

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS TO LOCAL ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is a sophisticated activity of any national economy. The originality of regional tourism impacts the application of special mix of means concerning insufficient professional knowledge and competences of entrepreneurs in the frame of providence of high quality services, hence, the regional tourism development interferens with specific problems. By current driven factors in regional tourism, such as high entrepreneurship, investments, variety of serviness, warrant a new era of local economy and serve for the strategic tourism development as tools and specific scenario. Sustainable tourism sector accesses new stock of acitivities concerning competitiveness amplification and popularization or implication of new resources. The current task of research is to identify the impacts of sustainable tourism development in the frame of amplification of new tourism resources concerning business range and sustainability of regional development.

KEY WORDS: *sustainable tourism development concept, tourism industry, local economy, tourism cluster.*

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Introduction

Sustainable tourism development concept is connected with specific issues for identification tourism development strategic tools upon sustainable regional development. By the UNESCO World Heritage Study (Sustainable tourism (...), 1999), the concept of sustainable tourism development is related to principles such as intra- and inter- generational equity, has been widely applied to economic sectors, mainly and sustainable tourism.

Sustainable tourism development means the optimal use of social, natural, cultural and financial resources for national development on an equitable and self-sustaining basis to provide a unique visitor experience and an improved quality of life through partnerships among local government, private sector and communities.

Problem. The necessity of wider explanation about the sustainable tourism development impacts to local economy is fitted to the new challanges for it, especially in remoted regions of EU.

Purpose. Scientific research is oriented on formulation of introductive information for the stakeholders about the impacts of sustainable tourism development.

Object. Sustainable tourism development dimensions.

Tasks:

- investigate the sustainable tourism environment and to induct transversal dimension of sustainable tourism development concept;

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- identify the impacting factors of sustainable tourism development;
- reveal the conceptual means for enhance the sustainable tourism development model.

Methods. The research methods are applied: monograph method, desk and integral method, systematic and content analysis of the referred scientific studies and reports.

The scientific article is compounded and structured as follows:

- firstly, the implication of the sustainable tourism development concept is presented;
- secondly, the survey is oriented on carrying out a review of sustainable tourism development by some dimensions: tourism infrastructure improvement, local tourism resources, mainly cultural, with its impact on local business development, that allows to clarify a number of related tourism development strategies and creation of regional tourism cluster for making evidence about the peculiarities of local economy upon tourism as a streamline factor for regional development;
- thirdly, the survey serves for proposition a conceptual model of regional competitiveness by clustering tourism ans aiming it to help filling the existent gap within this field as a tool for future researches in the sustainable tourism development.

The investigation of the transversal dimension of sustainable tourism development is based on systematic analysis of theoretical aspects of sustainable tourism model as EU tourism environment and infrastructure. For the investigation of preconditions for building cluster scenario for tourism sector, the research is contributed with the preconditions positively acting on tourism infrastructure and innovative processes insight, facilitating global markets with the new tourism products, tourism institutions, canalizing knowledge and information for tourism industry as technological dissemination.

1. Implications of sustainable tourism development concept

Tourism industry takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities (UNWTO, 2011). The most clearly declaration about sustainable tourism development concept was explained in 1997 (Sustainable (...) by Naturopa, 1997). Over 170 states agreed to pursue at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and possessed new challenges for environmental policy at both European and global level. The European Union and the Council of Europe have developed specific activities in this area. In 1995, the United Nations Environment Programme by UNEP in Paris published for the first time a collection of the environmental guidelines in existence throughout the world for the tourist sector. In April 1995, UNESCO held a World Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Lanzarote in co-operation with the Spanish Government. The participants adopted an 18-point Charter for Sustainable Tourism, which had a significant impact. The first example of an international legal instrument can be found in the implementing Protocol on Tourism of the Convention for the Protection of the Alps, which commits the eight Alpine states to the goal of sustainable tourism in the Alpine region.

The greatest interest in sustainable tourism development model in EU appeared at 1992, and splitted toward the concepts, programmes and practical studies.

