



REPORTS 139

**LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE
FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM:
PROCEEDINGS OF SUMMER SCHOOL 2014**

**SUSANNA KESKINARKAUS, ANNE MATILAINEN, SILVIA BARBONE AND
ANNE-MARIA MÄKELÄ (EDS.)**



LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM:

PROCEEDINGS OF SUMMER SCHOOL 2014

SUSANNA KESKINARKAUS, ANNE MATILAINEN, SILVIA BARBONE
AND ANNE-MARIA MÄKELÄ (EDS.)



2014

Publisher University of Helsinki
Ruralia Institute
www.helsinki.fi/ruralia

Lönnrotinkatu 7
50100 FI-MIKKELI

Kampusranta 9 C
60320 FI-SEINÄJOKI

Series Reports 139

Cover Photo Susanna Keskinarkaus

ISBN 978-951-51-0416-8 (pdf)

ISSN 1796-0630 (pdf)

CONTENTS

TIIVISTELMÄ	5
INTRODUCTION	7
THE RISE AND FALL OF A CONSERVATION TOURISM ENTERPRISE IN AFRICA: THE STORY (AND LESSONS) OF A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP	9
SWEN WATERREUS	
Abstract	9
Introduction	9
Outline of paper	10
Setting the scene	10
Line of events of Gabon Ecotourism	12
Exploring the partnership	14
Concluding lessons learnt	17
References	18
‘PUSHING STUDY TRIPS TO BECOME A TWO-WAY TOOL’ – A NEW SPIN ON KNOWLEDGE CREATION PARTNERSHIPS	21
JONATHAN KARKUT & JULIE SCOTT	
Knowledge and Tourism	21
Learning Partnerships in Theory and Practice	23
The Study Trip Model	24
Vignettes from the field	25
Conclusion	27
Bibliography	28
COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING IN TOURISM SECTOR: AN APPLICATION OF THE EUROPEAN TOURISM INDICATORS SYSTEM IN THE “A.T.L. DEL CUNEESE”	29
MASSIMILIANO CODA ZABETTA, SARA LEVI SACERDOTTI AND STEFANIA MAURO	
Abstract	29
Introduction	29
CBM: literature, approach, case studies	30
CBM in the tourism sector	31
CBM-T through the ETIS in an Italian destination	32
The Results of the ETIS Implementation	35
References	36
THE POTENTIAL GREEN CARE ACTORS’ INTEREST AND STARTING POINTS TO THE GREEN CARE OPERATION IN SOUTH OSTROBOTHNIA – SURVEYS RESULTS	37
M.SC. MARIA SUOMELA	
Abstract	37
Introduction	37
Definition of Green Care	37
Green Care in Finland	38
Green Care for health, welfare and growth in South-Ostrobothnia	39
Survey for potential private sector Green Care actors in South-Ostrobothnia	40
Survey for potential Green Care actors in South-Ostrobothnia	43
Conclusion of the surveys	44
References	45

STRATEGY THROUGH STORYTELLING; A STRENGTHENED IDENTITY FOR THE RUPELSTREEK	47
ELIZABETH VAN DEN BERGH	
Abstract.....	47
Introduction.....	47
Sustainable Tourism.....	47
The golden triangle of sustainability.....	48
Background info on the Rupelstreek.....	48
The regional narrative.....	49
Analysis of sustainability dimensions in the regional narrative.....	50
Conclusion.....	51
Recommendations.....	52
References.....	52
HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY	53
ABOU ARRAGE, JAD; KHREIS, ALI; EL-KURDI, AMAL; MIKHAEL, MAHA AND NASR, FAHD	
Abstract.....	53
Introduction.....	53
Conceptual linkages: landscapes, tourism, and sustainability.....	54
Methodology and research design.....	56
Landscapes and tourism in Lebanon: between degradation and conservation.....	60
Results and discussion.....	62
Conclusion and recommendations.....	67
References.....	68
THE EUROPEAN TOURISM INDICATOR SYSTEM	71
CINZIA DE MARZO	
ETIS background.....	71
Using the indicator system.....	71
ETIS implementation.....	72
References.....	72
STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT – TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES	73
MIKE DOLLIN	
Case study Forest Holidays.....	74
Blackwood Forest Micheldever, Hampshire England.....	74
GREEN CARE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – INSIGHTS GAINED FROM FINNISH GREEN CARE AND A MULTI-ACTOR GREEN CARE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN SOUTH SAVO, EASTERN FINLAND	76
PÄIVI PYLKKÄNEN, ANNE TÖRN AND SARI IIVONEN	
Abstract.....	76
Introduction.....	76
The notion of Green Care in the South Savo region and in Finland.....	77
Sustainability claims and criteria in the context of Finnish Green Care.....	79
On the notion of sustainable (nature-based) tourism.....	80
Conclusions.....	81
References.....	81
BEST PRACTICES IN COMBINING TOURISM AND GREEN CARE	83
CAROLA D'AGOSTINO SONIA CERULLO	
Abstract.....	83
Introduction.....	83
SUCCESSFUL TOURISM STRATEGIC PLANS FOR DESTINATIONS	85
DR. VARMA, DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND SERVICES, UNWTO	

