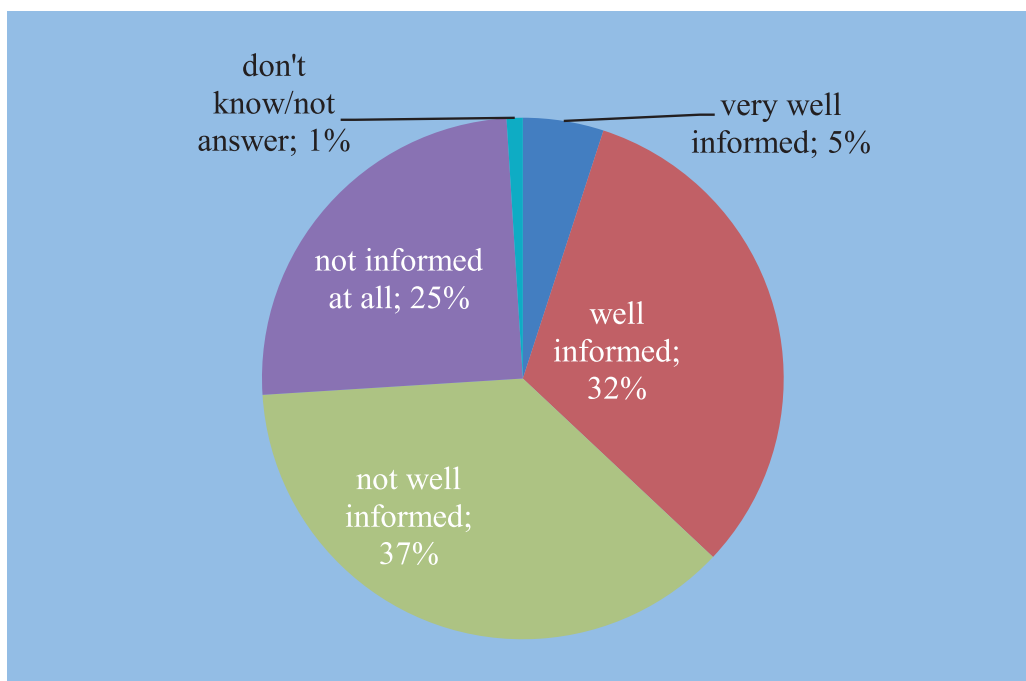


Figure 3. The percentage distribution of the awareness of EU citizens on “biodiversity loss”

German and Austrian citizens feel well informed about the biodiversity loss at a rate of 59% and 46%. Italian respondents feel the least informed on this issue in a ratio of 81%.

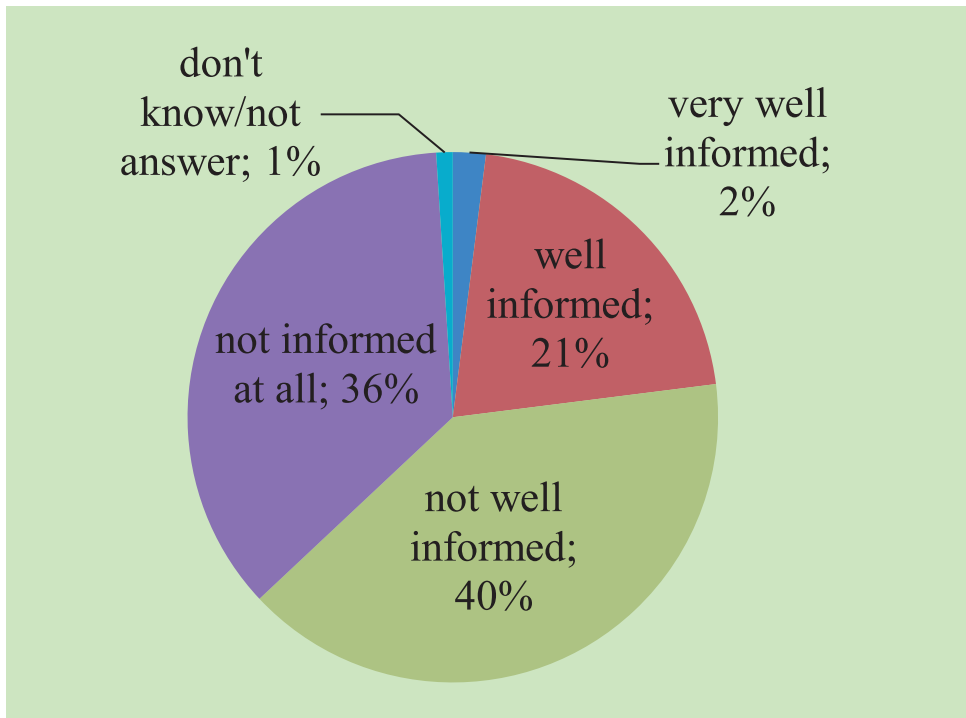


Figure 4. The percentage distribution of the awareness of Romanian citizens on “biodiversity loss”

Of the 1187 respondents **in Romania**, 36% are not aware of the “biodiversity loss”, 40% - not so well informed, 21% - well informed, very well-informed 2%, 1%-do not know.

- **I will read a list. Please specify which the biggest threat to biodiversity is:**
 - Pollution of air/water (seas, rivers, lakes etc.);
 - Man-made disasters (e.g. oil spills, industrial accidents etc.);
 - Intensification of agriculture, deforestation and over-fishing;
 - Climate change;
 - Land use change and development (e.g. roads, housing, industry, conversion of natural areas into farmland etc.);
 - Plants and animals introduced into our ecosystems (that are not normally found in a region or country);
 - Others;
 - Don't know/Not answer.

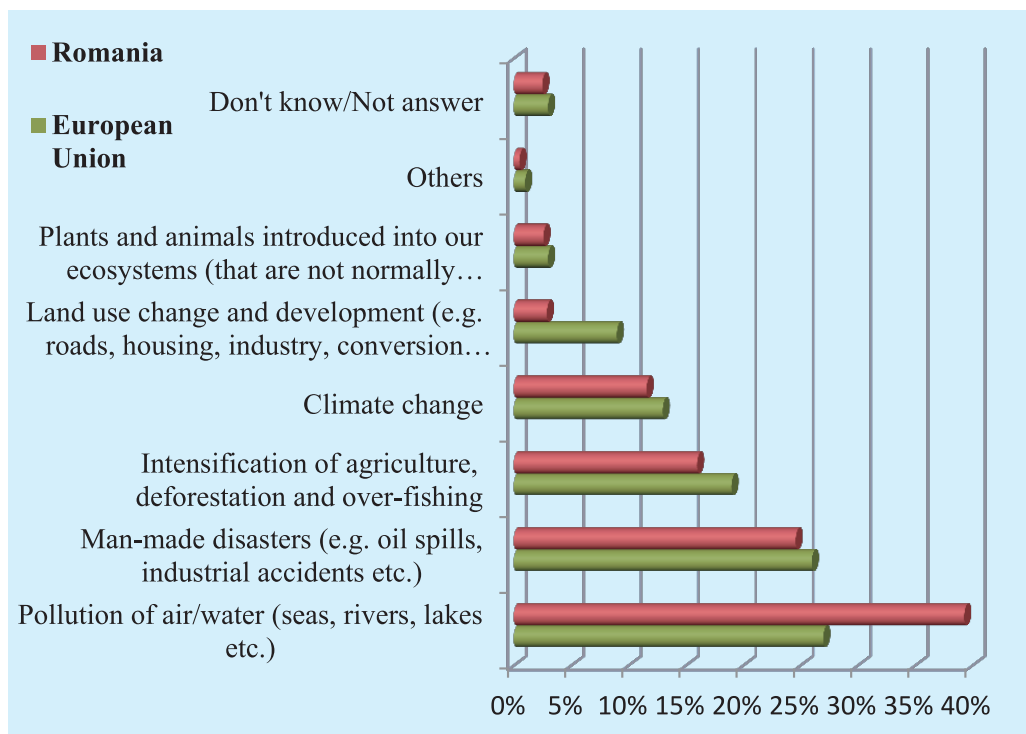


Figure 5. The percentage of threats on the biodiversity based on the answers of EU and Romanian citizens

27% of the respondents believe that water and air pollution were the most important threats to biodiversity. A similar percentage (26%) said that the human disasters such as oil spills or industrial accidents. 19% of respondents selected agricultural intensification, deforestation and fishing, climate change - 13%, 9% mentioned the construction of roads, houses, industrial areas as the biggest threats to biodiversity.

In Romania, the air and water pollution ranks among the top threats to biodiversity (39.3%), followed by disasters caused by people increasing by 24.6% and agriculture, deforestation and fishing 16%.

- **I will read some statements about the importance of stopping the biodiversity loss and please tell me whether you agree or disagree with them:**
 - A. **It is a moral obligation because we have a responsibility towards nature.**
 - It is a moral obligation because we have a responsibility towards nature.

In this case, in EU, of the 27,000 respondents, 70% agreed with the previous statement, 26%, rather agree, 2%, tend to disagree, I do not know 1%, 1% - not agree with previous statement. **In Romania**, the majority (80%) responded that they agree with the assertion that stopping the biodiversity loss is a moral obligation.

B. Our welfare and quality of life is based on nature and biodiversity, in their capacity as providers of recreation and pleasure.

58% of EU citizens agreed with the previous statement, 34% rather agree, 5%, tend to disagree, I do not know 2%, 2%-disagree. Respondents **in our country** agreed with the statement in proportion of 66%.

C. The biodiversity is essential for the production of goods such as food, medicines and fuel.

If EU opinions are divided in the sense that 53% agree with previous statement plus 33% which rather agree, **in our country**, 63% agree with that statement.

D. The biodiversity is essential in approaching the climate change.

While 50% of EU respondents agree with this statement while 32% rather agree, 67% of Romanian agrees and 23% rather agree.

E. Europe will become more economically impoverished due to the loss of biodiversity.

Thus, 45% of respondents at EU level agree with previous statement, 31%, rather agree, 12%, tend to disagree, 4%-do not know and 8% disagree. Most **Romanians** responded at a rate of 53% agrees with the statement while 3% disagree.

■ **What measures should the EU take to protect the biodiversity?**

When EU citizens were asked about the necessary steps to be taken in order to protect the biodiversity, 30% selected the introduction of several strict economic rules with impact on nature. Meanwhile, 22% said that the EU should focus on providing the right information on the importance of biodiversity. Measures such as increasing the number and area of protected natural areas in Europe and the allocation of additional financial resources for nature conservation were chosen as a priority by 14% and 12% of EU citizens. For Romania, the highest percentage

(24%) belongs same as in EU to the introduction of several strict economic rules with impact on nature.

- **Do you think the decline and possible extinction of flora, fauna and animals, will have an impact for you personally?**

The EU citizens do not see any immediate personal impact due to the loss of biodiversity, 17% of them say that they have been affected by this phenomenon, while 72% believe they will feel the effect in the future. A 9% of respondents doubt that the biodiversity loss will have any effect on the future.

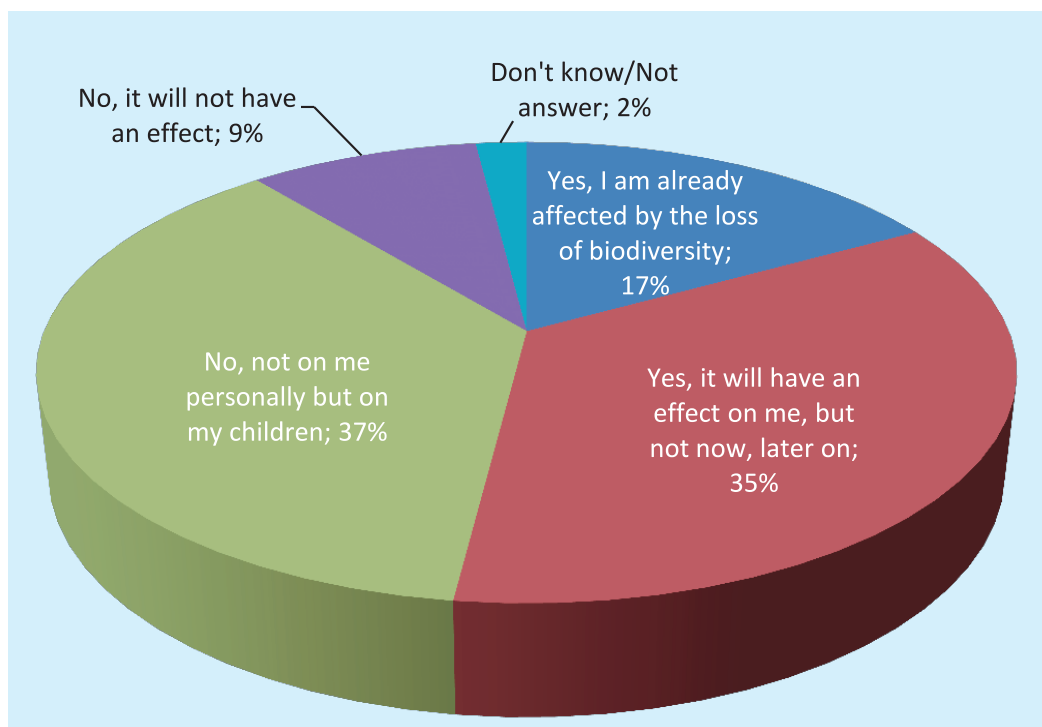


Figure 6. The personal impact on the biodiversity loss on EU citizens

Therefore, 72% of people from Europe see the future impact of this phenomenon.

In Romania, 24% say they are already affected by the loss of biodiversity while 5% say there will be no effect.

- **Have you heard of Natura 2000?**

Most of EU citizens (78%) never heard of Natura 2000, which is an ecological network of protected areas in Europe which includes **Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas** and aims to maintain a favorable conservation status of the most important **habitat types**. Natura 2000 is the main instrument for the conservation of natural heritage in the EU.

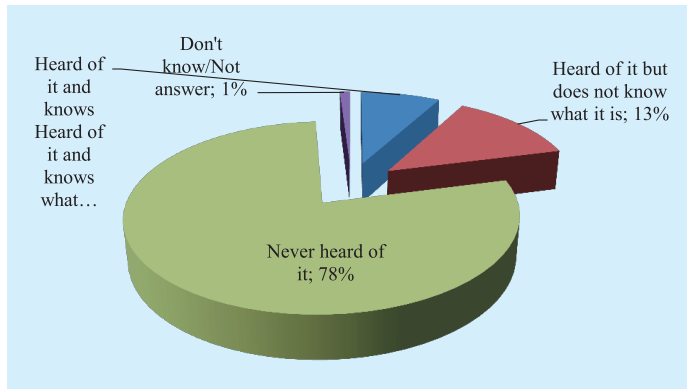


Figure 7. Awareness level concerning Natura 2000

13% of respondents have heard of this network but do not know exactly what that means and 8% know and also know what this network means.

In Finland only 19% never heard of the Natura 2000 network while in Ireland and Britain it's a very high percentage, 96% and 97%.

In our country, 86% of people have never heard of the network in question and only 5% have heard and know its meaning.

■ **The most important roles of protected areas**

When they were questioned about the role of protected areas and Natura 2000 sites 53% of EU citizens have chosen to protect plant and animal species endangered, 43% mentioned stopping the destruction of valuable terrestrial and marine areas, 38% of responses were related to the key role of protected areas in providing clean water and air and 24% were selected the response to promote land use which is friendly with the nature. Only 11% chose the role to stimulate the ecotourism and recreational opportunities.

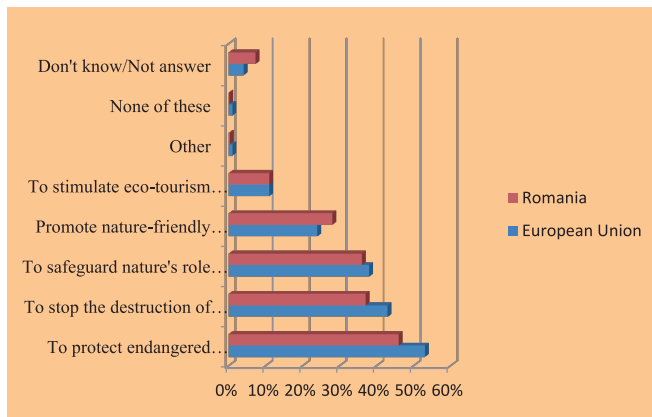


Figure 8. The key roles of natural protected areas in Romania and EU

In our country, 46% of respondents chose that the most important role of protected areas is the conservation of plants and endangered animals.