The final considerations and research results are important to stakeholders in application the cluster scenario for tourism sector of any EU region. Implications of the sustainable tourism development concept is based on the tourism sector could be characterized as one of the activities with great potential for expansion on a more global scale. For its growth potential and particular focus on a regional level is significant (Sharp-ley, 2002; Jackson et al., 2005) and a full view to small business (local economy) development opportunities even in rural areas.

There are several inherent challenges in applying the concept of sustainable tourism development by tourism industry and local business (Berno, Bricker, 2001), international tourism development with the international cooperation and assistance; and tourism development towards a green economy (UNWTO, 2011) with the new funding tools and programmes.

Tourism academics and practitioners openly consider about the implications of sustainable tourism development concept and declare their positive attitude about the necessity to special tourism funding programmes, which help to conduct the tourism sector in the less developed EU countries (Berno, Bricker, 2001; Peric, Mujacevic, Šimunic, 2011). Obviously, the tourism development under sustainable regional policy and institutional EU initiatives (Torres-Delgado, Palomeque, 2012) is important for local economy and population directly acting in this sector.

According to United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2011) tourism sector needs to strengthen alliances with other international and regional organizations, including some from the private sector as well as to build the institutional framework to better equip the Organization with policies, tools and knowledge in order to enhance results. The traditional resources and economic activities have stabilized and declined over the past few years the development of global tourism. The great need for activation it in new scenario is more relevant than ever.

The Roadmap to the Earth Summit RIO+20 in June 2012 (Earth Summit, 2012) was proposed by UNWTO, and linked to a unique milestone for the World Tourism Organization to position tourism in the Global Agenda (UNWTO, 2011). The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is a unique International Forum, where donor governments and multilateral organizations (ex., World Bank, United Nations) work together to reduce poverty and achieve the Millennium development goals. Forum is seeking of the new ways of implementation of DAC's objectives (UNWTO, 2011). The transversal dimension of tourism development is represented as a unique opportunity for UNWTO to act as the umbrella organization with other UN entities. For tourism development it covers all public and private sector – actors and stakeholders, and pull resources for common global market interests. By co-branding UNWTO with other institutions from public and private sectors, build the tourism scenario, which are available as a visible and brand equity of any country with a strong emphasis on economic development, employment, poverty reduction within the new paradigm of climate change and the recent crisis.

Consequently, the regional tourism sector is so significant at national levels, that it could be presented as mainstreaming tool in regional development and economic growth of any EU country, especially in remoted regions of the Baltic States, believing to be one of the shifts to avoid desertification and regional economic stagnation. The importance of tourism sector development is mentioned by local action groups (LAGs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and this activity is becoming important more in rural areas, than in urban.

Finally, tourism activities bring much-needed foreign exchange, which allows the regional economic development and diversification. So, in regional development context, the tourism is a powerful instrument (Opperman, 1993; Engelstoft et al., 2006) for creation tourism value chain, which is relevant to discuss the role of clusters and networking tourism organizations with local stakeholders (Peric et al., 2011).

In nowadays the tourism industry is developmeng by using some sustainable tools – the global partnership networking, green economy pillars, green passport campaign (UNEP, 2014).

The tourism industry can have adverse environmental, economic and social effects. These impacts are mostly linked with the construction and management of tourism infrastructures such as roads and airports, and of tourism facilities, including resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops, golf courses and marinas. All managed tourism can put enormous pressure on an area and lead to soil erosion, increased air, soil and marine pollution, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires (UNEP, 2014). On the other hand, tourism has the potential to contribute to environmental protection and poverty reduction by capitalising on biodiversity assets; to increase public appreciation of the environment and to spread awareness of environmental problems bringing people into closer contact with nature and the environment. Because of tourism potential, many natural areas are now legally protected. Finally, sustainable tourism businesses can be promoted as sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities in areas where current economic activities have detrimental effects on the host environment, but, where biodiversity and cultural assets could be a source of income. If efficiently planned and managed, tourism could become an

ally and a supportive economic and political force for conservation. That is the aim of promoting sustainable tourism development (STD) concept or tourism that is compatible with sustainable development.