TIIVISTELMÄ

Kestävän matkailun johtamiseen ja hallintoon pureutuva kesäkoulu on vuosittainen tapahtuma, jossa edistetään turismin kestävyttä, johtamisen ammattitaitoa ja seurantarjestelmien laatua. Kesäkoulu kokoaa matkailualan avaintoimijat päättäjistä ja kehittäjistä yrittäjiin sekä tutkijoihin. Tapahtuman tavoitteena on yhteistyössä

- Jakaa tietoa siitä, kuinka kestävästi suunnitella ja hallinnoida matkailuprojekteja
- Tuottaa matkailu johtamiseen liittyvää tietoa
- Innovoida kestäviä matkailuprojekteja
- Verkostoitua ja oppia toisilta parhaita käytänteitä kestävä matkailun johtamiseen liittyen
- Oppia PM4SD™-projektinhallintamenetelmään liittyvät periaatteet

Foundation for European Sustainable Tourism (FEST), Leeds Beckett University ja Network of European Regions for Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR) loivat kesäkoulun 2013

Euroopan Komission tuella. Kesällä 2014 Seinäjoen Ammattikorkeakoulu isännöi tapahtumaa yhteistyössä seuraavien organisaatioiden kanssa: Helsingin yliopiston Ruralia Instituutti, Seinäjoen yliopistokeskus, Etelä-Pohjanmaan liitto, Leeds Metropolitan University, George Washington University, JLAG ja NECSTouR. Tapahtumaa tukevat UNWTO ja Euroopan Matkailukomissio.

Tämä julkaisu kokoaa kesäkoulun esitykset. Tavoitteena on korostaa matkailun systemaattisen hallinnan merkitystä kestävyden edistämisessä. Julkaistavat paperit tuovat esiin kestävä matkailuun liittyviä tapaustutkimuksia, avainkäsitteitä sekä työkaluja. Tohtori Varma UNWTO:sta keskittyi matkailun suunnitteluun kun taas Cinzia de Marzo puhui Euroopan matkailuindikaattoreista. Kaikki kirjoitukset elävöittävät käsitystämme jostain tietysti kestävä matkailun osa-alueesta ja mahdollistavat aihepiirin moninaisuuden ymmärtämistä.

INTRODUCTION

THE DECLARATION OF SEINÄJOKI

The Summer School in “Leadership and Governance for Sustainable Tourism” is an annual event that addresses how to improve sustainable tourism projects and monitor the benefits of tourism initiatives. The Summer School also focuses on the professionalization of project management skills in tourism. The Summer School brings together key representatives of the tourism sector: funders, policy makers, industry representatives, project managers, academics and entrepreneurs. Organisations and professionals gather together to:

- Share practices on how to sustainably plan and manage tourism projects and destinations;
- Share knowledge on improving management and leadership practices;
- Generate sustainable and successful tourism project ideas;
- Network and disseminate papers related to the management, governance and leadership of sustainable tourism;
- Learn the key management principles of PM4SD™ (Project Management for Sustainable Development), a best practise methodology and certification in tourism project management.

The Summer School was developed in 2013 by the Foundation for European Sustainable Tourism (FEST), the Leeds Beckett University and the Network of European Regions for Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR), with the support of the European Commission, and it is designed to take place every year in a different European country. In 2014, Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences (SeAMK) hosted the FEST summer school in Finland under the topic “Tourism and green care”. The Summer School was organized in partnership with the University of Helsinki, Ruralia Institute, the University Consortium of Seinäjoki, the Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia, Leeds Metropolitan University, George Washington University, JLAG, and NECSTouR,

and with the support of UNWTO and the European Travel Commission.

As a result of the 2014 Summer School, the Declaration of Seinäjoki, the papers presented are published in the report. The declaration aims to create international awareness of the importance of structured project management in the field of sustainable tourism. The case studies and presentations aim to transfer best practices, key concepts, tools, and strategies in sustainable tourism and project management.

Several experts of sustainable tourism presented interesting insights on the topic. Dr. Varma from UNWTO focused on key elements for Successful Tourism Strategic Plans for Destinations. Cinzia de Marzo, on the other hand, brought an EU-level approach to the topic by unveiling the European Tourism System of Indicators (ETIS).

In one paper, the Riciclo-case by d’Agostino and Cerullo, a community-based project related to gastrotourism is presented with a focus on style and taste providing new approaches to sustainable food. Van Den Bergh from Netherlands introduces the sustainable development challenges and opportunities of Rupelstreek and the opportunities storytelling brings to the areas tourism development. Arrage et al. focus heritage and landscape management as important components of sustainable development, while Waterreus looks at conservation tourism in Africa. Zabetta, Sacerdoti & Mauro explore the European Tourism Indicator system in community-based monitoring using ATL del Cuneese as a case. Karkut & Scott investigate study trips as a tool for two-way knowledge creation. Dollin presents the significance of stakeholders in sustainable tourism management. Suomela examines the current knowledge and future potential of Green Care in the Southern Ostrobothnia region.

All these papers highlight some essential perspective of sustainable tourism development and serve as interesting reading in comprehending the full scope of project management issues the tourism sector faces.