■ **The impact of economic development on protected natural areas**

The economic development causes destruction or damage to the protected areas such as those included in the Natura 2000 network. Therefore, 48% of EU citizens consider that such actions should be prohibited because of the importance of such areas, with variations by country, from 30% in the Netherlands to 67% in Slovenia, Romania percentage is 45%.

■ **Can you specify whether you made any personal effort to protect the biodiversity?**

70% of EU citizens said they personally have made some efforts to protect the biodiversity and half of them said they would be willing to do more to stop the biodiversity loss (33% of those who answered “yes”). By country, the situation revealed that Portugal and Slovenia are the states most involved in the biodiversity conservation.

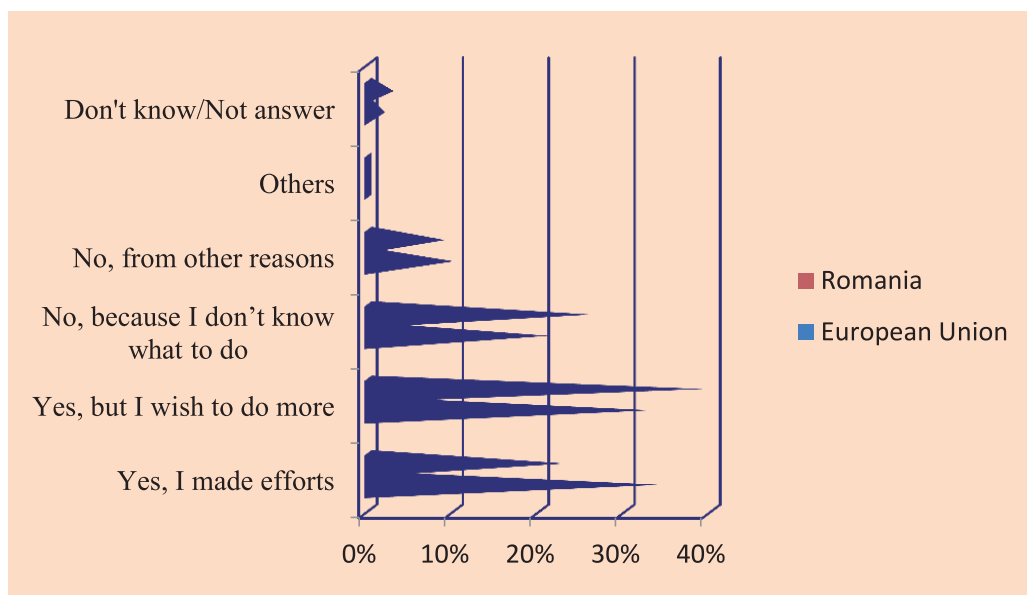


Figure 9. The percentages of efforts made or willing to be made in order to protect the biodiversity in case of EU and Romanian citizens

In Romania, 39% of citizens said they have made personal efforts to protect the biodiversity but would like to do more, 23% have made efforts in this regard, 26%-no, I do not know what to do for this purpose, 9%, no, from other reasons, 3%-do not know.

6. Conclusion

In the last two years there have been made significant progress, although insufficient, concerning the:

- Further selection of Natura 2000 sites and streamline their protection;
- Improve the knowledge base;
- Establishing the links between the biodiversity and the climate change and stressing the benefits resulted from the integrated approaches.

Have made more progress in terms of:

- Integration of biodiversity considerations into other policies;
- Availability of funds;
- Address the gaps in the existing policy.

We can say that protecting the biodiversity and stopping its loss is not yet a priority in the EU, its citizens are not informed enough about such problems, there were a small number of actions in order to protect the environment compared to many negative effects such as discharges waste oil, deforestation, etc...

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AN ENVIRONMENTALLY – SENSITIVE APPROACH IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY: ECOLOGDGES

Bariş Erdem¹

Nuray Tetik²

Abstract

Today tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors in the world. Statistics revealed that in spite of occasional shocks, international tourist arrivals have shown virtually uninterrupted growth: from 25 million in 1950, to 277 million in 1980; to 435 million in 1990, to 675 million in 2000. Worldwide, international tourist arrivals reached 940 million in 2010, up 6.6% over the previous year. It can be said that the growth in demand for nature tourism within this international tourist demand has been significant in recent years. Moreover, it is expected to grow steadily by taking into consideration of tourists 'changing needs and expectations. It is due to the increase in environmental awareness and environmental – sensitive choices of tourists. Today tourists are becoming more aware of the importance of environment and, this forces the hotel industry to pay more attention on environmentally – sensitive approach. As a consequence of these changes and progresses, an accommodation concept called as “eco-hotels” or “ecolodge” or “green hotel” has been occurred. Today, ecolodges are one of the first choices for hotel investments in many destinations. In the study, the samples presented are quite interesting and it is anticipated that with its such aspect, it will be quite beneficial to hotel investors and hotel managers.

KEYWORDS: tourism, hotel industry, environmentally – sensitive approach, ecolodges.

JEL Classification: M13, Q59

1. Introduction

A rapidly changing business environment, changing customer demands, and increasing competition has been a challenge for many of today's hospitality companies (Cho et al., 2006). In order to achieve their goals, tourism establishments are continuously going changes in their social and technical systems forming their structure. With such changes, tourism establishments either affect their environments or try to catch the changes in their environments (Kozak and Güçlü, 2003). The

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gradual rising in the importance of tourism for countries' economies have led to an increase in the number of tourism establishment nowadays, and strengthened the competition environment. As for all the establishments, one of the main reasons for the hotels is obviously to stay competitive as well. The way for that is to make the hotel more attractive than the competitors (Didin and Köroğlu, 2008). The diversifications in tourists' demands and expectations make the tourism investors to begin new quests, and thus new service concepts are seen to be developed. In that context, ecolodges are accepted as one of the new trends in the hotel industry in recent years. An important part of the today's travellers are living in the industrialized metropolitans. Problems in big cities such as noise, environmental pollution, traffic and overpopulation are increasing the people's longing for the nature. Ecolodges offer their environmentally sensitive customers a holiday alone with nature, and thus gain an important competitive advantage. Moreover, ecolodges adopt an environmental friendly approach and considerably serve for the sustainable tourism efforts.

Within the hotel sector, increasing numbers of customers prefer to choose a green lodging facility that follows environmentally friendly practices, showing concern about the seriousness of ecological degradation. In recognition of this eco-friendly consumption need, nowadays many hotel firms seek to incorporate customers' emerging concerns about the environment in their management/ marketing decision-making. Altering their hotel operations to be green (i.e. significantly reducing environmental impacts) is becoming a necessity to attain noticeable improvement in their competitiveness in the market (Kim and Han, 2010: 997).

The tendency for environmental friendly practices is not only a particular concern to tourism, but also to all industries in the world. Particularly, the establishments in all the industries which play a role in environmental problems such as climate changing and global warming are seeking solutions about reducing such negative effects. The problems such as pollution of the seas, melting glaciers and ozone depletion are tried to be minimized by the studies of international environmental friendly organizations, non governmental organizations and scientists. In this context, the "environmental sensitive" concept gradually began to gain importance by the effects of individuals and organizations that behave in a sensitive way for the environment (Gül, 2011: 46). Today, we can abundantly observe that in the hotel industry as well. Rada (1996 adapted from Bohdanowicz et al., 2005: 1643) states that due to high level of resource utilization (energy, water, consumables) in hotel facilities, the environmental footprint of hotels is typically larger than those of other types of buildings of similar size. In this context, Holjevac (2003) suggests that the hotel of the future will be a "green hotel" or an "eco-hotel". Everything, from the choice of the location, construction, equipment, hotel products and hotel services, will be subordinated to the preservation of nature and the environment, to man – the worker, and man – the guest. Nature hotels or "eco-oasis" will be a common phenomenon.

Likewise, Leonidas (2004) asserts that the sustainable and environmentalist design in hotels are the criteria which are increasingly demanded by the customers, and states that eco-resorts are new hotel concepts. Hotels have numerous motivations for going green including: a feeling of social responsibility, governmental regulations, and economic benefits (Cometa, 2012: 1 adapted from Bohdanowicz, 2006).

It is possible to give many examples of environmental friendly practises at hotel establishments. Today, with various slogans, many hotels invite their customers to help environment. For example Holiday Inn writes “would you help us to help environment” on the recycling papers which are left by them in the rooms, and as an explanation they state the following sentences: “imagine the tons of quilt covers which are unnecessarily washed in all the hotels of the world and the damage to our waters caused by the chemicals used to wash them. Now, you also take action and help us to stop this pollution. In case you leave this card on your bed, your bed will be made with the same sheet. For a healthier environment...” (Gül, 2011: 49). Such practises were also reflected to washing of the towels in customer rooms. Therefore, hotels lead to environmental friendly practises in a considerable extent.

In this study, the importance of ecolodges which are recently one of the newest trends in hotel industry, is being discussed. The study consists of two parts. In the first part, the ecolodge concept and its basic features are explained. The second part includes the samples related to ecolodges in the world. And in the last part of the study, there are some suggestions for the investors who want to make investments in the hotel management field.

2. Changing and Customer Expectations in the Tourism and Hotel Industry

The most important feature of our age is that there is a continuous and rapid change experienced almost in every field. The business environment is one of the most important fields where such changes occur. These changes take place in fields such as technology, management techniques, product/service innovations, customer choices etc. Today's organizations have to adapt such changes in order to continue their existence, improve themselves and remain competitive (Özdaşlı, 2006: 1). Whatever the type and field of activity of the establishment is, organizations involve in a rapid and ever-changing environment. This situation leads the organizations to face with a great variety of hazards. The survival of the organizations depend on their reactions against such hazards (Öztürk and Türkmen, 2005: 168).

The globalization process will continue, because tourism is a global business, a world industry without boundaries, open to all changes and improvements (Holjevac, 2003: 131). In other words, the change is deeply affecting the tourism and hotel industry which became one of the most important industries of the world (Grzinic, 2008: 122). The race for taking more share from the gains created by the tourism sector is increasing the competition in this industry day by day. Particularly, as the

expectations of the tourists varies more and more, the hotel managers and investors are seeking for new solutions. The changes occurred in consumers' likes and choices cause the consumers to get further away from products/services, and instead of that, to tend to products/services which will meet the diversified needs (Kayalı and Aktaş, 2003). Likewise, Gemlik et al. (2009) asserts that the organizational success is hidden in creating difference among the competitors. In this context, it may be said that the hotels which offer products/services suitable for customers' expectations shall remain more competitive.

As is known, the basic goal of the hotel managements is to offer their customers a clean room, delicious food prepared in hygienic environments and well planned entertainment services. However today, all such services can be easily performed by almost every hotel management. In other words, nowadays the hotel managements do not usually use the classic themes such as "our establishment is very clean" or "our cuisine is very rich" when they determine their competition strategies (İldiri, 1998: 44). Here, the important thing for the hotels are to be able to feature and reveal their characteristics which make themselves different from other hotels. Thus, in many researches for the related literature, it is mentioned that meeting customers' demand is an important success criterion and this case plays a vital role for the hotels to remain competitive (Powers, 1995; Pizam and Ellis, 1999; Acuner, 2000; Yurtseven and Sönmez, 2003; Su, 2004; Winata and Mia, 2005). As a result, it can be said that customers both desire and more often demand innovative alternatives (Victorino et al., 2005: 555).

One of the trends that has changed newly in tourism is the increase in environmental protection and concordantly environmental sensitive choices which have started to gain importance in recent years. For example, in a research conducted in 2010 by an international travel agency called Carlson Wagonlit Travel, "more environmental policies determined for travel and tourism industries" and "increase in awareness of the tourists on environmental protection" were detected as two important environmental tendencies. As a result of this tendency, it is strongly emphasized that the hotel managements shall be in more integral and sustainable approaches about the subjects and financial requirements related with the environmental protection (Brown, 1996; Koetting and Widener, 2008 adapted from Güneş, 2011: 46).

As people are becoming more aware of the damage caused on the environment by regular business activities, it has become increasingly obvious that the hotel industry does more than its share in harming and wasting environmental resources. As a result, more and more guests are looking for hotels following practices to protect environment (Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007: 365). According to the regional experts, consumers want value for their money, and they want to stay in local, more traditional accommodations if there are no easily identifiable facilities that offer a good alternative. In many cases, these travelers would likely embrace ecological alternative if it offered good value and excellent guides, and was located

near highly viewable wildlife resources or destinations with excellent scenic qualities (International Finance Corporation, 2004: 7).

Chafe (2007: 170 – 174) mentioned the importance of accommodations in terms of tourists by giving examples from studies. A 2002 survey of 7872 adult Germans found that the interviewees placed special importance on environmental quality: 65% of those surveyed think that it is particularly important to find environmentally friendly accommodation. The survey, which was carried out on behalf of Responsibletravel.com in 2004, revealed that an overwhelming 89% of the 1000 British adults agreed that their vacations would be more enjoyable if their hotel had adequate waste and sewage treatment facilities. Another study which was conducted by TIA and NGT in 2003 revealed that Nearly half (49%) of the Americans questioned in 2003 prefer trips with small-scale accommodation run by local people.

Sustainability in the hospitality industry has increased in awareness and to the point sustainable operations from corporate travellers, meeting planners and leisure guests may now be expected. Almost all hotel franchise groups, hotel management companies and individual hotel operators have taken steps in their journey to reduce their environmental impact. While the green movement is growing, many hotel owners and investors still remain sceptical of vendors, consultants and technologies that are pushing green and environmentally friendly products and services (Parisi, 2012). According Holjevac (2003), tourism is a clean industry, which will coincide with the “green trend” of the future that aims to preserve and conserve nature for future generation. This will be the great return to nature – the “green wave”. In this context Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) stated, the number of customers seeking green hotel properties has grown. Marketing its environmentally friendly practices can be an effective strategy for a hotel looking to change its position and achieve competitiveness in the lodging industry.

3. A New Phenomenon in Tourism: Ecolodges

The popularity of ecolodges is increasing because they offer an opportunity for rejuvenation rather than just recreation. It is a far deeper feeling of satisfaction than plain recreation. It is embalming to the soul than just the mind. It is about coming out of one's comfort zone and experiencing something that is simple, maybe slightly physically stressful and yet soothing. Little do people realize than even watching TV can be stressful, not to mention the hours spent in front of a computer screen in an average person's working day (Eco-Lodges for Green Minded Travelers, 2011: 39). The term of ecolodge is “a tourism industry label used to identify a nature-dependent tourist facility that meets the principles of ecotourism”. An ecolodge is recognized by distinct design features that are intended primarily to blend in with the natural environment (Assessment Criteria for Eco-lodge Proposals, 2010).

The term of ecolodge was formally launched in the marketplace at the First International Ecolodge Forum and Field Seminar held in 1994 at Maho Bay Camps in the U.S. Virgin Islands (Wood, 2002: 27; Mehta, 2007: 418; Dizdarević, 2010: 26) and Maho Bay Camps was determined as the first ecolodge (Mehta, 2007: 418). As a follow-up of the 1994 forum, TIES published the first book for ecolodge industry named “The Ecolodge Sourcebook for Planners and Developers” (Mehta, 2007: 417) which contains information on site selection, finance, planning, design, alternative energy applications, conservation education, guidelines and an impressive set of resources including a variety of architectural plans for ecolodges (Eagles, 2001: 615). Later, “The First International Ecolodge Guidelines” was published in 2002 after the Second International Conference held in 1995 in Costa Rica, which offered a definitive international definition of an ecolodge (Wood, 2002: 27; Mehta, 2007: 418). According to the definition, ecolodge is “an industry label used to identify a nature-dependent tourist lodge that meets the philosophy and principles of ecotourism” (Weaver, 2001: 147; Fennell, 2003: 169; Mehta, 2007: 418; Ceballos-Lascurain, 2008: 197; Kwan et al., 2008: 698; Raju, 2009: 47). Mehta et al. (2002) enriched the definition by utilizing existing one and the following definition was proposed (Mehta, 2007: 418):

“An ecolodge is a five – to 75 – room, low-impact, nature-based, financially sustainable accommodation facility that helps protect sensitive neighbouring areas; involves and benefits local communities; offers tourists an interpretive and interactive participatory experience; provides a spiritual communion with nature and culture; and is planned, designed, constructed and operated in an environmentally and socially sensitive manner”.