The goals of STD concept could be arisen from several sides of it implementation results, such as mentioned in the mission of UNEP (UNEP, 2014):

- to mainstream a sustainability into tourism development by demonstrating the economic, environmental and socio-cultural benefits;
- to contribute with biodiversity conservation;
- to sustaine of the well being local people;
- to support peopel and organizational with learning experience;
- to involve the responsible actions on the part of tourists and the tourism industry;
- to deliver the products/services primarily to small groups by small-scale businesses;
- to require the lowest consumption of non-renewable resources;
- to stress-up the local participation, ownership and business opportunities, particularly for rural people.

Simple framework of sustainable tourism development model needs three elements: target market, desired experience and place with it identity, locality, site and facilities. The main shifts of such scenario could be the handling of regional resources, which are so important for domestic and international tourism development.

In last decade, in Lithuania tourism sector is based on investigation of new opportunities and findings of the attractive cultural resources. This tendency is obviously great for all tourism industry. Finally, the integral approach is needful at a new period of Rural Development Programe 2014–2020 for Lithuania's local economy by further solutions to improve the socio-economic situation in rural areas. The interaction of main instruments in identification of cluster scenario for Lithuanian tourism development is important for encourage it regional competitiveness.

Sustainable tourism development concept includes the environmental physical and human issues, employment and financial leakages, business development and entrepreneurial activities, social impacts in business and consumer behavior, and environmental aspects (Miller, 2001). Finally, descriptive and general indicators are pointing to the difficulties to investigate properly the sectoral impacts for sustainable tourism development.

2. Analysis of dimensions of sustainable tourism development

World Trade Organization (WTO) suggests the definition such as the sustainable tourism development concept could include the regional development dimension in host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for it in the future (Cernat, Gourdon, 2007). It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes and biological diversity and life support systems.

In UNEP Programme sustainability of a tourism sector development is fixed on the strategic goals with pointed dimensions (UNEP, 2014):

- support the integration of sustainability in tourism development policies;
- support to governments and other institutional stakeholders in the local regional and international level;
- promotion of sustainable production patterns in the tourism value chain;
- co-operation with the tourism industry (hotels, tour operators, transportation industry, etc.);
- encourage demand for sustainable tourism services and consumer based activities;
- co-operation with NGOs having programmes on sustainable tourism.

Sustainable tourism development definitely includes the issues connected to the rural development, environmental impacts, cultural and natural heritage, services and infrastructure for tourism as ethnotourism or ecotourism, or agrotourism, and alternative activities in countryside.

Consequently, in the scientific publications sustainable tourism surveys are focused on the development of indicators measuring tourism sustainability in a complex way, or covered several indicators of the physical and human environment (Miller, 2001).

Seven dimensions are proposed for construction full view benchmarks of sustainable tourism: tourism assets (natural resources and cultural assets); tourism activity; tourism-related linkages; tourism-related leakage effects; environmental and social sustainability; overall infrastructure and regional attractiveness (UNWTO, 1998; Cernat, Gourdon, 2007).

The key pillars of sustainable tourism development are suitable for a balance between these dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability: environmental, socio-cultural and economic. In case of the aims of sustainable tourism development: economic viability, local prosperity, employment quality, social equity, visitor fulfillment, local control, community wellbeing, cultural richness, physical integrity, biological diversity, resource efficiency, environmental purity, the future investigations are appropriate.

UNWTO Guide for local authorities on developing sustainable tourism provides a good description of the type of tourism resources that need to be considered and assessed. The Tourism Satellite Account, for instance, also analyses the supply side of tourism, but that only concerns the producer of goods and services in tourism activity (UNWTO, 2011).

More impacts on sustainable tourism development are presented in 1 table.