THE RISE AND FALL OF A CONSERVATION TOURISM ENTERPRISE IN AFRICA: THE STORY (AND LESSONS) OF A PUBLICPRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

SWEN WATERREUS

ABSTRACT

Since the 1990s and the arrival of the neoliberal paradigm, there is a clear trend towards the deployment of tourism in the dynamic of biodiversity protection. Within the African context, the conservation enterprise model (initiated by the African Wildlife Foundation) introduced projects where high-end tourism was developed and revenues were used for nature conservation purposes. This trend has brought many types of new alliances in which market agents, state bodies and (non-governmental) organizations concerned with conservation and/or development, to join efforts. In such partnerships, even though end goals among partners may be similar (for example: the protection of national park X in country Y), the means to reach end goals may not. Market agents, state bodies and non-governmental organizations have, per definition, different agendas. This paper zooms in on a high-end tourism initiative in Gabon, West Africa, where a private investor collaborates with a nature organization to protect a national park. At first very successful, the case study shows the challenges of combining different agendas in one public-private partnership, how that eventually led to its fatal end and concludes with valuable lessons learnt.

Key words: conservation tourism; conservation enterprise; public-private partnerships; Gabon

INTRODUCTION

Between 2000 and 2012, Gabon Ecotourism¹ was a large and successful tourism project in Gabon, West Africa. It started with business-man [Matthew Williams] investing a large sum of money in the creation of Gabon Lodge in 2000, right outside of what was then a national reserve. Following the

vision “tourism pays for conservation”, the investor initiated a partnership with a nature conservation organization Save the Forest (STF) and set up the pilot project Gabon Ecotourism, a model that would bring together tourism and nature conservation. The model consisted of the main idea that a commercial tour operator would bring high-end tourists to Gabon for its extraordinary wildlife and nature under the premise that their money would be re-invested in wildlife and nature protection activities of a large conservation NGO, in which they could also participate in the form of excursions and activities.

Gabon Ecotourism (GE) soon became well known and popular throughout the high end tourism market in Europe and North America. The years 2003-2008 were successful times peaking in 2007 with 8,000 bed nights in Gabon Lodge, employing around one hundred staff. Due to Gabon's difficult logistic situation, the company behind GE, which shall be referred to as ABC, had started a small airline to provide transportation of tourists to the destination – ABC Air. The air carrier operated flights between the country's main cities and Gabon Lodge (GL), but later also in the West-African region, with approximately another two hundred staff.

When Gabon's president Omar Bongo died in 2009, ABC lost an important personal contact and entry point to the government as Williams enjoyed very good relations with President Omar Bongo. Agreements that had made the establishment of the tourism project possible – and especially the airline component – had come directly from the president. But after forty years of rule and national stability (Gabon was counted among the most stable countries of Africa), the country fell in a phase of uncertainty. Omar Bongo's son, Ali Ben Bongo, was elected president half a year later. With him and his entirely new government, previous close relations

¹ all names in this paper are modified for purposes of discretion

with the presidency disappeared. Simultaneously (and as a result of lost relations) ABC Air fell in a dispute with national aviation authorities. Licenses were withdrawn and planes were grounded.

With no possibilities to bring tourists to the destination, GE found itself in serious difficulty. It tried to restore relations with the new government, but agreements to continue aviation and tourism operations as before were never reached. As a result, GL had to close for the first time in 2010. A long series of negotiations with government bodies continued. The lodge opened again for a short while, then closed again in 2011, to be re-opened a third time for only a couple months in 2012. That is when ABC finally pulled the plug, leaving a once so successful tourism project behind.

OUTLINE OF PAPER

This paper is an excerpt of a 2012 master's thesis, which is based on empirical data (over thirty in-depth interviews, archives, correspondence, news sources etc.) For the sake of this paper, the practical story of the case study will be presented. Its focus is to show how a very specific public-private partnership came to exist, how it operated and how it could fall despite earlier success. In the setting the scene section, the case will be imbedded in the wider scientific discourse of the use of tourism for nature conservation and development of the 'third world'. Then the background of Gabon and tourism in Gabon will be described after which a summary of the line of events from project initiation, via changing external factors, leading to emerging disputes, to project closure. Finally, I explore the dynamics of the public-private partnership and how the characteristics of the private partner - its definition of the situation - has influence over its position towards, and its relation with, public partners in (and outside) the partnership. It is here that the case study is made relevant to public-private partnerships in other arrangements, too. The paper concludes with an attempt to extract lessons learnt from this case study relevant to the wider field of the deployment of tourism for sustainable development, and public-private partnerships in general.

SETTING THE SCENE

SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

As far back as in the 1970s, Budowski (1976) already predicted that tourism and the nature conservation arena can go hand in hand, bringing

great benefits to both camps, provided that they are well managed and institutionally grounded. With the observation that traditional divides between nation state, market and civil society started fading and new coalitions emerged between state agencies, market agents and civic organizations (Van Tatenhove et al. 2000), came the involvement of corporations in the preservation of biodiversity and the notion of 'selling nature to save it' (Holmes 2012). Within this neoliberal paradigm, there is a clear trend towards the deployment of tourism in the dynamics of conservation. Nature conservation and development organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Conservation International started to fund and/or support tourism programs to achieve conservation goals while simultaneously addressing development issues (See Butcher 2007). Within the African context, the conservation enterprise model by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) introduced projects where high-end tourism was developed and revenues were shared with local communities for development and conservation purposes (Nthiga et al. 2011), of which The Koija Starbeds enterprise in Kenya is a known example (See also Sumba et al. 2007) but numerous others exist as well (see Lamers et al. 2014; Ahebwa et al. 2012). Africa has since then seen many new alliances for tourism, conservation and development emerge (Van der Duim et al. 2011a). These alliances come in many forms, among others as public-private partnerships (PPP), private-community partnerships (PCP) or public-private-community partnerships (PPCP) (Van der Duim et al. 2011b).