Ecolodges are usually small with less than 10 rooms. This ensures that there are no crowds and makes it an exclusive place to enjoy a holiday at a relaxed pace. There is no night-life and therefore guest go to bed early and rise early in the morning to the song of birds. It has a very positive impact on health of stressed urban souls leading a sedentary lifestyle (Eco-Lodges for Green Minded Travelers, 2011: 39).

Ecolodge structures can range from contemporary to ancient, permanent to temporary, centralized to dispersed, (Weaver, 2001: 150) and rustic to luxurious (Weaver, 2001: 150; Wood, 2002: 28; Demir and Çevirgen, 2006: 89; Dizdarević, 2010: 27) as can be seen at Table 1 (Weaver, 2001: 150):

Table 1. Ecotourism Building Types

Verneclular building types	<i>Indigenous structures:</i> Grass huts, mud structures, caves, elevated halls, house boats, reed platforms and buildings, yurts (Mongolian circular tent), tree platforms, ice houses, teepees, cliff dwellings, stick houses
Historical building types	<i>Developed verneclular:</i> Colonial architecture, residentially derived styles, commercially developed styles, military architecture, ecclesiastical architecture, monuments, industrial buildings, palaces and great homes

Contemporary structures	<i>Prefabricated structures:</i> Masonry, glass-fibre, reinforced concrete, rigid tents, inflatable structures <i>Traditional tourism:</i> Cottage colonies, inns, guesthouses, homes
Portable and low impact structures	Rigid tents, collapsible tents, elevated huts, inflatable structures, vehicles, jungle hammocks

Source: Weaver, D. B. (2001). *Ecotourism. (1st Edition), John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd, Australia, p.150.*

As can be seen at the table, accommodations in general for the ecotourism industry are usually mid-range in price, though the range of accommodation types is enormous from luxury tent-camps, to backpacker tents, rustic lean-tos and homestays, ranches and haciendas, tea houses as much as live-abroad boats, high-end small cruise ships (Wood, 2002: 28; Demir and Çevirgen, 2006: 89; Dizdareviç, 2010: 27).

Ecolodges are usually small-scale, individually and locally owned businesses (Moscardo et al., 1996: 32; Wood, 2002: 36; Kwan et al., 2010: 4), rather than being part of a chain. However, there are also a number of outbound tour operators, which have ecolodge chains. For example Abercrombie & Kent Hotels and Resorts, a transnational hotel chain, is corporating with The Nature Conservancy to develop an ecolodge chain in Belize, Brazil and Peru (Honey, 1999: 67; Weaver, 2001: 150). For example, Russell et al. (1995) undertook an international ecolodges survey of 28 operators in nine regions around the world (Belize, Costa Rica, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador, the state of Alaska, Australia, New Zealand and Africa). This study discovered that many of the lodges were found in or adjacent to protected areas, with outstanding natural beauty acting as a key to success of the operation. Most of the ecolodges sampled were small, accommodating about 24 guests, with some successful operations in Amazonia catering up to 100 guests. Although most of the ownership had been typically small scale and independent, corporate ownership was becoming more common. The authors cited the P&O line in Australia and the Hilton in Kenya as two examples of this recent phenomenon (Fennell, 2003: 173; Raju, 2009: 52).

They are usually located in or near national parks and protected areas with facilities designed with a local or exotic quality (Kwan et al., 2008: 698) and provide educational programmes (Wood, 2002: 36; Kwan et al., 2010: 4). They can generate a variety of positive economic development impacts in highly rural, biodiverse areas, where other types of development underway or under consideration are frequently damaging to the environment. Therefore, ecolodges are of particular interest to the sustainable development community (International Finance Corporation, 2004: 4).

As Wood (2002: 28) stated many lodges offer their own guides and interpretation walks, as their visitors are frequently independent travelers that are not traveling with a tour guide. Often local farmers or indigenous people with in-

depth knowledge of the local flora and fauna are hired to guide for ecolodges. Other recreation opportunities offered by lodges vary tremendously depending on the site: game drives, bird watching, canoeing, horseback riding, bicycling, beach trips and educational visits to local museums, zoos, butterfly farms, agricultural and livestock farms, craft production areas and other natural history and cultural sights.

According to The International Ecodge Guidelines, an ecolodge should meet the following criteria, which are the key principles of ecolodges (Bien, 2002: 140; Wood, 2002: 28; International Finance Corporation, 2004: 28; Mehta, 2007: 419; Dizdarević, 2010: 27):

- Conserve the surrounding environment, both natural and cultural.
- Have minimal impact on the natural surroundings during construction.
- Fit into its specific physical and cultural contexts through careful attention to form, landscaping and color, as well as the use of localized architecture.
- Use alternative, sustainable means of water acquisition and reduces water consumption.
- Provide careful handling and disposal of solid waste and sewage.
- Meet its energy needs through passive design and combines these with their modern counterparts for greater sustainability.
- to work together with the local community.
- interpretative programs to educate both its employees and tourists about the surroundings natural and cultural environments.
- Contribute to sustainable local development through research programs.

If lodges do not follow the principles and sound practices of ecotourism, they can have negative impacts on biodiversity in the surrounding areas. Community benefits may also be minimal if lodges do not promote stakeholder participation, including the employment and training of local people, local ownership, purchase of food, crafts and other supplies from local vendors, or the opportunity for local people to use or learn about their facilities and natural resources. In some cases, the failure to include local people may lead to conflict or confrontation within communities. Poor employment and management practices can also damage relations between the business and communities (International Finance Corporation, 2004: 29). As a result, the ecolodge loses its selling point and community support- and may ultimately fail (Mehta, 2007: 420). On the other hand, not all ecolodges will meet all the principles, as individual circumstances or location may make different principles irrelevant. For an accommodation facility to be called an ecolodge, it had to satisfy five of the above-mentioned criteria, three of which embodied the three main principles of ecotourism, namely protection of nature, benefits to local people and offering interpretive programmes. With these criteria system, there was flexibility depending on the individual circumstances of the ecolodge (Mehta, 2007: 419).

Mehta (2007: 421) stressed that some of the main environmental management systems principles that need to be considered for ecolodges in order to develop sustainable tourism. These include water conservation and harvesting, energy conservation and use of alternative energy, wastewater and sewage treatment and solid waste management. This also helps save energy, lower waste discharge, cost saving, improve service, enhance image, contribute to the promotion of the business, attract tourist and make them feel secure (WWF, 2000: 3). In the case of water conservation and harvesting, rain and snow harvesting as well as water conservation technologies, such as low-flow showerheads and grey-water irrigation can be used. Alternative energy sources and energy conservation technologies can be applied, such as solar, wind and geothermal power and the use of low-wattage light fittings and energy saving kitchen equipment. In the case of waste management, which is a crucial principle especially for Eco lodges because of their remote locations, strategies such as sorting of solid waste (plastics, glass, paper, etc.), composting of kitchen waste, use of dry decomposing toilets and constructed wetlands to treat sewage are some of the techniques utilized by designers (Mehta, 2007: 421). Table 2 shows guidelines for managing environmental issue in hotels (WWF, 2000: 3):

Table 2. Guidelines for Managing Environmental Issue in Hotels

1. Location/architecture

Hotels should be located in a place which ensure the sanitation, unpolluted, easy for access and supply hotels should meet the following requirement for architecture:

- Suitable with the surrounding environment (height, style, color)
- Utilize the natural energy (light, solar power, wind) in order to save energy, lower cost, waste discharge, protect the environment
- Utilize local construction material and labor force
- Logically setup services and facilities within the Hotels, ensure smooth operation, sanitation, avoid overlap which affect the productivity and effectiveness of work
- Improve green environment and tree
- Reduce negative impacts of the business to surrounding environment (waste, exhaust, noise)

2. Facilities

Hotels should invest in eco-friendly facilities and green foodstuff with environment management purpose, detail as follow:

- Facilities utilize natural energy or save energy
- Facilities, materials, foodstuff that lower waste discharge, control pollution, noise
- Green foodstuff (nontoxic, clear source), don't use wildlife and endangered animals

- Use nontoxic chemical, natural vegetables
- Have green contract with supplier

3. Energy, material

- Implement measures to save resources, reduce waste, avoid pollution, protect the environment (use electric meter, water meter to control the amount use monthly)
- Use less energy, make less noise, use natural resources (solar power, wind power) or recycle power (solar battery, bios gas)

4. Water management and sanitation

- Ensure the sanitation, quality of water supply.
- Control the water supply: use water meter, take note the amount of water use monthly, implement management measures to save water.
- Identify the source of water discharge, kind and amount of water discharge from each unit in the hotel.
- Control (the use and metering) the use of chemical substances (cleaning, shampoo, soap ...) to reduce environmental impact.
- Have measures to treat water discharge before discharge into the environment.
- Use treated water discharge for cleaning and watering
- Recycle to make usable water in order to decrease discharge, avoid pollution.

5. Waste management and sanitation

- Manage, collect from all units and areas within the hotel (need to be)
- Encourage staff to classify waste into different types:
- Recyclable: (paper, cardboard, glass, plastic, cans, metal)
- Disposable: (organic waste: food, vegetable): treat by composting
- Toxic waste: (neon lamp, bulb, battery)
- Non-disposable

6. Exhaust management

- Define the source of exhaust
- Analyze the impact to the environment
- Apply measures to control and manage exhaust

7. Noise management

- Define the source of noise and level of impact to guests and staff
- Apply measures to reduce and eliminate noise both in and outside of the hotel

8. Environment management

- Have plan and objective and policy on environment. Control and evaluate environment management periodically
- Assign a staff to be in charge of the environment management and related issues in the hotel. This person will go to meeting, workshop, training course...

- Organize training course, meeting to disseminate information, raise staff's awareness of the environment management
- Inform guests about environment management activities of the hotel and encourage them to participate in those activities
- Have agreement with supplier on “green” product with neighboring communities on the environment management of the hotel

Source: Edited from WWF, 2000: 3; Gardner, 2001: 529; International Finance Corporation, 2004: 28; Ceballos-Lascurain, 2008: 198.

Since mainly nature tourists use ecolodges, who are concerned with conservation, ecolodges should provide practical examples of harmonious interaction with nature. They should not only strive to minimize negative impacts but also provide alternative, more sustainable ways of living (Mehta, 2007: 421).

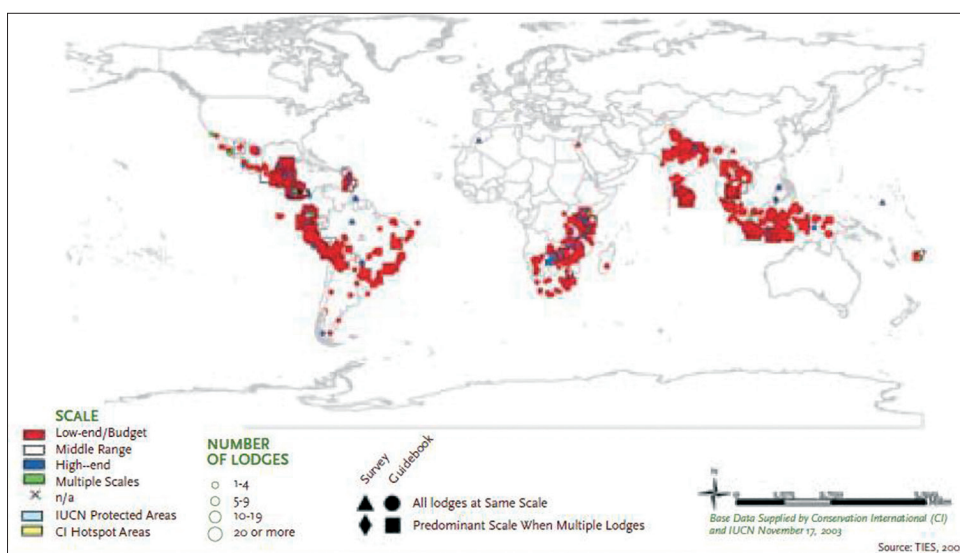


Fig. 1. Ecolodges worldwide

Eco lodges are predominantly located in natural surroundings of offering an experience close to nature. It is a concept where guests enjoy a place for what it inherently has to offer, rather than something that is replicated from elsewhere. The guests therefore, get to interact with to local people and observe their lifestyles, appreciate a culture and environment, different from their own (Eco-Lodges for Green Minded Travellers, 2011: 38). Bricker et al. (2004) did a study for determining the location of Eco lodges and nature-based lodges in countries. The 60 countries were chosen based on their high concentration of nature-based lodges, their developing (or mature) ecotourism industry, and their location in an area of high biodiversity and/or significant natural attractions. Of the total 5,459 lodges mapped (another 1,059 lodges could not be plotted because no location was available), Indonesia has

the largest concentration of lodges (758), followed by Costa Rica (590), Thailand (468), Peru (356), Ecuador (345), Guatemala (322), Mexico (304), Sri Lanka (277) and Tanzania (259). Of the lodges mapped in all 60 countries, 84 percent are located in biodiversity hotspot areas, as defined by Conservation International. The highest concentration is in Mesoamerica (1,157 lodges), followed by Indo-Burma (543 lodges). Of those Eco lodges that completed the in-depth surveys, 60 percent are located within or on the periphery of an established protected area, and 39 percent are located within a private reserve (International Finance Corporation, 2004: 9). Authors marked these ecolodges on the map as seen in Fig. 1.

Against all the global warming and environmental pollution which are highly discussed in all fields, hotels are also seen to make efforts for starting to take necessary precautions. The environmental friendly hotels, numbers of which increase day by day, apply various practices to minimize the damage given to the environment. While some of them do not include any electronic appliance within them, some other changes the towels and sheets only if the customer wishes to. And some hotels care about to offer organic food products. Today's travellers mind out that the hotel is environmental friendly as well as with comfort, luxury and design. In this sense, ecolodge models are seen in the tourism industry number of which is growing day by day. Features of some of such hotels may be summarized as in the following (Buckley, 2003; <http://gezz.org/index.php/seyahat/85-seyahat-onerileri/148-dunyanin-en-iyi-eko-sik-otelleri>):

Tauana Hotel: This hotel, which is located in northwest of Brazil, consists of nine bungalows which are utmost compatible with tropical nature. The hotel was built from sustainable wood which are used in construction of Indian houses. In the hotel where noise pollution is minimized, no television music system is included in any way. In the hotel which is illuminated by minimal lighting system, there is no pool as well due to corrosive characteristic of chlorine. The guests are offered to ride bicycles around the exotic vicinity as eco-activity. All the meals in hotel's menu are prepared from organic fruits and vegetables that are grown in hotel's garden.

Ngala Lodge and Game Reserve (South Africa): Glass and cans are recycled in nearby Nelspruit. Catering scraps are used in neighbouring communities for raising pigs. Candle ends are provided for a local village business, which recasts them and sells them back to the Lodge. Sewage is treated in multi-chambered septic-tank systems. Paper and plastic packaging are burnt in an on-site incinerator. The lodge also buys a locally made artisanal paper, manufactured from elephant dung and recycled office paper, for use in the guest rooms.

Whitepod Hotel: This hotel, which is located in Switzerland, offers an environmental accommodation facility to winter sports lovers. The hotel consists of nine tents in three different types which are remarkable by their round domes. Recycled materials were used for building the tents, and in order to be ergonomically, white colour was preferred in summer and green in winter. The platforms on which

the tents were placed has been designed from sustainable Swiss wood. Therefore the tents are able to be carried to any place easily without damaging the environment. The tents, in which the electricity consumption is minimized, are heated with stoves and illuminated with gasoline lamps. Water consumption is under control by a massive bath located in the main building. All the guests are using the bath in common; sheets and towels are replaced only when the guests want to.

Canvaschic Hotel: This hotel, which operates in the south of France, offers its guests a camp holiday far from urban life and in touch with nature. The tents, which are covered with cream colour natural clothes, are placed on wooden platforms and have all the comfort demanded in a classical hotel room. The pathways in the tents and hotel are illuminated with solar energy and candlelight. The baths which have heated rainwater are offered for common use.