Table 1. Types of impacts in sustainable tourism development model

Positive impacts of sustainable tourism development	Negative impacts of sustainable tourism development
Building community pride	Commodification and cheapening of culture and traditions
Enhancing the sense of identity of a community or region	Alienation and loss of cultural identity
Promoting intercultural/international understanding	Undermining of local traditions and ways of life
Encouraging revival or maintenance of traditional crafts	Displacement of traditional residents
Enhancing external support for minority groups and preservation of their culture	Increased division between those who do and do not benefit from tourism
Broadening community horizons	Conflict over (and at times loss of) land rights and access to resources (including the attractions themselves)
Providing funding for site preservation and management	Damage to attractions and facilities
Enhancing local and external appreciation	Loss of authenticity and historical accuracy in interpretation
Support for cultural heritage	Selectivity in which heritage attractions are developed

Source: author's elaboration

Such diversity of activities in regional level leads on findings on different sustainable tourism impacts, and makes the concept so complex (Middleton, Hawkins, 1998). Identification of positive and negative impacts is required for maintenance the framework of national tourism industry with new findings for improving it by clustering.

3. Clustering of National tourism industry

The scientific and practical discussion about tourism clusters is still in primal level in EU (Rosenfeld, 1997; Nordin, 2003; Capone, 2004) and Lithuania, too. For investigating the possibilities to improve the economic situation of local residents in the rural areas, arises a great necessity to create a conceptual model

for local stakeholders to act in networking upon the scenario of sustainable tourism development (STD) (Torres-Delgado, Palomeque, 2012).

The major potential of clusters in tourism sector stands on geographical location and natural environment (including landscape), historical and cultural heritage, nature watch, thematic routes, museums, crafts and food, local lifestyle, tourist accommodation and facilities. Clusters are emerging spontaneously based on market forces on a variety of activities. Such process of clusters formation occurs naturally as local business entities are more active, investment to infrastructure is quite available, logistics and transport system is working. Clusters are responding of local needs, organized in cluster concentrations and global markets.

The existence of geographical concentrations (Porter, 1994) is available, where growth is strong and sustained by the interactions among private, public and institutional entities.

Clusters are functioning through the famous points of M. Porter “diamond”:

- factorial conditions or structural environment of business;
- demand conditions, which disclose the demand conditions for products / services in the internal market where innovation impacts is greater along the value chain;
- related industries, which offer other products/services, and synergy to a similar demand is higher, interacting the client and business cluster;
- strategy, structure and rivalry is needful for the existence of local competitors as a powerful stimulant to innovation and performance improvement up to cooperation among firms;
- historical hazards;
- public policy.

M. Porter (Porter, 1994) suggested “diamond model” and applied to sustainable tourism development that shows the system of interactions inside the cluster, which are mainly informal, enticing coherence, all actors in cluster need co-operation, but keep their freedom of choice in all business opportunities by competition.

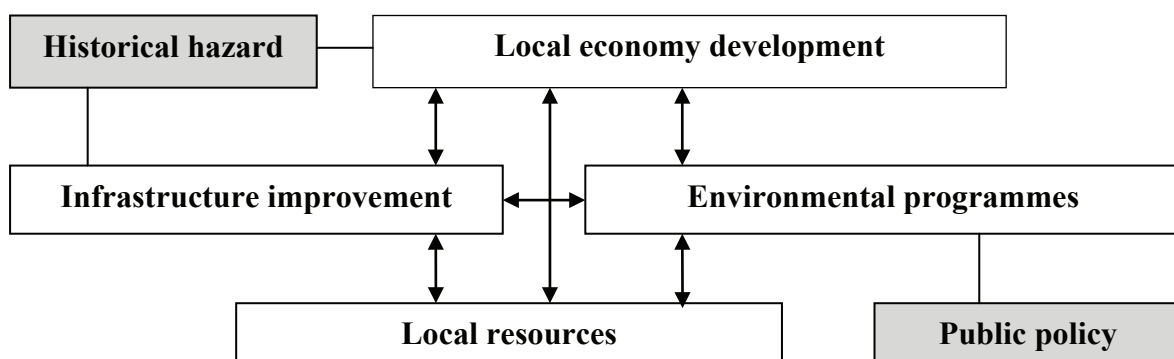


Figure 1. Conceptual model of sustainable tourism development

Source: author's elaboration

The tourism cluster is important in adoption of the specific characteristics of tourism activity, those product is linked to its local base and to the common activity of enterprises involved in the regional tourism product in the frame of horizontal or vertical business relations (Cunha, Cunha, 2005). Strategic alliances or strategic networks are rewarding the regional tourism infrastructure. Tourism clustering helps to guarantee high quality tourism, with tourist attractions and sustainable economic activity.