The current paper adds to the discussion by zooming in on a public-private partnership in Africa. It delivers a case, in which many things went right, but enough went wrong so it could not maintain. It should not be regarded as an independent case study, but rather be placed in the wider discourse of conservation tourism in Africa and is, as such, exemplary for other and future initiatives in Africa and beyond.

EMERGING GABON

Gabon neighbors Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon and the Republic of Congo in West-Central Africa and has approximately 950 km of Atlantic coast. With its 1,5 million inhabitants it is one of the least populated countries in Africa with less than five people per km². 75% of inhabitants live in urban areas. Gabon gained independence from France in 1960 and is a resource-rich country and the fifth

largest oil producer of Sub-Saharan Africa (UNDP 2012). Oil production has been declining rapidly from its peak point of 370 000 barrels per day in 1997 to 241 700 in 2011 (The Richest 2012). Oil revenues comprise roughly 46% of the government's budget, 43% of gross domestic product (GDP), and 81% of exports (manganese, timber and uranium being other large export products). Some estimates suggest that Gabonese oil will be expended by 2025. Despite decreasing oil revenues, planning for an after-oil scenario has only recently begun (US Department of State 2012). In his message to the nation for the 50th anniversary of independence in 2010, the president of Gabon presented the four strategic sectors for the country's new economic diversification policy: wood processing, light metallurgy, ecotourism and energy (UNDP 2012).

In 2009, president Omar Bongo Ondimba died after having ruled Gabon for 42 years. He is said to have gained immense private wealth by the country's oil production and to have ruled autocratically (The Telegraph 2009). In the political void caused by his death until long after the (disputed) election of his son Ali Ben Bongo in November 2009, many well-established political structures fell apart and saw much political turmoil within the government and the country.

One of the first things Ali Bongo did was announcing a new vision for the modernization of Gabon, which he called Gabon Emergent (Emerging Gabon). This vision consists of three pillars: Gabon Vert (Green Gabon), Gabon des Services (Service Gabon) and Gabon Industriel (Industrial Gabon). With the awareness of decreasing oil stocks, the Gabon Emergent plans were meant to diversify Gabon's economy and decrease dependency on oil (Portail Gabon 2012).

NATURE CONSERVATION IN GABON

Central Africa's moist tropical forests cover 1.8 million km², the second largest contiguous block in the world, traversing boundaries of Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon and Central African Republic. Gabon harbors an important part of that block, with roughly 80% of the country covered by moist tropical forest. Its flora is classified as among the richest in Africa (Lee et al. undated). From 69 to 80% of Gabon's original forest cover remains, although much forest is being selectively logged (Laurance et al. 2006).

Biodiversity research has pointed out that Gabon is home to immense numbers of species of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish and

plants, and that the country hosts important populations of species of conservation concern, such as sea turtles, African forest elephants, humpback whales and great apes. The abundance of globally rare species and its biological diversity make Gabon's land valuable for conservation at an international level (Lee et al. undated). Human influence is indicated to threaten biodiversity. Major identified threats include illegal hunting (commercial hunting of protected species or in restricted zones like national parks); illegal offshore trawler fishing on the coast; onshore fishing using illegal techniques or quotas; logging and related hunting pressures; low-standard oil operations and poor pollution response on- and off-shore; lack of land use planning; and lack of sustainable development strategies to provide economic alternatives to natural resource extraction (Lee et al. undated). Managing these threats is considered the work of the government, assisted by non-governmental organizations and private companies through a variety of actions including law enforcement, ecotourism, education and research (Lee et al. undated).

Encouraged by two ecologists and several nature organizations, and backed by USA funds, Bongo Ondimba created thirteen national parks of a combined size of 30,000 km² or 11% of total land surface. This gave Gabon the largest surface of protected land in any country of the world. Only Costa Rica has a larger percentage of protected land surface. Since the creation of the parks, Gabon is globally viewed as one of the most progressive and environmentally concerned countries in Africa.

TOURISM AS OPPORTUNITY

With Gabon Emergent, which at its core has the principal approach of sustainable development, the new president called for strategic, long-term partnerships to diversify and strengthen the economy and was committed to protecting the environment while doing so. The "Gabon Industriel" –pillar of the policy sets out to promote the local treatment of raw materials, the export of products with high added value, and the diversification of the national economy. "Gabon des Services" focuses on developing Gabon's human resources. Gabon aims to become a regional benchmark for sectors such as financial services, new information technology resources, service jobs linked to the green economy, and the specialist areas of health and higher education. "Gabon Vert", finally, is based on developing the 'green oil' that Gabonese ecosystems provide: 22 million hectares of forest, 1 million hectares of arable agriculture land and over 800 kilometers

of coastline. Development projects must involve sustainably developing natural resources and adhering to national ecological standards. National parks, forestry, ecotourism and agriculture are all elements of the main paths to implement the Gabon Vert strategy. Together with environmental protection, the timber industry and agriculture, ecotourism is a primary focus of the Gabon Vert strategy aiming to "...develop this sector with a view to opening up the country's natural and cultural wealth whilst improving the living conditions of the local population at the same time. Gabon aims to attract 100,000 tourists a year in the middle and top of the range segments of the industry by 2020." (LeGabon.org, 2012a)