Strattons Hotel: This facility, which is one of the leading environmental friendly hotels in England, has many awards in eco-hotel fields. In the hotel organization structure, a special “green management team” has been established. All hotel employees are trained in parallel to environmental sensitivity. In the hotel, electricity and water consumption is daily measured and thus energy loss is minimized. In times when electronic appliances such as television, coffee machine etc. are not used, care is taken for them to be closed. Accessories used in bath such as shampoo, hair cream, shower gel are offered in refillable pumping bottles instead of miniature plastic bottles. In the hotel, where development of local economy is contributed, only local products are used.

Jean-Michel Fiji Islands Resort: In this hotel located in Vanua Levu Island of South Pacific Ocean, no television and telephone is included in any way. The rooms and villas, which are heated with recycled materials, are ventilated in natural method. The food in the hotel menu hosting to modern Fijian cuisine are made of local vegetables and fruits which are grown in the hotel’s organic garden. Yoga, visit to local markets, walking in the tropical forest, underwater diving, Fijian language training lesson are some of the eco-activities offered by the hotel.

Daintree Ecolodge (Australia): Sewage is treated in a multi-chamber biocycle system located between the villas and the restaurant. Power is supplied from a mains line along the nearby road to Daintree Village. Used kitchen oils are collected and returned for reprocessing.

Lapa Rios Eco lodge: During the construction of this hotel located in the rainforests of Costa Rica; local, natural and recycling materials were used completely. The hotel, which is shown as a sample for several eco-tourism projects, is using only local products in order to contribute to local economy. The water in the hotel is heated with solar energy, plastic and glass are used as recyclable. Bicycle tour in the tropical forest, riding horses, watching the birds and yoga are among the eco-activities presented by the hotel.

Tiamo Resort: This hotel, which is one of the smallest tropical resorts in the world, has a system that produces the biggest solar system in Caribbean and Latin America. In the hotel, there are 11 hand made bungalows as well as classic hotel rooms. All of the bungalows are made of palm trees which are acquired by sustainable forests and had antitoxine process. Plastic materials which are forgotten by the guests in rooms are processed again by taking their permissions, turned into plastic jugs and sold as souvenir. In the hotel, definitely no brochure is used in order to make paper saving.

Nowadays, other than those examples, there are many ecolodges in various countries. In accordance with the aim of the study, we had to content with those ecolodges examples mentioned above.

4. Conclusions

One of the most important factors affecting the success of hotel managements in today's global competitive environment is to be able to create difference. Zerenler et al. (2007) asserts that in order to stay competitive, the organizations should redefine their basic strategies, rediscover the sector they are in and have the ability to create difference in their products and services. And Aksu (2000) states that in order to be able to sell products or goods in a market full of competitors, one should have the capacity to meet demands and expectations of the customers. Today, it became an important obligation to realize the differentiation occurred in customers' demand before the competitors. Accordingly, organizations which can offer the products and services having new and different characteristics in the fastest way are able to survive. In terms of hotel establishments, although predicting how the future developments shall progress and contribute to the establishment is very important, this case requires a hard effort due to sector's structural characteristic. In such an environment, the working of hotel establishments with increasing performance and customer satisfaction level depends on their strategical thinking and to be able to apply them (Seymen, 2001).

Ecolodges are accepted as one of the new trends of the tourism in recent years. In an environment where environmental problems are increasing day by day, ecolodges both provide their customers to live a different holiday experience and serve the sustainable tourism efforts at an important level. Within the frame of this study, suggestions for the entrepreneurs who wish to make investments in hotel management field may be as follows:

- The entrepreneurs who wish to make investments in hotel management field should at first well analyse where the hotel trends are heading towards, who their customers are and in what kind of environment they want to spend their holidays.
- Investors should develop a detailed construction plan including where and when each of the steps to be taken.

- The investors should create common projects with expert architectures, designers and marketing experts in hotel management field, particularly at planning and application levels.
- They should evaluate infrastructure of the location whether it is ecologically appropriate for the construction and they should consider the impact of construction on the area's biodiversity and its surroundings.
- They should analyze social and cultural factors that are influenced by construction such as the acceptance by local community and compliance with legal regulations.
- They should promote the use of green architectural design and low impact construction in order to minimize their impact on the surrounding environment.
- They should take technical assistance especially in applying new technologies for energy, waste, sewage and water.
- Investors, advisors, donors, policy makers, Eco lodge operators and other stakeholders should play an active role in order to sustain financial, environmental, and social benefits.
- As environmental issues have become central to competitive success for the tourism sector, investors should take into consideration of implementation of environmental management and establish Environmental Impact Assessment.
- They should use environmentally-friendly, energy-efficient and non-hazardous products by taking into consideration of customers' choices in order to reduce environmental impact of the industry and to create customer satisfaction.
- They also should give financial, employment and training, opportunities for local communities in order to increase local development of the area.
- Lodge owners may be involved in long-term agreements and create strategic alliances about environmental protection.
- Lodge owners may actively contribute to environmental programs such as volunteer programs, or research projects, or the monitoring of visitor use.

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ROI-KAEN-SAN-SIN DESTINATION BRANDING. THE CHALLENGE OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN THAILAND FOR THE AEC**Donruetai Kovathanakul, Ph.D.¹****Abstract**

Roi-Kaen-San-Sin is a pseudonym of the cultural prosperity destination areas of Roi-et, Khon Kaen, Mahasarakam, and Kalasin Provinces in Thailand. This cluster is situated on Mittraphap Road, the highway and gateway to Route No.9, which links to Laos and Vietnam. Destination Branding is one of the things the Tourism Authority of Thailand would like to upgrade in each of the provinces. The author selected Sinsai, oral traditions, unique forms of architecture, literature, and various performances for use in branding in order to accentuate and brand these tourism destinations in Laos-Thailand as valuable heritages, both tangibly and intangibly. The challenge was in how to show the cultural diversity of the former Lan Xang Kingdom by means of responsible tourism in line with the objectives of the ASEAN Economic Community. What is the best way to systemize and integrate the cultural and intangible splendor of these locations? This paper will develop the initiative case study concept of responsible cultural heritage destination branding.

Keywords: Roi-Kaen-San-Sin, AEC, cultural heritage, destination, branding, Roi-Kaen-San-Sin, the cultural prosperity destinations of Roi-et, Khon Kaen, Mahasarakam, and Kalasin Provinces in Thailand.

JEL Classification: M31, Q56

This cluster consists of Roi-et, Khon Kaen, Mahasarakam, and Kalasin. They are situated on Mittraphap Road, the highway and gateway of Route No.9 (starting from Mukdahan, Thailand continuing to Savannakhet, Laos, and ending in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam; shown in figure 1), which links to Laos and Vietnam. The website *www.logisticnews.net* (2007) suggests that Route No.9, which links Thailand, Lao PDR. and Vietnam, including logistics in the Indochina market, would be a benefit to tourism.

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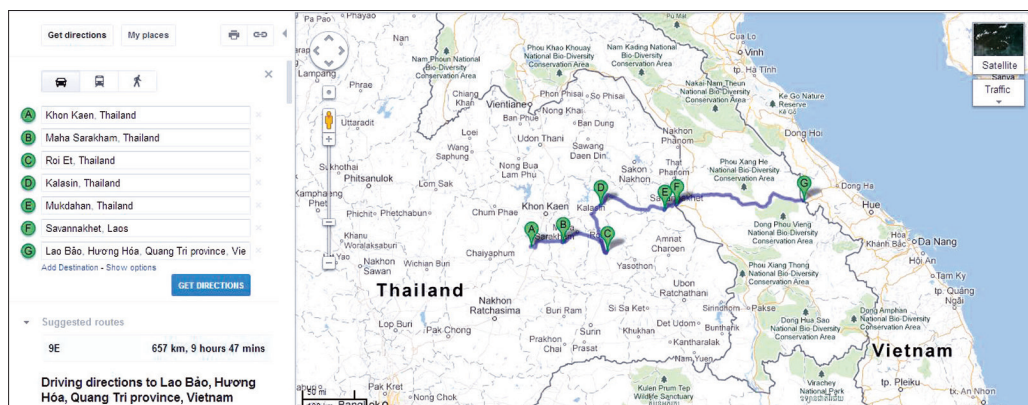


Figure 1: Map showing places linked to Khon Kaen by Route No. 9

Thailand Destination Branding

To accomplish Destination Branding in Thailand some of the components necessary are: the need for a consistent strategy backed with long term investment, the power of innovation, the determination of and focus on a core essence, and the importance of customer service orientation. Challenges to Destination Branding efforts must also be considered. Emphasis is placed on service orientation as it occurs in three different contexts: the international and “controlled” level, the local and “controlled” level, and the independent and “uncontrolled” level. This third area is where real, spontaneous interactions occur between independent service providers or common citizens and tourists. This richness is a challenging area of exploration and potential impact. (McFarland, 2006)

Thailand tourism authorities need to up the country’s brand image on the international marketplace of global brand specialist. (TravelBlackboard, 2011) In the marketing communication campaign named “Amazing Thailand”; Thailand appears as a very suitable destination choice in our case, because it offers a broad variety of interests to visitors from cultural and historical to fun and entertainment venues, while it has repeatedly attracted media attention in numerous areas such as Buddhism festivals. (Sangsue, n.d.) *Destination Branding is one of the things the Tourism Authority of Thailand would like to upgrade in each of the mentioned provinces.* The branding of the north-eastern region is proposed as “The Land of Knowledge and Cultural Richness.

Sinsai, the reflection of Thai-Laos cultural heritage

Sinsai is part of the oral traditions and Buddhist literature that narrate the hero named Sinsai, who has gratefulness, love, and morality. (BanchaKiet, 2011) The

story is a part of Chadok (Buddhist literature), oral tradition and the literature of Laos and Thailand's north-eastern region, the former Lan Xang Kingdom.

The hero and terms are still in existence in illustrated form in the external folk mural paintings of architecture in many of Thailand's north-eastern Buddhist temples such as Sanuanwareepattanaram Temple (figure 2), Chaisri Temple (figure 3), et al.



Figure 2: External Mural Painting of Sanuanwareepattanaram Temple, Khon Kaen (feng_shui, 2000)



Figure 3: Mural Painting of Chaisri Temple, Khon Kaen (dailynews, 2013)



Figure 4: Sinsai on Isan Architecture splendor (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2013)

The performances of Sinsai, Northeastern (Isan) traditional dancing (figure 4). The use of illustrations and branding is to accentuate and brand these tourism destinations in Laos-Thailand as valuable heritages, both tangibly and intangibly. The challenge was in how to show the cultural diversity of the former Lan Xang Kingdom by means of responsible tourism in line with the objectives of the ASEAN Economic Community.



Figure 5: Sinsai, Northeastern (Isan) traditional dancing band (Chula, 2013)

What is the best way to systemize and integrate the cultural and intangible splendor of these locations?

The researcher developed the database systemization from www.unesco.org (UNESCO, n.d.), Asian Development Bank (AsianDevelopmentBank, n.d.), and (AsiaPacificDatabaseonIntangibleCulturalHeritage, n.d.) as shown in the list below.

- 1. Tangible Heritage**
 - 1.1. AEC Cultural Heritage**
 - 1.1.1. Monuments**
 - 1.1.2. Groups of Buildings**
 - 1.1.3. Sites**
 - 1.1.3.1. Archeological Sites**
 - 1.1.3.1.1. Pre-historic Sites**
 - 1.1.3.1.2. Historic Sites**
 - 1.1.3.1.3. Engineering and Industrial Sites**
 - 1.1.3.1.4. River Sites**
 - 1.1.3.2. Built Structures**
 - 1.1.3.2.1. Architecture**
 - 1.1.3.2.2. Town Planning**
 - 1.1.3.3. Cultural Landscape**
 - 1.1.3.3.1. Cultural Landscape**
 - 1.1.3.3.2. Historic Parks and Gardens**
 - 1.1.3.3.3. Trade Route Monuments and Remains**
- 2. Intangible Heritage**
 - 2.1. AEC Cultural Heritage**
 - 2.1.1. Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle for the intangible cultural heritage**
 - 2.1.2. Performing Arts**
 - 2.1.3. Social practices, rituals and festive events**
 - 2.1.4. Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe**
 - 2.1.5. Traditional craftsmanship**
- 3. Museums**
 - 3.1. Tangible Heritage**
 - 3.2. Intangible Heritage**
 - 3.3. Mixed Heritage**
 - 3.4. Contemporary Heritage**
 - 3.5. Digital Heritage**
- 4. Related Cultural Heritage Laws**

The collection of the Sinsai architecture database, especially, should be assembled by address history, adaptive history, cultural or foreign influence, age, flooring, color, material, and decoration (eg. doors, windows or façade, etc.). The collector should

accumulate the occupations by studying the history, process, material, and appliances. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008) (UNESCO Bangkok, 2004) (UNESCO, 2006)

The concept of responsible cultural heritage tourism in AEC destination branding

The development of the database systemization is integrated into the destination branding.

Branding Strategy

1. STP

2. Branding

Type of destination branding based on the database systemization topics above.

- Product brand
- Service brand
- Place brand
- Thematic brand
- Geographic brand
- Events brand

a. Brand Structure

The elements of destination branding consist of:

- Brand Identity
- Brand Value Proposition
- Brand Communication
 - Brand image
 - Brand perception
 - Brand equity
- Brand integrity
- Brand idea
- Brand awareness
- Brand recognition
- Brand loyalty
- Brand quality
- Brand feeling
- Brand experience
- Brand personality
- Brand positioning

b. Link Brand to Marketing Mix

c. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

IMC Tools:

- Advertising

- Public Relations
- Direct Marketing
- Point of Purchasing (P.O.P.)
- Personal Selling
- Sales Promotion
- Events
- Sponsorship
- Online Marketing
 - Social media
 - Viral marketing

(Adapted from: (Mongkolchan, 2013), (Charoenwongsak, 2013), (Wongmontha, n.d.), (Prayoonrattana, n.d.), (Consulting, 2012), (Saguanpiyapan, 2011), (Organization, 2009), (Centre, n.d.), (Nergis Aziz, 2011)

From the concept of responsible cultural heritage tourism in AEC destination branding above, the researcher would like to clarify for the Thailand Central Northeastern Provinces Tourism Branding Based on the ASEAN Economic Community as shown below:

Branding Strategy

1. STP

- Niche tourists: Foreign (Ministry of Tourism and Sports Thailand, 2012), internet searching, cultural heritage tourists.

2. Branding “Sinsai, the Wonder”

a. Brand Structure

The elements of destination branding consist of:

- Brand Identity
 - Sinsai can connect to the cultural heritage; based on the architecture, paintings, literature, and performances.
- Brand Positioning
 - The Cultural Destination: The Land of Knowledge and Cultural Richness. (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2013)
- Brand Value Proposition
 - Brand Promise
 - Brand Feeling / Attitude
 - Brand Experience
- Brand Identity
 - Logo - Sinsai
 - Hearing - Songs
 - Touching – Destination Ambiance

- Brand Personality
 - All ages of cultural heritage tourists; the World Tourism Organization (WTO) estimates that cultural tourism accounts for 37% of all tourist trips. Cultural tourists are also thought to spend more, stay longer, travel more frequently, and participate in more activities than other tourists. (Isaac, 2008) The demographic profile of the cultural heritage travel segment today is younger, wealthier, more educated and more technologically savvy. (CulturalHeritageTourism.org, 2003)



Figure 6: Poster of Amazing Isan Fair 2013 (www.hisoparty.com, 2013)

b. Link Brand to Marketing Mix

- Product

Type of destination branding

The concept for this case has to be able to integrate the product brand, service brand, place brand, thematic brand, geographic brand, and events brand, together by linking the temples, architectures, literature, and performances, as mentioned in the topic of Sinsai, the reflection of Thai-Laos cultural heritage.