Public policy or governance has an important role in assembling information about cluster composition, membership, employment and performance. Such information allows public investments to be better aligned with business needs, based on the cluster composition in any region. This will make public policy more effective. Cluster information will also increase the efficiency of private sector investment and foster the start-ups with new business. Cluster-based tourism sector should face with the higher economic activity, spillovers productivity and prosperity increase, providing superior levels of territorial competitiveness.

Thus, landscape and natural environment, cultural heritage and local infrastructure have to be adequate to regional development goals.

Conclusions

Research provides a long-term priority areas of tourism sector and regional tourism industry for promoting the most accessible tourism resources – natural, cultural, recreational, business and human. The analysis of strategic objectives and actions serves for identification of capabilities for private business to implement sustainable tourism development concept and its tools, mastering a rational use of EU Structural Funds in the national tourism sector competitiveness. Landscape, natural environment and heritage could be the answer to regional development by clusters formation for tourism sector.

The investigation results about sustainable tourism environment are focused on several inherent challenges in applying the concept of sustainable tourism development to regional tourism industry. Nowadays the regional tourism industry is developing by using some sustainable tools – the global partnership networking, green economy pillars, green passport campaign, which makes easier way to manage tourism information and reveal structural market changes. Tourism environment serves also for contribution to sustainable regional development bringing people into closer contact with nature.

Seven dimensions are proposed for construction full view benchmarks of sustainable tourism, which includes the environmental physical and human issues, employment and financial leakages, business development and entrepreneurial activities, social impacts in business and consumer behavior, and environmental aspects.

Finally, descriptive and general indicators are pointing to the difficulties to investigate properly the sectoral impacts for sustainable tourism development.

Such diversity of activities in regional level leads on findings on different sustainable tourism impacts, with the identification of positive and negative impacts. Their evaluation is required for maintenance the framework of national tourism industry with new findings for improving it by clustering.

Clusters in tourism industry are making geographical concentration of available regional/local businesses with interactions among private, public and institutional entities. Clustering occurs naturally as the local business entities are becoming more active. Clusters are spontaneously based on market forces on a variety of their activities. Cluster-based tourism sector should face with the higher economic activity and territorial competitiveness.

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TVARIOS TURIZMO PLĖTROS POVEIKIS VIETOS EKONOMIKAI

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Santrauka

Mokslinių tyrimų gausa verčia analizuoti darnios turizmo plėtros koncepcijos turinį ir suprasti septynių jos dimensijų poveikį. Straipsnyje akcentuojamos naujos dimensijos: fizinės infrastruktūros ir apinkosaugos, darbo rinkos ir verslumo, finansinės paramos bei socialinės priemonės, kurios svarbios ir sparčiai diegiamos versle bei vartotojų elgsenoje. Aptariamos kylančios problemos.

Turizmas yra sudėtinga veikla, daranti didelį poveikį regiono ar vietovės ekonomikai. ES šalių regionų vystymo strategijoje turizmo plėtros poveikis vertinamas teigiamai. Vykdam įvairią ekonominę veiklą ar įgyvendinant specialias verslumo priemones, siekiama konkretaus regiono gyventojų gerovės. Menkai ekonomiškai išvystytuose regionuose, kur ryškus verslumo ar verslo žinių bei ekonominės veiklos patirties trūkumas, svarbu atrasti būdų, kaip teikti aukštos pridėtinės vertės turizmo produktus ir paslaugas. Darniai turizmo plėtrai reikia naujų išteklių, naujos veiklos siekiant didesnio regiono konkurencingumo, todėl būtina skatinti verslumo, investicijų ar paslaugų įvairovę, sudarant prielaidas įgyvendinti specialius turizmo plėtros scenarijus.

Pagrindinė šiuo moksliniu tyrimu identifikuota problema yra vietovės gamtos, kultūros, poilsio, verslo ir žmonių išteklių sutelkimas kuriant pridėtinę vertę turizmo klasteriuose.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: *darnios turizmo plėtros koncepcija, turizmo sektorius, vietos ekonomika, turizmo klasteris*.

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