Gabon Emergent directly calls for international investors to establish themselves in Gabon through several agencies and government bodies, urging the market 'why not invest in Gabon'. It is relevant for the case study to understand, that government puts great importance in the promotion of tourism development and goes great lengths to attract tourism investment. The main actor in this is ANPN (Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux), a presidential agency that is higher in power than ministries. The thirteen national parks are legally owned by ANPN and it is ANPN that has the responsibility of promoting the parks for leisure and tourism purposes. ANPN emphasizes that the very objective of the parks creation is the protection of natural resources in favor of tourism, leisure, science and education. Its mission statement mentions that the promotion and regulation (via legislation) of touristic activities in national parks is one of the principal goals of their existence. Also, ANPN states Gabon's aim to be 'the first global destination of African tropical forest tourism by 2015 and to be regarded an example of national parks management in the XXIst century' (ANPN 2012). In the book "A Vision for Gabon", ANPN sketches many future ecolodge designs for each national park. They are highly ambitious, futuristic structures and highlight, once again, the importance the agency puts in the creation of nature tourism. Furthermore, the ministry of tourism, the ministry of waters and forests and the Gabonese international trade platform all emphasize the importance and potential of tourism for foreign investors, and for the country's development, with many tax exemption schemes, etc.² Several large nature organizations, WWF among others, are present in Gabon. They have a large

number of projects, some of which focus on ecotourism development.

LINE OF EVENTS OF GABON ECOTOURISM

In this case study, the main actors are a private company ABC; a nature organization STF; and the Gabonese government. It is difficult to pinpoint what government body was the precise key player. The Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Waters and Forestry, the Wildlife Department of the Ministry of Waters and Forestry, the Conseil Nationale des Parcs Nationaux (CNP), the Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux (ANPN), the Agence Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ANAC - civil aviation authorities) and presidents Omar Bongo Ondimba and Ali Bongo Ondimba have all been closely involved. The project also concerned local communities (villages surrounding the lodge area), but they were not included in the partnership. Therefore, we speak of a private-public partnership between ABC and STF, with the national government supporting this partnership.

GABON LODGE

In 2000, with the parks' creation already in sight, Williams bought a small camp on the boundaries of a nature reserve (later to become one of the thirteen national parks). Until then, the camp offered small scale hunting and fishing tourism with basic facilities. Williams rebuilt the property by adding a number of luxurious bed room cabins and one large lodge with restaurant, bar, terrace and sun deck. It was named Gabon Lodge (GL). Several satellite camps were built inside the national park for guests to do overnight excursions, all equipped with comfort tents, an (outside) bathroom with shower and toilet, and an ad-hoc restaurant/lounge. Clientele consisted mainly of upper class Gabonese and expatriates living in Gabon (70%) and European and US international visitors (30%). Rates for this up-market accommodation circulated around €300 per person per night.

GABON ECOTOURISM

A shared interest in gorilla protection was what initially brought together ABC and STF around the turn of the millennium. Williams was looking for a partner for a gorilla sanctuary project and got acquainted to a likeminded naturalist from STF.

² See also www.LeGabon.org; Ministère du Tourisme (2012); Ministère de l'Economie Forestière, des Eaux, de la Pêche et de l'Aquaculture and World Resources Institute (2009); Ministère des Eaux et Forêts, de la Pêche, du Reboisement chargé de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature (1999)

They started discussions about what would later become Gabon Ecotourism (GE). The core concept was “tourism pays for conservation”. ABC owned Gabon Lodge and provided a steady stream of (inter)national tourists, marketing, transportation, accommodation and tour operating. STF carried out conservation activities and research, in which tourists could participate in the form of day excursions. The revenues of tourism would be re-invested in the conservation activities.

GE’s objective was to ‘initiate sustainable economic development through ecotourism to ensure the conservation/rehabilitation of nature’. It aimed to create 150 jobs in the conservation and ecotourism industries by 2005. ABC committed to providing 50 % of the investment budget. The remaining 50 % should have originated from cooperation with organizations with common objectives. In terms of tourism, the minimum goal was to reach a level of 5000 bed nights per year by 2004 and up to 7000 by 2006. The project objectives included focusing on education and employment for the local population, conservation of nature (eco-guide team and scientific research) and eco-tourism activities.

One of the first things ABC did in 2001, was the creation of a sanctuary for gorilla poaching victims. The Gorilla Centre was not far from Gabon Lodge. The idea was to develop gorilla tourism following the Rwandan model. Gabon is rich with gorilla populations and poaching is a universal problem, so one of the plans was to rehabilitate gorillas saved from poaching and get them used to humans. The first primates came from a primate center in Southeast Gabon. A collaboration with a primate research institute followed around 2004.

The Gorilla Centre started as an integral part of ABC, but later requested independent ownership to be able to also apply for international funds. The Gorilla Centre functioned as an additional attraction/activity, and a separate satellite lodge near the Gorilla Centre was hosting GL visitors for short trips.

Besides the gorilla trips, GE started to offer tourist excursions with STF researchers/conservationists on missions. In the beginning, STF targeted mostly marine research, mainly whales, so tourists could join these whale trips and observe the STF teams at work. Later, tourist groups could also join STF teams on night patrols looking for nesting turtles and reburying the eggs in special nurseries; catching crocodiles for scientific purposes; helping with beach clean-ups; and many other excursions involving elephants, crocodiles, plants, gorillas etc. STF workers lived on the premises of Gabon Lodge and always mingled with tourists. This way, visi-

tors were very involved in conservation activities. Even laboratory work could be done accompanied by the guests. This is how the concept of “tourism pays for conservation” was given shape. The rare concept was a unique selling point especially for the international market. Domestic visitors were motivated by the remote and unique location, amplified by a general lack of tourism offer in Gabon.