- Prize
- Place

- Promotion
 - People
 - Process
 - Physical Evidence
 - Brand Communication
 - Brand Image
 - Brand Perception
 - Brand Equity
- c. **Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)**
- IMC Tools
- Advertising
 - Public Relations – Tourism Authority of Thailand (2013) organized “Amazing Isan Fair”, at Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre”.
 - Point of Purchasing (P.O.P.), and Sales Promotion – Destination
 - Direct Marketing, and Personal Selling – create a Thailand Cultural Elite Card. As a government-backed program, Thailand Elite can offer privileges on an unprecedented scale. As you are now recognized as a friend of the country, you are also treated as such. From the visa privilege to our government concierge services, we look forward to welcoming you with our unique Thai warmth and hospitality. Adapted from (Elite, 2013)
 - Events – tourism fair, department stores, and street markets.
 - Sponsorship – private companies
 - Online Marketing: Social media



Figure 7: <http://www.facebook.com/TAT.KhonkaenOffice>
(Tourism Authority of Thailand Khonkaen, 2013)

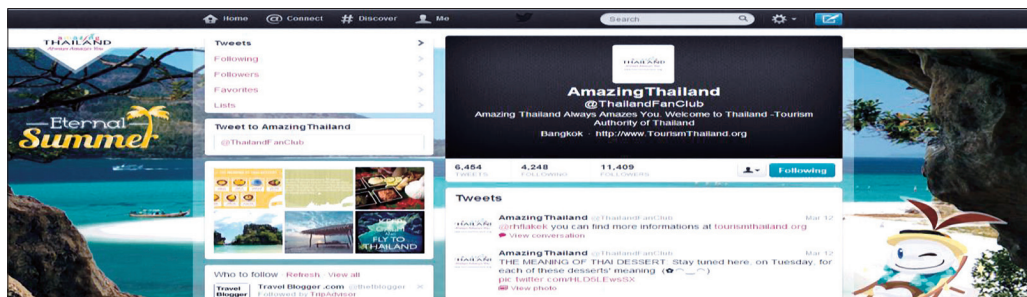


Figure 8: Twitter of Tourism Authority of Thailand (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2013)

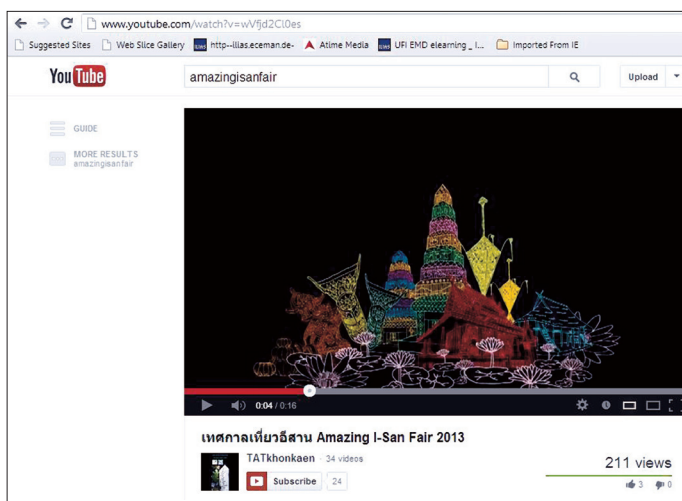


Figure 9: Viral marketing – YouTube Amazing I-San Fair 2013 (TATkhonkaen, 2013)

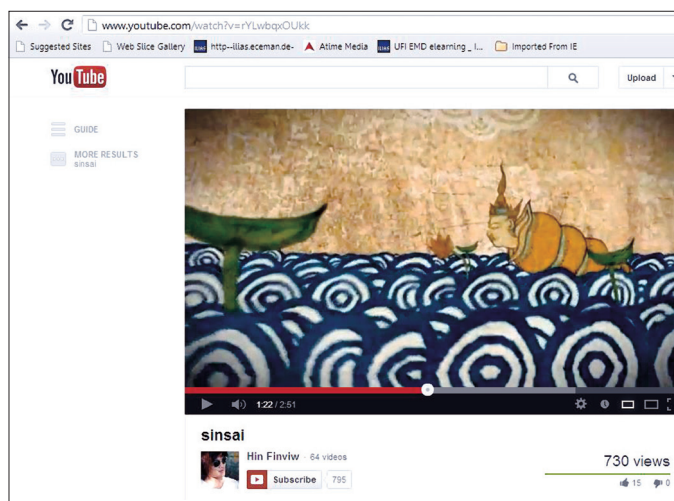


Figure 10: Sinsai on YouTube (Finviw, 2011)



Figure 11: Museum AR (MuseumAR, 2013)

- **Brand Integrity and Idea**
The brand “Sinsai, The Wonder” is guaranteed to give an authentic cultural experience.
- **Brand Awareness**
It must have a certain artistic level to increase tourism. Increasing brand awareness has made tremendous contributions by providing a strong guiding role in the niche of tourism psychology. This has been done by expanding the scope with a wider circulation, longer promotion times, and by providing literary works corresponding to the tourist destinations and events.
- **Brand Recognition**
The brand can be used in conjunction with social media for tourism promotion. For example, the broadcasts of social media such as videos on YouTube. There visitors can see unique experiences such as Sinsai Story. These are the actions the researcher is taking to increase Roi-Kaen-San-Sin’s tourism brand recognition and international ranking. Adapted from (GovernmentofCanada, 2013)
- **Brand Loyalty and Brand Quality**
First, the concept of Consumer Experience Tourism is defined. Second, the underlying interest in this type of tourism activity is reviewed. Travelers who engage in cultural tourism activities can visit (CulturalHeritageTourism.org, 2003) the following:

- art galleries, theatres and museums
- historic sites, communities or landmarks
- cultural events, festivals and fairs
- ethnic communities and neighbourhoods
- architectural and archaeological treasures

Third, the target consumers for such tourism destinations are examined. Finally, existing Consumer Experience Tourism efforts of authentic culture-related marketers are profiled. Adapted from (Journal, 2004)

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CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE APPROACH OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM COMMUNICATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract

Relational approach of tourism leads to the idea that the fundamental building of socio-economic reality of passengers is provided through communication. This is because the individual, as social being, is building its own reality according to his own nature, in the spiritual plan, by transforming the environment in which it manifests itself in different poses (entrepreneur, traveler, client, visitor, buyer, etc.), but not simply by his presence, but through knowledge achieved in communication. Thus, the man, the measurement of all things, takes effect in cognitive, affective and behavioral nature, in the community in which it manifests itself. As such, the outlook responsible approach to tourism can be accomplished through communication. Effects are obvious, at least in the physical, moral and socio-economic.

In the same time, in the context of globalization, influence networking (communication) represents a key feature of entities that want to reach high synergies as exchange of information is essential for socio-economic systems. In fact any interaction, action, attitude, may be reduced to exchanging information or transmitting information, in fact, as any socio-economic behavior. On the other hand, the principles of responsible tourism can be achieved not only by social and economic changes, but by changing attitudes, changes which are based on relationships, influence, communication, and dissatisfaction regarding the present state, alternately, accumulation of new knowledge, information and ideas.

Keywords: communication, responsible tourism, social responsibility, relationships, globalization

JEL Classification: M31, Q 50

1. Introduction

Tourism, global phenomenon in the context of the knowledge-based economy, presents a new approach, in the sense that it seeks on the one hand protecting

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and conserving natural and cultural heritage, on the other hand involvement in the community to generate beneficial economic and social effects (increased living standards of local people, increasing employment, infrastructure development, increase economic performance and so on). That approach, which focuses on minimizing negative socioeconomic tourism, on generating economic benefits for locals, the involvement of local people in decisions concerning their lives and the community they belong to, the development of effective relationships between tourists and hosts, is known in the literature and in practice as responsible tourism. The concern for this method of planning and managing tourism phenomenon does not belong exclusively to professionals in the tourism industry and it is the prerogative of the knowledge-based economy, the first ideas on the concept of responsible tourism were contained in the 1980 Manila Declaration.

Paradigm's changes (management, production and organization), manifested after 1994, and features of the new economy, have amplified concerns about the effects of natural environmental degradation, social and cultural due to tourists invasion, on a global scale. As such, the concept of responsible tourism is promoted as a solution to the problems of mass, global and uniform tourism. It is known that in 2002, on the Cape Town Declaration (adopted by the International Conference on Responsible Tourism Destinations) [<http://www.romania-libera.ro>] were defined courses of action, and also the factors of development and application for responsible tourism.

Taking in account all those aspects, dimensions, factors, relations generated, the interests of all parties involved in the manifestation of the tourism phenomenon leads to the idea that joining the social responsibility concept to that of travel is absolutely necessary. This means that all actants involved in tourism phenomenon (legal entities, organizations, physical entities, communities) must behave responsibly. Meanwhile, experts believe that implementing the concept of responsible tourism requires at least legislative support. Responsible tourism can be developed by entrepreneurs in the form of tourism they want, although sustainable and ecological tourism are recognized as forms of responsible tourism. It is certain that tourism can be taken seriously as any other economic sector.

2. Relevant aspects of the concept of social responsibility in tourism

In the knowledge-based economy, business purpose, specifically their socio-economic function is to satisfy in proper conditions social needs, not only customers, but for all concerned (employees, suppliers, partners, social organizations, and residents of local communities, area, regional and national).

The European Union is interested in CSR; considering it as a means by which any economic system may become the most competitive and dynamic in the world. At the same time, states and international institutions have developed a series of

standards regarding human rights, environmental protection, customer interests, corruption and competition for companies who focus on CSR.

Evolutionary perspective of the concept of CSR reveals that it grows, passing the content identified by the theory of co-interested groups, on the social impact of business environment located in full existential crisis. So companies are socially responsible not only to shareholders or owners, employees, creditors, suppliers, distributors, consumers, local communities, government and government agencies, but also to people or society in general.

Social responsibility of companies (CSR) can be addressed both by reporting the results of the company in terms of social responsibility and the reporting processes and phenomena within firms. This means that companies must assume a certain social responsibility regarding products / services and information they offer to the market, and also an ethical behavior to its internal and external customers. Assuming social responsibility is based on the development of socially responsible business practices. These are initiatives that a company improves, in voluntarily mode, so as to contribute to the general welfare of the community and the environment.

But, in the process of globalization, as necessary production relations, social relations, institutions transforming should be, will not be effective and sustainable will not be possible unless changes in the same time of relations with things, with nature, with other beings in everyday life [Toffler A., 1995, Toffler A., 1996]. All these relationships can be changed only through *economic responsibility, social and environmental organizations and, in particular, companies operating in the tourism sector.*

But, assuming social responsibilities by the tourism actants should be seen in terms of two essential features of the phenomenon of responsibility: on the one hand, the concept refers to **the voluntary nature of CSR**, involving moral responsibilities assumed by companies, and on the other hand CSR concerns that this means creating **long-term relationships and equally profitable with market and social environment**. Obviously, relationships are created, maintained and developed through communication. Moreover, the efficiency of CSR policies and strategies is actually communication efficiency, becoming an essential imperative in fair information and networking of interested partners.

Communication role is essential not only in CSR reports, *but also to identify the company's social needs and expectations of the community and society in transformation CSR model a profitable strategy in response to public issues including company policies.*

3. A view of tourism from the relational perspective

Known is the fact that tourism is a set of relationships and phenomena resulting from the movement of individuals outside their homes. Based on this definition, becomes evident the relational and phenomenological approach of tourism.

Phenomena generated by the movement and stay of individuals are primarily social phenomena with specific character, as travelers reality cannot be conceived outside the social frame. First, because the individual traveler is a social product, essentially, is a social being. As such, it generates and creates cultural relations, expressing the ideals, aspirations, faced by his work with other people's desires and develops through relationships with other people, i.e. communication.

Man appropriates the objective world in accordance with his own nature, in the spiritual scheme, but it has to transform the environment, not just by his presence, but by knowledge. Nature became objects of knowledge and valorization of human action. Man is subject autonomous, rational and individualized, who transforms his related reality, cognitive and axiological, in a correlative object of the human subject.

Some theories assign to human the role of spectator and writer, observer of nature, and integrated agent in the world they describe. The observer is physically, anthropological, historical, social, political and cultural located, knowing that time is oriented and irreversible. Integrating the man in the order of nature, reads *anthropoid principle* re-formulates a meaning that philosophical thinking had acquired from his first coherent manifestations. Man is the start and finish of philosophical meditation. He is known by the culture which created it, reaching his recognition rooted in nature. Anthropoid principles recover also the traditional meanings of humanism, by reversing the demonstration route. It can be said that today, the first priority is human naturalization and its culture. Alliance between man and nature is made in two ways: from man to nature and vice versa, from nature to man.

Responsible tourism theory must take into account the dual nature of man: the biological and social, on the one hand, and how to act and relate to people on the other hand. Which leads us to the idea that the concept of responsible tourism can be defined operationally, based on the following guidelines and levels of variation: innate character of human nature (*human nature is evil, and good and bad, good*) temporary concentration of human life (*past, present and future*), man's relationship to nature (*nature obedience, harmony with nature, control nature*), typology of human activity (*passivity, existentialism, minimal action and tendency towards passivity, activity*), type of individual related to others (*linear, collateral, individual*). These guidelines are derived from the mutual reaction of three effects of the communication process (cognitive component, affective component and behavioral component) which give order and direction of acts and human thought. From this perspective, is considered that responsible approach to tourism can be accomplished through communication.

Communication is a social phenomenon more specific because reality communication process can not be conceived outside the social environment. Communication is really a social variable. If any communicational reality is also a social reality, it can be said that all social reality is, at the same time, a communicative

phenomenon? Given the complexity of the problem and the level reached today in exploring the phenomenon of communication, the answer is quite clear.

Considering communication as a social phenomenon integrated represents the theoretical position of the Palo Alto school. This school has tried by “grammar” (or “logical communication”) to build a bridge between relational and organizational aspects, between the mechanisms that regulate individual relations and between those that regulate social relations. School of Palo Alto, designing organic communication immediately reached to the thesis: Everything is communication [Tran V., Stanciugelu I., 2001]. With this, communication became the new term that expresses the human relationship with the world, because communication agreement provides rules for everything in the world as science, art and everyday practices are only contained in the communication sector that includes. As such, it is assumed that any socio-economic problem is a communication problem.

It should be noted that any communication process requires as prerequisites for setting two elements: objective reality (inside and outside the organization) and the human subject. At the origin of any communication act is human dissatisfaction with the situation observed, and aspiration to a goal, towards an ideal to which aspire by modifying the existent one. Of course, noted situation, is not only objective reality, but is a function of culture, because the existing and impersonal objective is viewed from the perspective of human socio-cultural, subjective one.

Socio-economic entity is a social space, in which communication is continuous, social reality created, which is a socio-communicational reality (according to the Palo Alto school). New communication paradigm highlights the crucial importance of context in determining the characteristics of communication process. Along with human nature, communication is the key factor that creates and develops personality and gives significance.

The man is what he thinks. In his developing the individual creates his own reality (his own representation of reality in the form of a map of the world), influencing the space where other’s realities also manifests. This is because the behavior of entities are less conditioned by real world, as determined by their own representation of reality (“I see the world as I am,” said P Eluard [De Lassus, R., 2004,]) and the fact that no individual comes into contact with the entire world, with all other entities. More than that, entities cannot pass through all human experience; the limits are being conditioned by geographical, climatic, historical, social and economic elements but also by personal evolutions [De Lassus, R., 2004].

At any time of his life, the individual is in a certain state, a certain way of being physically and mentally [De Lassus, R., 2004], which affects his relations with the world. In everyday life, each entity passes from a current state to one desired through communication. Known is the fact that the term of communication is used in close connection with the following terms: signs and symbols, language, code

and language, behavior, information. In the knowledge society, information has become an essential part of the human condition, an important way of knowledge, the most important individual and social resource of people. It is essential for the establishment and development of organizations, their evolution being proportional dependent directly by the amount of information stored by these organizations. Moreover, in an economy of networks, information is vital because it gives meaning to existence of networks. So, the means of communication are important resources of the development, the information provided by them representing an effective way to reduce uncertainty in socio-economic processes. Thus, in the global and digital economy, **communication process involves interconnecting some agents until then isolated** and the *result of the communication is generating new high level construction, presenting new features compared to those of the components. In other words, in an era of globalization, people are dynamic connected through various communicational ways, generating networks in terms of content and relationship is more than the individuals that compose them, and this is due to interpersonal communication between network members. Communication affect the evolutionary behaviors of network members that generate every individual in the members of the network that are generating evolutionary behaviors to each individual from the network* (individual development occurs through communication), individual dynamics being found later in network dynamics.

The traveler comes into a relationship of influence, and the communication behavior occurs according to his own reality. The relationship of influence represents the essence of relationship established between individuals. The organizing activity of the influencing process influence communication, respectively those relations between its components: source, message, channel, receiver, context, noise, feedback. Influencing can be done by persuasion and manipulation. Generally, if want an effectively communication, must take into account the emotional and affective realities of interlocutors. It cannot be ensured the preservation of ecosystems in the same time with achieving high performance by entities only through communication. Individuals being constantly engaged in the exchange of information, ideas, feelings, especially with symbolic content, use different media and communication. From these can be considered: technical means for securing and transmitting information, skills, competencies and forms of knowledge used in the production, transmission and reception of information and symbolic content and symbolic capital, or accumulated prestige, recognition and respect for certain actors.