Tourism operations ran this way between 2001 and 2008. Legally, these activities were rather contested. In the first years there was no authority whatsoever in the national reserves, so all arrangements were informal. But when CNPN (Conseil Nationale des Parcs Nationaux) was established in 2003, negotiations began on how to operate tourism within the National Park in terms of responsibilities, rights and obligations. Many drafts of a four-party Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ABC, STF, CNPN and Wildlife Department of the Ministry of Waters and Forestry were agreed upon, but never signed due to internal discrepancies within the government bodies. Thus the collaboration never got formalized.

PROJECT COPIES AND PARK MANAGEMENT

The first years of operation were so successful that GE caught the attention of other nature organizations as well. WWF was impressed by the success and the underlying concept of “tourism pays for conservation” and started bilateral discussions about possible collaboration between WWF and GE in other Gabonese national parks. Around this time (2005/2006), ABC wanted to expand their tourism model to other national parks throughout Gabon. There were many discussions with WWF Gabon and other nature organizations to join forces and install a national legal framework for park management and tourism operations in Gabon, with GE as a pilot model for such tourism development. This framework would set the management standards for tourism development in parks and establish clear rules for the financial contribution of the tourism sector to park management and local development. But the expansion never materialized, and neither did a legal framework.

As GE was using the national park as its tourist attraction, it had a great interest in protecting the park in order to maintain not only its natural wealth, but also its capitalized value and freedom of movement regarding tourist purposes. As described, however, there was no national parks authority until 2003, and even when CNPN arrived at the stage, it had hardly any manpower, nor ex-

perience. ABC, therefore, had far-reaching plans to become the official park management authority of this park and potentially other parks as well. There had been many negotiations with other nature organizations and relevant government bodies. Several proposals passed the scene, but the legal status of park management body was never granted by the government, as they saw nature and its management as strictly a national issues.

END OF PILOT PROJECT

Until 2007, GE had run as a pilot project. Even though it had not made profit, it had reached a break-even point and proven feasible. There were high ambitions to expand to other parks and potentially even to surrounding countries. It was at this time that ABC split up into three separate legal companies: Savanna Adventures for the tourism branch; Savanna Air for the aviation branch; and Savanna Nature for park management. Consequently, Gabon Ecotourism ceased to exist and continued (in the same form) under the name of Savanna Adventures, still with STF as a conservation and research partner.

AVIATION

As there are hardly any roads leading to Gabon Lodge and water transportation takes a full day's travel, ABC used its own airplane to transport tourists from Libreville to Gabon Lodge. It soon proved lucrative to start an own airline so more airplanes were acquired, and after a few years, a commercial airline was established. ABC Air was flying international lines connecting the countries of West Africa with around ten aircraft. Port Gentil was its home base with around 200 staff.

In 2008, a European Union agency concerned with international aviation blacklisted a number of Gabonese airlines because it regarded Gabon's national aviation agency ANAC (Agence Nationale de l'Aviation Civile) unfit to audit Gabon's airlines adequately. ABC Air could no longer transport tourists to GE because European and US tour operators legally cannot submit their clients to 'illegal' means of transportation. This crippled all operations of ABC, ABC Air and GE. After a while, ABC bankrupted its ABC Air component in an attempt to get debts waived and to start a new aviation branch. This coincided with the organization's re-structuring of 2007, so the new aviation branch was to become Savanna Air. During this process, however, President Omar Bongo died in 2009, and the country fell in distress. The company's per-

sonal relations on the highest level of government disappeared. Not only on the streets, but also in the government, chaos followed, and many institutional structures changed (some with force and in non-democratic ways). Among them, the aviation authorities totally changed leadership: previous agreements were ignored and ABC Air was now demanded to pay an increased route tax. Furthermore, the new aviation agency refused to authorize the new airline Savanna Air because of its previous bad relations with ABC Air and accumulated debts. Countless arguments between several players caused disputes with many parties. Some government bodies concerned with Gabonese tourism, among which ANPN, intervened and attempted to resolve the conflict with debt waivers and renewed sets of criteria, but the situation never got resolved. Finally, Savanna Air established in the island state of Sao Tomé and wanted to serve its Gabon Lodge clients from there, but were refused entry to Gabonese airports.

CLOSURE

With the aviation non-functional, tourism became practically impossible, and the lodge had to close down for the first time in 2009. During the aviation dispute and the periods of the several closures described here, ABC spread several press releases blaming the Gabonese government's (aviation authorities) incompetence to resolve the issue. Accompanied legal actions against the aviation authorities to seek compensation for occurred losses was meant as an extra pressure measure and did not improve relations. Gabon Lodge has been closed and re-opened around three times. ANPN intervened again and set conditions for a renewed and speedy permanent re-opening, but agreements were not reached. ABC permanently withdrew from the operation in 2012. Since then, GL resumed operations under a new name and by a new operator, but was still owned by ABC.