4. Responsible tourism - a change of paradigm

No matter how objective would be the tourism seen, as a phenomenon, it is seen in terms of conditions that people have been, are and will be subjected to their entire existence. It says that every individual sees the world as he is and not as it is.

Thus, the responsible approach to tourism entails a change of how entities perceive the essence of the phenomenon, reported to nature and extent of the expected effects.

T. Kuhn (“The Structure of Scientific Revolutions”) [Kuhn T. S., 1970] pointed out that almost every significant progress in the field of scientific research is, above all, a break with the old traditions with previous modes of thinking, with old paradigms. As such, making responsible tourism, means first, changing modes of thought of all those involved in tourism. This is because the paradigm, the perception, understanding, interpretation determines the attitudes and behaviors of tourism entities involved in tourism. Known the fact that the changes of paradigm involves the passing from a way of perceiving the world to another. And these movements produce huge changes. Paradigms, correct or incorrect, underlying attitudes and behaviors of all individuals and, ultimately, to the social interrelations.

At the organizational level, the change of paradigm aims the strategy, the structure, the systems, the staff, style, skills, shared values, the source of power and leadership [Senge P. M., 1990; Kotter J. P., Heskett J. L., 1992; Hughes R. L., Ginnett R. C., Curphy G. J., 1993; Mintzberg H., 1994]. It also believes that the change of paradigm at organizational level must be sustained (in a positive connection) by the change of individual paradigms.

In this context, it is necessary to emphasize also Covey’s opinion to which there is a reference element common to all, namely that, paradigm setting is done around seven fundamental principles to be applied consistently and responsibly. The seven principles are: the principle of reality proactive approach (initiative and responsibility for their actions are based on freedom of choice in making decisions); principle mission (everything is the result of a double creation: mental and physical), the principle of discipline (organization and execution of actions as princes, values and priorities); principle of win / win (all must win, there synergies business partners), the principle of empathic communication (stresses the value of diagnosis as a basis for cooperation and mutual benefit in relations interdependent) synergy principle (essence of synergy is to integrate the recognition, respect and use creative differences), the principle of renewal (maintaining and enhancing capabilities through a balanced approach organizations dimensions: economic (physical), mental (psychological), spiritual and social / emotional).

Paradigms create the lens through which the world is viewed. Impact of change of paradigm had, essentially, the effect of a radical mutation; either is produced instantly or slowly and deliberately. In the same vein it should be noted that paradigms are subjective realities, simple attempts to describe the perception, understanding and interpretation, while the objective reality is composed of principles, natural laws inserted in place of any civilization throughout history, governing human evolution. These principles, natural laws seem to exist in every human being, regardless of their social conditioning and their compliance or

non-compliance. For example: honesty, integrity and honesty, dignity, quality, potentiality, patience, encouragement, etc.

Principles cannot be confused with the practice, those being activities or actions. A practice that works in some circumstances, may fail in other circumstances. While practices are specific to certain situations, principles are deep truths, fundamental, with universal application. Principles are not values. Principles are those leading lines of human behavior that have proved permanent value. Therefore, the principles of responsible tourism are the main step in the development of this new way of doing tourism. Entities (individuals and businesses) will know where they are, to what goes (responsible tourism) and how to get where you want. Decisions can be made using data, information, facts correct and rational. Power of action arising from a principle-centered life is the power of an entity vigilant, active without being influenced by the actions of other entities, the circumstances or environmental changes that restrict the activities of other actors. As such, limit the power of such entities to achieve the desired state, resulting from the consequences of those principles.

Conclusions

Today, in a globalize economy, both individuals and companies need direct legitimating of specific community and society in general. Obviously, the need for legitimacy manifests itself as an affirmation of social responsibility, because business legitimacy is not given nor challenged, but it is built and sold, like any product. Each entity develops its own kind of legitimacy, namely a specific type of social responsibility, based on their resources and developing business practices that contribute to the general good. CSR supporters believe that businesses are not just economic profitable instruments; they have also significant social effects. In this context, it is imposed the approach of also from responsible approach, fact that leads in attention of specialists not just assuming by the legal entities which operates in the tourism with social responsibilities, but also from travelers and communities, society as a whole. Of course, responsible approach to tourism by all stakeholders reveals the idea that understanding mode, values, practices, vision of reality must be changed, so that practicing any form of tourism to contribute to the preservation of ecosystems, improve the quality of life of local communities, development effective relationships between tourists and hosts, better working conditions, high performance entities etc. Obviously, all this can be achieved through education, information, learning that communication.

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FIELD RESEARCH OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: ECONOMIC ASSUMPTIONS TO DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

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Abstract

Sustainability tends to ensure the future revenue of local community through the preservation and proper exploitation of resources. However, these are a part of the collective heritage and so are not freely available. This leads to a economic gap-disadvantage for private subjects involved in sustainability strategy, which can be overcome by a system of relationships between public and private subjects, able to spread the “cost” of sustainability beyond the study area and to optimize the use of resources.

A method, which involves public and private measures based on support and relationships between all subjects, is proposed and explained, also using some layers which show the business phases divided-allocated between the involved subjects.

The concepts are often related to the results of a questionnaire-based survey of local tourism entrepreneurs which was carried out in some small villages in Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia.

Keywords: survival of sustainable tourism, local tourism entrepreneurs, public support, questionnaire survey

JEL Classification: Q01, Q 50, Q 58

1. Introduction

In small rural destinations, where the structure of supply is highly fragmented and dominated by small businesses, local entrepreneurs, which are the base of local sustainable tourism, are often characterized by low resources and low education to arrange their firms in accordance to the principles of good management. Survival of local tourism, due to development of the so called global market, imposes more professionalism, higher quality, etc., which, at the end, mean higher investments and operating costs for the firms. At the same time, sustainability is both a limit to management, due to its tasks, and the best, often the only one, chance for survival and development of local tourism.

The intention of this paper is to show a method, based on public and private measures, to reduce the value of investments and the operating costs of small sustainable entrepreneur.

2. Sustainability is a way to preserve the public interest

The most reliable definitions for sustainable tourism (WCED- Brundtland report 1987, WOT – 1988, Agenda 21 Rio de Janeiro, WTO – 1996, International Conference of Sustainable Tourism Rimini – 2001, Holden – 2000) focus the main goal of sustainability as a way to preserve the natural, social, cultural, etc. resources, in order to ensure their economic exploitation by the future generations.

Hence, sustainability seems to consider the local community as the direct beneficiary of its efforts which, through the proper use of the present resources, will ensure the development-survival of local economy in the future. This concept of sustainability is too limited and needs further analysis.

A project based on natural and cultural resources, always involves some subjects located outside the studied area. The preservation of a natural parks, local culture and traditional architecture is both a good chance for local community regarding new job opportunities, demographic growth, etc. and a positive experience, a cultural growing etc. for all visitors. Cultural heritage, natural beauties don't allow only to local community, but they are a collective heritage: when a folk tradition disappears, a ancient building is demolished and books, photos and the memory of the elderly remain their witness, this lost affects both local community and society.

In addition, during the last a few years, the growing interest by people on tourism products based on the discover of nature, local culture and traditions, shows this type of tourism as a important part of tourism market in the future (IRPET-2005). Hence sustainability cannot be limited to local economy but has to involve everyone; not only people working in local tourism.

The correct use of the local resources ensures local economy in the future, but it's also a condition to preserve and develop the present one which is the base for the future generations. Future local economy depends on economic measures which ensure the survival and the development of the present local entrepreneurs.

To consider sustainability as the way to preserve local resources, which are not freely available because part of collective heritage, leads to these assumptions:

- sustainable entrepreneur uses inputs which are not free because they are a part of the protection of higher collective interests;
- sustainable entrepreneur cannot develop its businesses using the same rules and conditions of the firms working in free market;
- sustainability achieves a public interest, hence sustainable entrepreneur develops a public function.

These points have some important effects on management and the survival of local private subjects. As explained later, they are the base of specific public and private economic measures, which would be unacceptable in traditional free market where almost always specific supports have to be properly justified.

I think everyone is agree to pay the guards and the employees of a national museum, a national park etc.: they work for state, they defend and develop a collective heritage, national tourism, etc. The same function is made by a private subject who, through its activity, protects a popular tradition, a traditional processing, an old house, local culture, etc. which are a part of national heritage and one of the most important condition for tourism development. Hence why doesn't this private subject have to be supported by public entity? Both cases protect a public heritage, so they have to be considered in the same way!

Sustainability puts some obstacles-limits even on management and it effects both the revenues and costs. The well known loading capacity, through its limits about the number of visitors, limits the revenues of tourism local entrepreneurs which have to respect them to ensure the future local economy. A subject involved in the conservation of local traditions, local architecture, etc. almost always needs investments and operating costs much more higher than those are not involved in this project: the higher costs to renovate a old house with traditional techniques than its total demolition and reconstruction, the costs to product following ancient processing, are only a few examples. Lower revenues and higher costs lead to this conclusion: *Sustainability imposes to "sustainable entrepreneurs" a economic gap-disadvantage compared to "standard entrepreneurs"*.

From the businesses economy, profit is the main goal for a firm, which is founded to make money and not to preserve local culture and traditions, natural beauties etc., in other words to develop a public function. Despite, these resources are often the main factors for development of rural tourism (Table 1), always represent a tool, a device to make profit and they cannot be or become the main goal of entrepreneur.

Table 1

	The main factors for tourism development in your village (% of positive answers)									
	Bulgaria			Macedonia				Serbia		
	Dolen	Leshten	Kovachevica	Elsani	Babino	Brajcino	Vevciani	Guca	Siroigojno	Mecavnik
Good accessibility			25%	25%	100%	100%		100%		
Close proximity to development resorts			75%			100%		100%		
Close proximity to GR	100%		75%			100%				
Clean and picturesque nature	100%	100%	75%	25%	100%	100%		100%	100%	100%
Welcoming and well maintained village			50%	25%	100%	100%		100%	100%	100%
Hospitable local population	100%	100%	50%		100%	100%		100%	100%	100%
Preserved local culture	100%		50%	25%	100%	100%		100%	100%	
Natural attractions	100%		75%	25,00%	100%	100%		100%		
Historic, architectural and cultural attractions	100%	100%	50%	25%				100%		
Active cultural institutions			25%	25%						100%
Interesting tourist paths and tours	100%		50%	25%		100%				
Existing tourist facilities and services			50%	25%		100%		100%		

Table 1 is a part of the results of a questionnaire-based survey of local tourism entrepreneurs, conducted in August 2011 and from August to December 2012, in three Bulgarian villages, three Serbians and four Macedonians, with the purpose to find the economic assumptions for development of sustainable tourism.

Hence, sustainability, due to its intentions of far reaching, is a matter that involves private and public subjects located inside and outside the area. Sustainable tourism cannot develop without public measures which represent the “return or payment” for the constraints that sustainable entrepreneurs must comply to ensure the economic future for local community and to protect collective heritage that certainly doesn't belong the mission-task of private economy.

However public measures has to be related to private ones because, as I'll explain, sustainability is an important chance for everyone, so its survival and development has to be a mission of all public and private subjects. In nutshell public and private measures can be classified as follow:

- public = support and partnerships;
- private = partnerships.

Lack or insufficient public and private measures leads the “sustainable entrepreneurs” to the economic situation characterized by a structural gap-disadvantage which is a great obstacle for his survival.

The intention of the paper is to develop a method to reduce the operating costs of sustainable entrepreneur, without imposing new expenses to public and private entities. Of course this approach is only a part of the management and the businesses success also depends on other measures focused on market, clients, revenues, etc.

3. The public support

In nutshell the mission of public subjects is the well-being of community through the so-called public function. Among the most collective interests, is the homogeneous cultural and economic development of the area as a whole: large structural differences in the area are like a crack in a wall, which will collapse sooner or later. Higher equitable redistribution of resources, makes the area more compact, especially in terms of resources (there aren't communities which grow and others which decrease), and much more able to cope the external threats. While a area characterized by communities with different degree of development and available resources, includes some weaknesses which will spread their negative effects all over the area with the passage of the time.

Experience shows that most of economic development in a area depends on the success of its entrepreneurs and that area, characterized by higher public facilities, logistical services etc., almost always includes the best entrepreneurs. Hence, the area with a good degree of economic development takes advantage from trade and the

economic differences between this area and the poorer ones increases. Unfortunately, this happens all over the world.

Local public subject obtains high return as local taxes and the advantages related to lower unemployment, demographic growth, etc. from the businesses by its entrepreneurs: a part of private profit is transferred to public subject, probably, of the most developed area. According to the concepts and goals shown in the paper, this way to finance public subjects cannot be totally accepted when the public profit comes from sales of goods and services to sustainable entrepreneurs.

Suppose 3 districts, A, B and C and a “sustainable entrepreneur” located in A which buys a service from a supplier in B. According to this paper, sustainability is an advantage for everyone (public function of sustainability), but this operation puts the three districts in different positions:

- *neutral* for C, which is not directly involved in the specific transaction;
- *cost* for A,
- *return* for B which obtains a direct profit through the revenue of its entrepreneur.

This situation leads to the contradiction that everyone obtains advantages from sustainability, but one public subject obtains more advantages than others, and usually this subject-area is the richest. The intention of the method proposed by the paper is to change this public profit into a support to sustainability, through the refunding of this value to sustainable entrepreneur.

Considering the mission of sustainability, it would be supported by public subjects with a general contribution (usually as % of their budget), but especially during economic crisis they often prefer to use the low available resources for other projects.

The method proposed by the paper, asks the support only to public subjects which obtain a direct benefit from the economic transaction between a supplier and a “sustainable buyer” related to their locations. Sales of goods and/or services with the related profit by a supplier located in B, means for this area more local taxes, employment, economic development, population growth, etc., but also higher socio-economic hardships, more pollution, traffic, etc.

Hence the public refund, which certainly is positive value, would be obtained from the difference between these positive and negative components.

3.1. Relationships

Usually an area is divided into municipalities, districts and regions, following the administrative rules of the country. In addition to these public entities there are a few categories of private subjects and legal entities which establish relationships between public and private subjects (eg. associations, cooperatives, districts tourism, etc.).

Experience has shown that at the beginning, the area doesn't include relationships and/or joint actions between public and private subjects and cooperation types mainly depend on administrative matters (eg. some activities require training provided by specific subjects) rather than on economic and/or social reasons. Usually, development planning of the area doesn't exist and entrepreneurs organize the businesses with their own resources.

The area is characterized by lack or insufficient relationships between public and private subjects, especially of horizontal types, because entrepreneurs consider the other private subjects as competitors and public subjects quite useless for their businesses.

The situation may be represented by Fig.1.

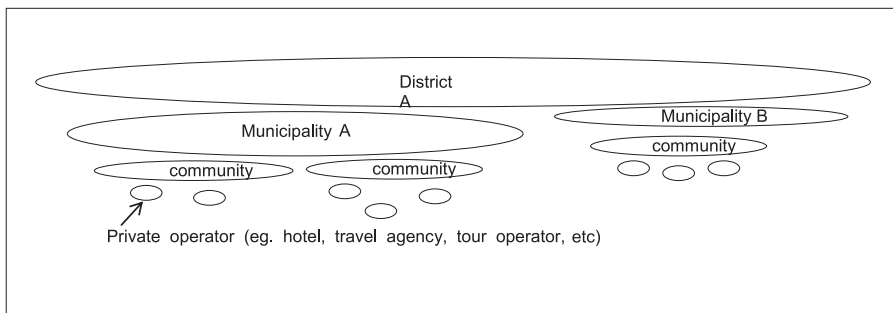


Fig. 1

With the passage of the time and thanks to the economic development of the area, the number and the quality of the relations increase.

Regarding the aim of the paper, the relationships may be classified as follow:

a. horizontal relationships, which involve entities with the same type-level, eg. municipality-municipality, district-district, (Fig. 2)

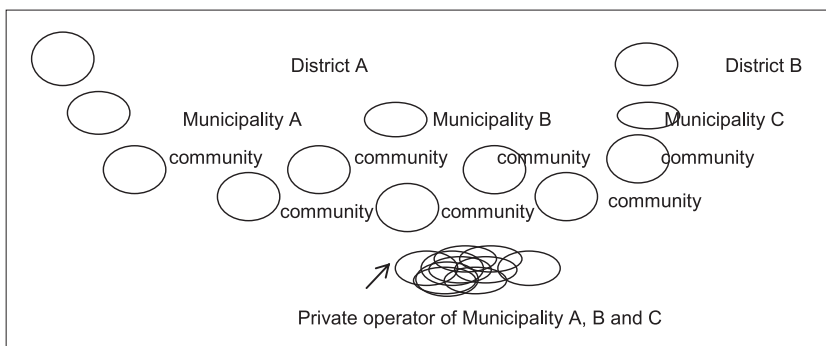


Fig. 2

b. vertical relationships, which involve entities with different characters, eg. community-municipality, municipality-region (Fig. 3).

Of course, vertical relationships are not forced to follow the “administrative path” shown by Fig. 3, but they can be direct when the existing relation between entities follows a non-sequential order, such as community-district, community-region, entrepreneur-district etc.

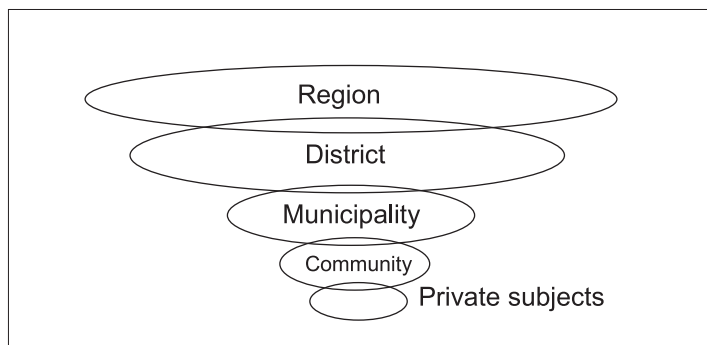


Fig. 3

3.2. The method

As told earlier, the essence of this approach, called in the paper “transfer system”, is to refund to “sustainable entrepreneur” the plus-value (totally or partially) obtained by the public subject or subjects whose area includes the supplier.

From the operating standpoint the refund may be a direct provision to the “client” or a benefit to the supplier which can apply a lower price for the goods and/or services sold to sustainable entrepreneurs.

In comparison to general contribution this method has, at least, these advantages:

- it relates only the subjects involved in the specific transaction;
- it supports the development of the whole region. Often public support, based on the general contribution, helps the most developed areas. It’s like to say “*they ask your money with a hand and they return you with the other hand*”. Hence, general contribution supports sustainable entrepreneur, through the total or partial return of his expenses, but increases the differences of economic development among the areas;
- it allows the suppliers to apply lower price. In the short time, the suppliers become more competitive:
- higher revenues of local entrepreneurs lead to increasing of local economy;
- higher profits of local entrepreneurs lead to higher local taxes (as I’ll explain);
- the method involves areas increasingly large.

The transfer system reduces the operating costs of sustainable entrepreneur moving to another subject a part of these costs. Up to this point the transfer system has only explained the public support based on the partial refunding to the sus-

tainable entrepreneur, but this method also includes, among the potential way to transfer costs, the development of relationships between public and private subjects.

In according to the results of the cited questionnaire-based survey, development of cooperation and relationships between public and private subjects is considered one of the most important factor for local development by studied tourism entrepreneurs (Tables 2 and 3)

Table 2

The degree of importance of cooperation and partnership for local tourism development (% of positive answers)										
	Dolen	Leshthen	Kovachevica	Elsani	Babino	Brajcino	Vevciani	Guca	Siroigojno	Mecavnik
No importance										
Little importance				25%						
Some importance										
Importance				25%	100%	100%			100%	
Very importance	100%	100%	100%	25%				100%		100%

Table 3

The leader in establishing partnership and cooperation in the destination (% of positive answers)										
	Dolen	Leshthen	Kovachevica	Elsani	Babino	Brajcino	Vevciani	Guca	Siroigojno	Mecavnik
No importance	50%			25%		100%				
Little importance	100%			100%	100%			100%	100%	100%

To have good results the method needs a great cooperation between public subjects to recognize and certify the sustainable subjects from the entrepreneurs which use sustainability only as a commercial slogan.

Summary

- sustainability is an advantage for everyone;
- sustainable entrepreneurs develop a public function;
- sustainable entrepreneurs are subjected to a economic gap-disadvantage;
- the gap needs public support and relationships between private and public;
- no one public subject can obtain a plus-profit by sustainability;
- with the passage of the time the area enriches with relationships between private an public;
- transfer system has the intention to reduce the operating costs of sustainable subjects;
- transfer system allows a better spread of the resources on the areas.

4. The transfers

According with the relationships shown in the paragraph 3.1, there are two types of transfers:

- vertical transfers;
- horizontal transfers.

4.1. Vertical transfers

The vertical transfer takes place when a part of the cost is shifted to a subject with higher level, such as from a local entrepreneur to community, from municipality to district or region, etc.

This can be achieved through relationships-cooperation between private and public subjects or by the partially refund of operating costs by the public subject (or subjects) which represent the area where the supplier is located.

Fig. 4 shows an entrepreneur in A which buys a service from a supplier located in another district and a part of this cost is supported (transferred) by the public subject in B.

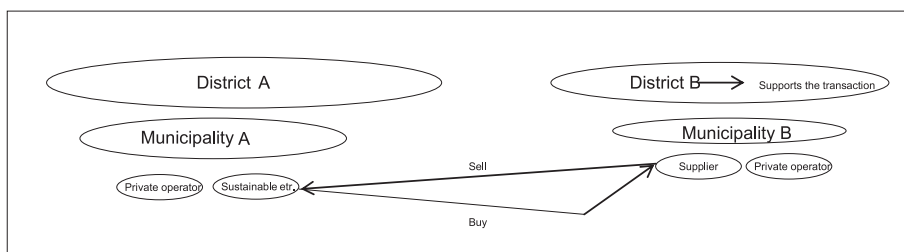


Fig. 4

The vertical transfers can be internal type when the equality cost-revenue takes place in the same area (supplier-seller and sustainable buyer are located in the same area and they are related with the same public subject who has to make the refund), and external when revenue and cost are in different areas. Despite the method produces the same effects, the internal transfers are easier to manage than external ones because buyer and supplier are related to the same public subject.

Hence, the public planner has to focus the increase of the spectrum of commercial businesses in his area, in order to offer to local and external entrepreneurs a wider range of goods and services not only in tourism sector and to limit the output of local resources and profits made by the local firms.

The intentions is to avoid the exploitation of the area which became a tool to make profit.

According to the results of the cited questionnaire-based survey one of the main problems for local development is the low part of the purchases by entrepreneurs which remains in the area (Table 4).

Table 4

Part of the costs of the local businesses which remain in the community-municipality										
	Bulgaria			Macedonia				Serbia		
average %	Dolen	Leshten	Kovachevica	Elsani	Babino	Brajcino	Vevciani	Guca	Siroigojno	Mecavnik
	2%	2%	7%	7%	20%	4%	35%		40%	

Lack of local suppliers, and often of persons able to work in tourism, forces local tourism entrepreneurs to buy goods and services outside the area, which became the

only one to take advantage from tourism. Further analysis of the data lead to this assumption: when local entrepreneurs use employees who live outside the studied area, more than 90% the local resources leaves the community.

4.2. The refund

Up to this point, only a public subject has been considered about the refund, but situation where the benefits by the transaction involve several public subjects can be easily hypothesized.

Considering the previous example, if the supplier pays on his profit both municipality taxes and district taxes, there are two public subjects which obtain a benefit from the specific transaction. In this case the number of public subjects involved depends on the range of the transfer system: of course the best support to sustainable entrepreneurs is obtained when the process involves more public subjects.

From the operating point of view, the refund can be done with money and/or through a reduction of local taxes (may be a fiscal credit). About that some ways are possible:

- through the direct refunding to sustainable entrepreneur (Fig. 5)

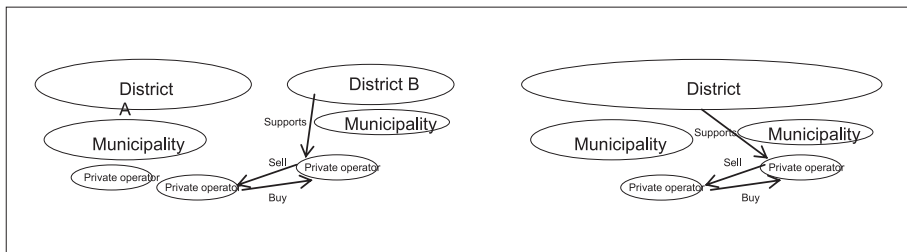


Fig. 5

- through the refunding (money or fiscal credit) to the supplier, which can apply lower price to sustainable buyer (Fig. 6)

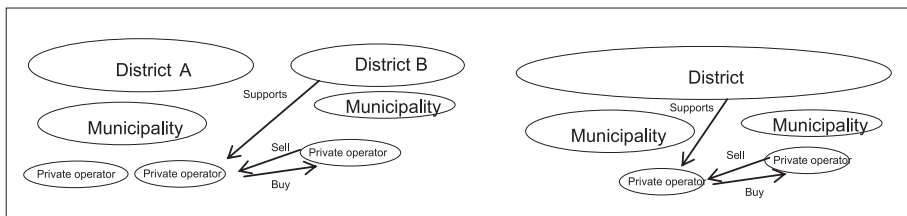


Fig. 6

- through a compensation credit-debt between two public subjects and the correspondent fiscal credit or return to sustainable entrepreneur (Fig. 7)

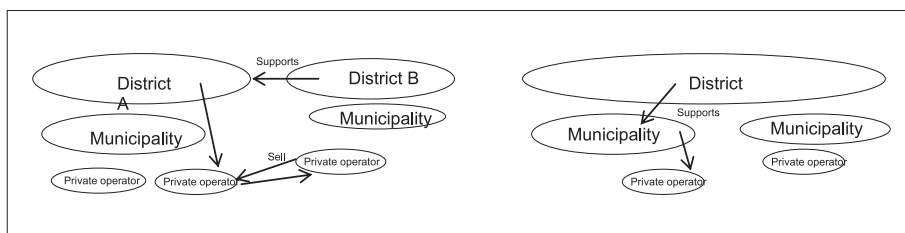


Fig. 7

The refund would be the plus-value obtained by the public subjects thanks to the transactions between the suppliers located in its area and the sustainable buyers. From the economic standpoint this positive value is obtained from the difference between these positive and negative values:

- positive
 - more local taxes;
 - more local employment, more local consumption and more welfare;
 - local demographic growth;
 - development of others economic sectors related with tourism;
- negative
 - more pollution, more costs for the disposal of waste products;
 - more traffic and local congestion and more problems related to socio-economic factors.

From the economic stand point this value is always positive, but from the other standpoints such as the social one, it can be negative: negative components related to tourism development are higher than the positive ones. This happens, when local economic development doesn't take care the needs and requires of local community, which has to be involved in the planning and economic development of the area.

Of course it's not so easy to calculate the plus-value of the public subject, especially when the benefit involves more subjects, but even considering as refund only the local taxes paid by suppliers on their profit, the method makes interesting results. This also applies in the areas characterized by low local taxes, low salaries and demand of goods-services.

The best support to sustainability is obtained when the process also involves the state because national taxes on profit are much more higher then local ones.

According to these observations, at the end, the refunding is not a cost for public subjects but only a temporary use of financial resources; rather a temporary waiver of financial revenues. Suppliers, thanks to lower selling prices, will become quickly more competitive, higher revenues and purchase of consumer goods will reduce the effects of the fix costs on the profit and the entrepreneurs will pay more local taxes. Probably the "feedback" will involve reduction of public supports to unemployment (Fig. 8).

The previous chapters explain that sustainable entrepreneurs cannot develop (may be survival) without the public and private measures to solve the economic gap-disadvantage related to sustainability. Hence this approach can be considered as a way to preserve the potential clients of local suppliers: when the public subject supports sustainable entrepreneurs located inside or outside its area, at the same time, it ensures the development and/or the survival of its local economy.

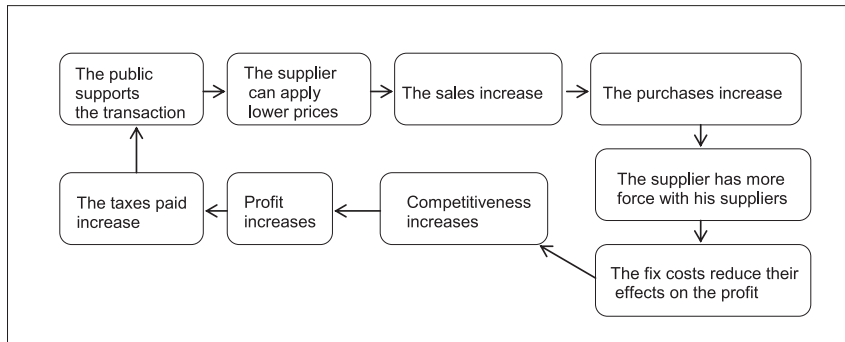


Fig. 8

4.3. Horizontal transfers

The horizontal transfer is a shift of a part of the cost between subjects with same characters an level: community - community, private subject - private subject, etc., but often located in areas characterized by different degrees of public facilities and private economy.

Regarding the public subjects the horizontal transfers involve the areas which, thanks to their developed economy and good administrative structures, are able to offer the other public subjects cheap goods and services related to sustainable activities.

From operating point of view, the services may be executed by the internal organization of the public subject and/or by its local entrepreneurs. To noted, when the service is made by a public subject for a subject located outside the area, this transaction isn't a economic advantage from local suppliers, but it's a cost and/or an increase of workload for the public subject who has the "misfortune" to have the internal organization more effective than those of other subjects.

The intention that more developed public subject has to support the weaker one is certainly appreciable, but it's difficult to meet for a long time and the equity cost-revenues is not satisfied (developed public subject has a cost, while the revenue is outside its area).

Hence the process must consider the payment by the public subject of the area where the services or the goods are used (Fig. 9).

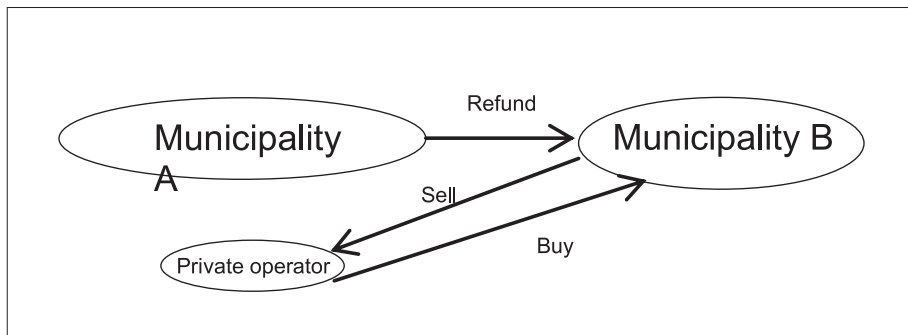


Fig. 9

Quite different are the horizontal transfers between private subjects, because it's very difficult a refund of money between entrepreneurs. Hence the transfer of a part of the operating costs is made through relationships, joint management and cooperation.

The subdivision of a specific part of production or management among some entrepreneurs can be saw as a partial transfer the related costs to other private subjects: the production cost divided between three firms is $2/3$ lower for each of them.

However it's necessary to point up that entrepreneurs often develop relationships and cooperation both to reduce the costs and due to these reasons:

- reduce the cost and risk of their business;
- need specific skills. Especially during the implementation of a medium-long term project, collaborations are based on durable and specific skills rather than the reduction of the production costs;
- maximize the exploitation of the productive factors. Especially the business of small local entrepreneurs often does not allow the total economic exploitation of productive factors;
- Increase the flexibility of the business through lower investments in material and immaterial goods.

Summary

- public planner has to encourage the increase of the spectrum of commercial businesses in the area;
- best support to sustainable entrepreneurs is obtained by the process which involves more public subjects;
- local economic development must takes care the needs and requires of local community;
- the return of local taxes from suppliers on their profit, leads to interesting results;
- the refunding is only a temporary use of financial resources by public subject;

- the approach can be considered as a way to preserve the clients of local suppliers;
- private subjects reduce (transfer) operating costs through relationships, joint management and cooperation.