EXPLORING THE PARTNERSHIP

The collective end-goal for the case's partnership was conserving Gabon's nature. The means to reach the end-goal in a partnership are not necessarily similar among the actors. Per definition, different actors have different agendas. The way actors can reach a mutual end-goal with their different agendas, is through tight collaboration. And collaboration is very much shaped by how an actor positions himself towards others or in other words,

by the actor's perceived reality shaped by their values and norms. This definition of the situation (see also: Van der Duim 2005; 2007) of an actor forms the basis of an actor's attitude and behavior in a partnership, and thus affects success. It should be noted, of course, that a successful partnership is the work of all actors and therefore never a one-sided story. In order to take lessons from this case study, this section shows how the corporate culture of the private partner influenced the partnership and its continuity. Quotes from a number of respondents are used to illustrate observations.

DIFFERENT AGENDAS

"NGOs are not very good at doing conservation. I think I can do better, whilst making money from it." Typical for a private investor, ABC regarded the project as strictly business. The concept of Gabon Ecotourism rests on a business orientation with tourism as a means to make money from nature conservation. *"Business is the only sustainable way of preserving nature"* was an often heard remark and summarizes the internal culture within the company. This underlying business approach is crucial in the characterization of the actor as it shapes the organization's behavior. The organization's mission was to create an economically sound tourism business in order to fulfill its vision of conserving the endangered nature of Gabon.

The private investor and the nature organization often clashed over different agendas. One's agenda was nature conservation fed by sound research within the national park, while the other's was a maximized holiday experience for a maximized number of paying tourists: *"We did not have the same visions ... It was a conflict of interest. We wanted more conservation activities, they wanted more tourism"*. The priority of STF research teams was to bring enough equipment and personnel on their missions, while lodge management insisted on bringing more tourists on these trips. Logistics was an always troublesome issue in this remote and uninhabited surrounding. The location made it challenging to go out on missions, which were excursions at the same time. The research teams soon felt inadequately supported for their tasks and started to feel their roles as conservationists were not taken seriously: *"A colleague and me organized many excursions and guides, while that was not our job, but lodge management didn't do it!"* Vice versa, lodge management found it increasingly difficult to provide the service and activities promised to visitors.

While working with many other private sector partners on several projects without problems, STF started feeling uncomfortable with ABC as a partner. Former STF staff referred to their collaboration as very difficult *"because of a too tough business approach ... and a changed ... strategy all the time, not keeping promises"*, and talked of a *"too arrogant business style"*. A respondent from within the company confirmed, and recognized how their approach aimed for *"too fast grow ..., and ... return of investment (with) an often changing management style and strategy"*.

EXTERNAL DELEGATION

The strong business approach led to a degree of skepticism towards conservation organizations: *"NGOs play a dubious role in nature conservation in my opinion. When a controversy appears somewhere you see that most NGOs retreat immediately and won't risk their influence even if it goes against their objectives. Instead they do everything to protect their status with the government, so de facto they are ineffective"*. The investor's strong skepticism towards conservation NGOs and government, and the resulting reluctance to delegate, slowed down processes of innovation. A returning comment from the NGO partner and other external nature conservation organizations was, that tourism experts were not let in by the investor for consultation on the operation. The STF leader at the time had taken tourism professionals to the project but *"their advices as how to proceed were ignored. ...With more of a backseat, and allowing tourism professionals in, it would have worked better"*.

When, around 2005, the idea had arisen for ABC to formally become the park management authority for the national park it operated in, a European nature organization involved in the inclusion of tourism for the sustainable protection of protected areas, was brought in. Their extensive consultancy report by established experts opposed the idea of an independent authority body and instead recommended working closely together with government bodies and public nature organizations. But the consultation was ignored. There was another comparable relation with another major nature organization in Gabon. They too, expressed doubts over the ambitions of a private company becoming a national park management authority and opted for a more holistic approach where also other (small) tourism players around the park were recognized. They also wished that a revenue sharing scheme for local development would be included.

They suggested calling in an independent team of tourism experts to develop tourism regulations; access and benefit sharing schemes; and a tourism development plan. This was also never followed up. STF was “beginning to feel that they were taking some reputational risks working with (ABC) that was very difficult to manage in some ways”. Also other external partners expressed similar worries and joined endeavors from public organizations stopped coming.

With external consultation not let in, the private partner took more responsibilities and tasks on its shoulders and on its people. In the original setup, the private investor fulfilled the roles of accommodation provider and tour operator. But as the project advanced, they started taking up multiple roles. What started as a small tour operator firm, soon also became a commercial airline - with which they subjected themselves to the political sphere typical to the aviation sector. Later on, they aspired to become the official park management authority - first for the park they operated in, later for other national parks as well. And besides all that, a tourism development plan on a national scale was also presented. These new roles pushed the private partner's initial position in the partnership to other lengths and had great impacts on relations and on its initial role as tourism provider.

Not only relations with other nature organizations were compromised. Since personal relations with the president were lost, it was increasingly difficult to ‘get things done’ with the authorities. Resulting from the company's business orientation, the same skeptic attitude grew towards the role of the government, blaming the “...incompetence of many people (in the government). ... The country did not really cooperate and that was frustrating ... The incompetence was the main cause“. The disputes that ABC Air had gotten in, were mainly of a political nature. In a nutshell, national aviation authorities had altered regulations over route taxes, withdrawn licenses for operation and refused to authorize the new Savanna Air that had to replace ABC Air. The disputes got quite persistent and emotional from both sides. Both felt in their right. Among many other events, finally, ABC published several international press releases blaming the failing authorities of Gabon for the closure of Gabon Ecotourism. No effort was done to keep distrust towards the government hidden. This was understood as pressure measures and blocked processes of communication even further, to the point that the problem was never solved.