5. Investment and operating costs

Business Administration defines the firm as a bundle of assets and persons organized by the entrepreneur in order to produce goods and/or services to satisfy human needs. According to this concept, assets are among the precondition to establish the firm.

Divided into durable and consumer goods regarding their nature, utility, characteristics, etc., they are anticipated costs related to unsure future revenues. Risk is a typical factor of the businesses and assets are characterized by different degrees of risk which depend on economic and psychological variables.

5.1. Durable goods and intangibles

They are the permanent structure of the firm. Some of their characteristics are shown by Table 5:

Table 5

Character	Effects
High cost	Bank loans, high bank interests
Long time use	High obsolescence risk, low flexibility
Purchase much earlier than potential revenues	High economic risk
Lack of direct relation with revenues	High economic risk

According to their nature they are divided into material goods (equipments, furnishings, vehicles, buildings etc.) and intangibles (know-how, grants, licenses, research and development, promotion, marketing, training, etc.). Usually the first ones are more expensive than the second ones, but due to psychological and/or economic reasons, they are often preferred by entrepreneurs then investments in intangibles, due to some reasons explained by Table 6.

Table 6

Material goods	Intangibles
Rental and leasing are possible, so lower funding to start up	Rental and leasing are quite impossible
They can be the collateral for bank loans	They cannot be used as collateral for bank loans
Easy to evaluate	Difficulty to evaluate
Easy to sell	Difficulty to sell
Support by public subjects	Lack of public support
Entrepreneurs consider them as “refuge goods”	Their values are related to survival of the firm

Material goods	Intangibles
	Low protection (other entrepreneurs can advantage from them)
	Low local skills
	Low check of progress
	Difficulty to value the results
	Higher risk, about three times then material goods

The results of the cited questionnaire-based survey confirm lack or insufficient investments in intangibles by the tourism entrepreneurs located in the studied areas (Table 7).

Table 7

	Main investments (% investments)										
	Dolen	Leshten	Kovachevica	Elsani	Babino	Brajcino	Vecjani	Guca	Siroigojno	Mecavnik	% average
Material goods											
Buildings	89%	80%	78%	30%	25%	10%	53%	40%	65%	50%	52%
furnishings	8%	10%	5%	10%	25%	47%	27%	50%	35%	10%	23%
General equipments	1%	4%	10%	0%	25%	90%	10%	47%		10%	20%
Electro equipments	1%	5%	5%	10%	25%		10%			10%	6%
Vehicles				50%			10%	30%		20%	11%
Intangibles											
Formation (notary.)	1%	1%	1%								0%
licensing			1%								0%
Research											0%
Commercial*											0%
Advertising*			1%			20%	5%				3%
Training*											0%

* *durable – 2 years at least*

Almost always in tourism, intangibles play a very important role for business success. Despite research and development, promotion and marketing, staff training are the assumption of the high growth firms, these investments-costs are often neglected by small entrepreneurs which prefer to invest their resources in material goods.

Lack of intangibles is a great obstacle to businesses, so public and private measures in favour to sustainable subjects have to be focused on the increasing of these types of investments in the capital structure of local entrepreneurs.

Another observation about the assets.

Among the material goods, there are the “generic goods” characterized by long use and low risk of technical obsolescence (furniture, general equipment, vehicles, etc.) and “technological goods” (computers, communications systems, etc.), which are exposed to technological innovations and therefore characterized by a short economic life.

Higher degree of risk of investments in high-tech than the first one, puts this type of investments among the transferred expenses, especially to subjects located

outside the local area because these goods probably come from outside suppliers. Instead, eg. the renovation of the house of sustainable firm, which almost always involves client and builder located in the same area, prefers the support by local public subject.

5.2. Consumer goods

Regarding the degree of risk, these goods can be classified:

- direct costs, which includes the purchases of goods and/or services related to the presence of tourists (food purchases, transport expenses, etc.);
- indirect costs, which are independent from the existence of clients. Entrepreneurs incurs these costs without confirmed sales, so this type of costs have a higher degree of risk than the other one. Of course these costs are a very critical aspect of management.

5.3. Borrowing costs

Specific paragraph is dedicated to financial costs because they are often a important obstacle-limit to development of sustainable entrepreneur both for initial investments and operating actions.

Usually, assets are financed by the owner and by other subjects such as banks and suppliers: balanced capital structure shows 70-50% of investments with internal capital and the remaining 30-50% with borrowed capital.

The results of the cited questionnaire-based survey outline the structure of the capital characterized by much low use of bank loans. Most of studied entrepreneurs finance the investments with their own resources (Table 8).

Table 8

Structure of funding for investments											
Capital:	Dolen	Leshten	Kovachevica	Elsani	Babino	Brajcino	Vevciani	Guca	Siroigojno	Mecavnik	%
by owner	40%	100%	20%	100%	100%	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	85%
by bank credit	54%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%
by public institutions	6%	0%	30%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
by other subjects	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Further analysis of Macro-economic data shown that low use of bank loans depends on several variables, such as the suspicion in banking sector by the studied entrepreneurs due to their low-lack economic knowledge, the banking systems of these countries which put great obstaclews to loans, high interest rates and lack of public support.

The perfect rate between internal and external capital doesn't exist (it depends on several variables such as the activity of the firm, the financial leverage, etc.) but usually it's not a wrong to finance a part of investments with bank loans. Especially

when entrepreneurs have low resources, lack of bank loans often means a reduction of the potentials of the firm and the lost of interesting growth opportunities.

Summary

- entrepreneurs focus their investments in material goods;
- public and private measures must support intangibles;
- external subjects must support investments in high-tech goods;
- public subjects must encourage-support the use of bank loans.

6. Transferability

The transfer system is a device which reduces the costs of sustainable entrepreneurs through the transfer of them to others subjects. These subjects can be related to some specific areas whose number and range depend on the degree of complex which characterizes the method.

The process can study the areas related to the administrative subdivisions shown by figures 1,2 and 3 or can apply a more complex structure. In any case, all areas represent specific layers of transferability which include some specific measures-matters.

The paper consider only three layers: two of them related to public subjects and one to private subjects:

- **LP** (internal transferability), public subjects-areas of sustainable subject;
- **EP** (external transferability), public subjects-areas outside the area of sustainable subject;
- **P** (general transferability), private entities located in-outside the area of sustainable subject.

According to the concepts explained in the previous paragraphs, all types of costs-investments are related to its specific degree of transferability expressed by a growing numbers from 1 to 5, based on these concepts:

- public measures (internal and external transferability)
 - the propensity of the entrepreneur to buy the goods and/or service;
 - the characteristic of assets (intrinsic value to the good);
 - the existence in the area of the good and/or service (logistics);
 - the positive effects by the good or service to the business (economic aspect);
- private measures (general transferability)
 - the willingness of the entrepreneur to share with other subjects his knowledges (psychological);
 - the willingness of the specific actions to be shared or realized by cooperation, relationships, joint venture, etc. which are the best expression of private entities (operational aspect);

- the existence in the territory of the good or service (logistics);
- the positive effects by the good or service to the reduction of the costs (economic aspect).

All the time, but especially during the economic crisis, the method must focus its limited resources on the most critical and important parts of management with the related costs. To achieve this, management is divided into three categories:

- **structural**, which represents the investments in assets, such as material goods and intangibles;
- **patrimonial**, which represents the funding of investments;
- **operating**, which represents the consumer goods

6.1. Public transferability

Structural

Table 9 shows the degree of transferability of material goods and intangibles to public subjects: LP (internal transferability) and EP (external transferability).

Table 9

Investments assets	Transferability		Notes
	LP Internal	EP External	
Material goods			
buildings	3	1	Usually the builder and sustainable subject are in the same area, so local public subject supports the investment
furnishings	3	1	As above
equipments	2	4	Most of the equipments, especially the high-tech ones, come from suppliers outside the area
vehicles	0	4	All vehicles come from suppliers outside the area
Average material goods	2	2,5	
Intangibles			
formation expenses	3	3	Bureaucratic complexity involves all public subjects
licensing and permissions	4	4	As above
research and development	5	2	Local subjects have a higher role than external ones to develop local tourism products.
commercial*	1	5	Usually, commercial organization needs subjects located outside the area
advertising*	1	5	As above
training*	1	5	As above
Average intangibles	2,5	4	
* durable – 2 years at least			

The table outlines the same values (average 2 – 2,5) of the internal and external transfers for the investments in material goods and much different values (average 2,5 - 4) of the investments in intangibles. This means that about the material goods, local and external public subjects ply the same role, while about the intangibles, external subjects are much more involved than local ones.

LP, local public subjects focus on:

- buildings and furnishings;
- administrative-bureaucratic expenses;
- research and development expenses;

EP, external public subjects focus on

- vehicles and high-tech goods;
- all types of intangibles.

Patrimonial

Banking system plays an important role in development of local economy, especially in the areas characterized by small entrepreneurs and low available resources. Lack or insufficient control of financial matters means: high interest rates, high bank charges (especially related to transactions with foreign supplier or clients), outflow of local resources, high impact of bank costs on gross margins, etc.

Hence this matter must be included among the tasks of the public subjects:

- encourage banks to offer special conditions to sustainable subjects;
- encourage higher knowledge about bank system by sustainable subjects;
- guarantee the bank loans of sustainable subjects, through local public properties.

Table 10 shows the degree of transferability of the guarantee on bank loans between LP and EP.

Bank interests and charges are in the operating section.

Table 10

Action	Transferability		Notes
	LP	EP	
	Internal	External	
establishment of guarantee	4	1	

Operating

According to previous concepts, public support must focus on the so called indirect costs which have a degree of risk higher than direct ones.

However, division of some types of expenses between direct and indirect costs is not a easy task, so the purchase of goods (foot, chancellery, eg.) are included into a category with degree 3 (medium) of internal and external transferability.

Table 11

Costs	Transferability		Notes
	Internal	External	
salaries	5	1	Sustainability needs local employees
share of maintenance costs	3	3	Part of the maintenance is made by local subjects
administrative costs	3	3	
purchase of goods	3	3	
purchases of energy	1	5	
bank interests	1	5	
bank charges	1	5	
Average costs	2,4	3,5	

6.2. Private transferability

Structural

Table 12

Investments Assets	Transferability	Notes
Material goods		
buildings	2	Sublease
furnishings	1	
equipments	2	Promotion equipments
vehicles	2	Sublease
Average material goods	1,7	
Intangibles		
formation expenses	1	
licensing-permissions	2	Licensing for some subjects
research - development	5	Production of local tourism offers
commercial*	4	Multi-firm agents by national agreements
advertising*	4	Brochures, évents, info tours, etc.
training*	5	Employees and subjects related to tourism
Average Intangibles	3,5	

* durable – 2 years at least

The table shows the high degree of willingness of intangibles to run with relationships between several subjects, especially for the expenses for the production of local tourism offers and training.

Material goods have a low degree of transferability due to their difficulty to be used by several subjects together.

Patrimonial*Table 13*

Action	Transferability	Notes
establishment of guarantee	4	Establishment of guarantee cooperatives

Operating*Table 14*

Costs	Transferability	Notes
employees	2	
energy purchases	4	Photovoltaic panels, consortia
administrative costs, services, advertising and commercial	4	Establishment cooperatives of services, private agreements
share of maintenance costs	4	As above
purchases of goods	4	As above
bank charges	4	Establishment of guarantee cooperatives, bank agreements
Average operating costs	3,6	

Table 15 shows the degree of transferability of investments, patrimonial aspects and operating costs between private and public subjects.

Table 15

Layers	LP					EP					P					notes	
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
Material goods																	
buildings			x			x									x		Average 2,1
furnishings			x			x								x			
equipments			x							x				x			
vehicles	x									x				x			
Intangibles																	
formation expenses			x							x					x		Average 3,3
licensing-permissions				x						x				x			
research - development					x		x									x	
commercial costs	x													x			
advertising costs	x													x			
training costs	x													x			
Patrimonial																	
establishment of guarantee				x		x										x	Average 3
Operating																	
salaries					x	x									x		Average 3,2
costs for energy	x													x			
administration and services			x							x						x	
maintenance			x							x						x	
purchases of goods			x							x						x	
bank interests	x													x		x	
bank charges	x													x		x	

The table outlines:

- low willingness of material goods to the private transferability. Buildings and furnishing have good degree of internal transferability, while vehicles and equipments prefer the external ones;
- low willingness of material goods to involve all the subjects in the same measure;
- high willingness of intangibles, especially commercial, advertising and training, to transferability;
- good willingness of intangibles to involve two subjects in the same measure;
- quite good willingness of operating costs to the transferability;
- quite good willingness of operating costs to involve all subjects in the same measure;
- low attitude to involve only private subjects in the measures (private and public measures has to be together).

6.3. Diagram of the circles

In order to compare the three layers studied by the method, LP, EP and P are shown by three circles which include the aspects (costs and investments) related to transferability.

Moving these circles, which represent different layers, one over the other, the Fig. 10 shows the individual and collective measures in support to sustainability which can be developed by private and public subjects.

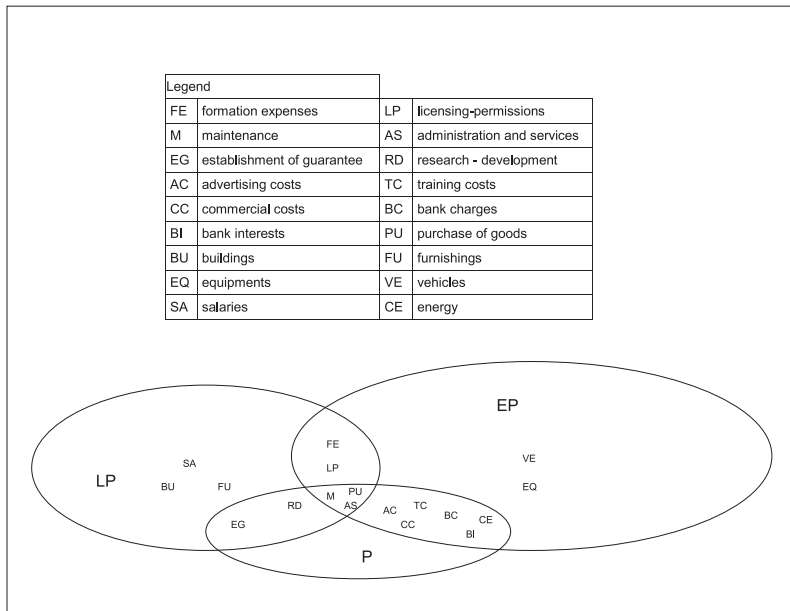


Fig. 10

According with the method propose by the paper, cooperation and relationships are a device which reaches its zenith following the suggestions shown by Fig. 10:

- most of operating costs (administration expenses, maintenance and purchase of goods and services) can be the object of measures which involves all three the subjects-areas;
- investments in research and development of tourism offers are a matter of local cooperation between local public subject and private entities;
- all investments and operating costs of promotion and advertising have to be supported by measures between private entities and public subjects outside the area;
- most of financial matter have to be supported by measures between private entities and public subjects outside the area. Local public subjects must focus on the guarantee of bank loans.

Summary

- areas represent specific layers of transferability which include some specific measures;
- all costs-investments have a specific degree of transferability;
- the method focuses on the most critical matters for sustainable entrepreneur;
- lack or insufficient control of financial matters is a great obstacle to development of sustainable tourism.

Conclusions

Sustainability makes economic disadvantages to private sustainable subjects who see their management limited by the public function included into sustainability.

Without measures able to solve this economic gap-disadvantage and the overflow of resources from the local area, sustainable tourism cannot developed and present and future local economy will disappear.

Economic assumptions to development of sustainable tourism are based on public support and cooperation between public and private subjects, is a pretty obvious and useless statement without furthers analysis suggestions and recommendations.

Hence, the paper has the intention to show a method which, from this statement, justifies the public and private involvement in sustainability, shows a way to find the resources (not only financial) and where these has to be invested. In comparison to other approaches, the present one focuses on the public subjects directly involved in the matter, spreading the costs of sustainability on over different areas.

Of course this method is only a hypothesis based on my experience in tourism and, up to now, there aren't scientific evidences about this. However, the results of the questionnaire-based survey show that most concepts explained by the method are certainly among the obstacles to development and survival of small tourism entrepreneurs.

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