Having granted the investment a 15 year tax exemption, the government officials quickly con-

cluded that the investor seemed to be after profit only, questioning “*what did Gabon ever earn (from the project)?*” Besides the aviation dispute, government officials felt especially aggrieved in their authority when the investor attempted to acquire a mandate as a park management body: “*An operator cannot have administration rights of a national park: that happens nowhere! An operator must work according to an MoU and within the rules and regulations of the authorities!*”

INTERNAL DELEGATION

Observations within the private partner identified further problems that trace back to poor delegation. The most influential one was, that the Gabon operation was plagued by a high staff turnover. The lodge manager's position rotated continuously. The first lodge managers – a couple – stayed for five years and had been able to lay a strong foundation. But after they left, managers succeeded each other frequently, with most of them not staying longer than a year, many even only six months. It proved increasingly difficult to find skilled and dedicated lodge managers who shared the company's vision of nature conservation and possessed a vigorous management style. Some were even reported stealing from the business. A previous employee said: “... *many of them (lodge managers) have even stolen. They get a lot of money through their hands.*” The frequent change of managers and their sometimes questionable trustworthiness, compromised internal continuity and quality of tourism operations. Lodge management works entirely independent with little daily supervision from headquarters possible, because of the lodge's remoteness. With people who did not strongly share the vision and vigor of the company, which unfortunately often was the case, the position of the entire company and all other parts got jeopardized. But it also damaged external relations because collaborating partners had to constantly deal with new personalities and new ways of doing things. A local stakeholder, for instance complained, that ABC representatives only showed up when there were problems. Their initial relationship was friendly, but along the project that had slowly turned. Personal relations were little maintained.

Subsequently, the company was not very structured in terms of checks and balances. Administration was undervalued. In Gabon as the headquarters, administrative records of incomes and expenses were not kept adequately, even to the extent that there is no internal consensus, if any profits have been made. An estimated €25 mil-

lion had been invested, but there are hardly any official calculations available, nor a detailed profit and loss statement. Two employees provide expressive quotes on the administration situation: *“When I started, there were so many arrears in administration and payments, it was chaotic. There hadn’t been anyone for the task before me. It was a complex and sluggish machine.”* And: *“Not one manager had finances in order. Much money was coming in in Libreville. But it went first to aviation and often there wasn’t anything left for us at the lodge and our costs and salaries for the workers.”*

DOCUMENTED RELATIONS

Despite their differences and disagreements, both the private and public party’s leaders managed to keep a professional relationship and kept the project running for several years out of pure passion and vision. They understood they needed each other and both made concessions on various areas. The available project documentation was limited to project papers and annual reports. When the project was growing, however, they were quick to realize that their collaboration needed accordant formalization. During the lifespan of the partnership, a continuous effort was made to formally document each other’s responsibilities, duties and rights. Many versions of memorandums of understanding (MOU) had been designed, but none ever got signed because details could not be agreed upon. This kept the collaboration very disorganized and lead to mutual frustration. The relationship between the two slowly deteriorated and finally broke in 2009.

The same is true for the relations between the private investor and the government. In the early years of the tourism operations, there was hardly any regulation regarding tourism in the national parks so there was almost no government involvement. But when government presence appeared with CNPN (around 2003) and later with the more stable ANPN (around 2009), they started to play an ever growing role in tourism regulations and park entrance. Also here, both parties understood the necessity of documenting their roles and started negotiations for an MOU. But the private investor and government never succeeded in agreeing on a division of responsibilities, rights and obligations, and as a result the collaboration was never formalized. Both kept doing as they deemed right, and good relations could not sustain.

CONCLUDING LESSONS LEARNT

As the last two decades have seen a strong increase in the involvement of private, commercial corporations in the sphere of nature conservation and community development, several forms of new alliances are emerging (Van der Duim et al. 2011b). The body of research on these new alliances is still limited, but knowledge and insight of the embedding of market mechanism in biodiversity protection is slowly growing. For example, Lamers et al. (2014) compare three tourism conservation enterprises in Kenya initiated by several nature organizations, and identify differences in governance structure, where local context provides each project with its own challenges. A valuable observation is that benefits will flow to these new conservation ventures only if the wider tourism value chain understands the added value. Van Wijk et al. (2014) continue that such ventures, therefore, need to be marketed as distinctive from mainstream safari lodges, if they are to become a separate market category in the wildlife tourism industry. This paper attempts to show how high-end tourism lodge with a conservation mission in Gabon was created, what chances were taken, and what the vulnerabilities of such a mission are. It also brings lessons that are projectable on other conservation tourism initiatives, and public-private partnerships also outside the field of tourism.

I described that the direct cause of the final closure of the project in 2012, were strong disputes over the aviation branch of the firm. It had gotten into a very sensitive position in political terms. It was government restrictions that finally made it impossible to continue aviation and thus tourism operations, while the same government so dearly wants to attract tourism to the country. For the sake of the discussion, it is more worthwhile looking into the core of the problem, which is the fact, that the partnership was not strong enough to resist the dispute, than going into details of that dispute. The argument here is that strong relations are the foundation for the success of partnerships. The following lessons learnt, therefore, are to be taken in account for future partnership building, even before project initiation, to increase chances for a strong foundation.

SIGN HERE PLEASE

Document the partnership. The case study emphasizes the importance of processes of translation between partners in a partnership, and their willingness to come together and collaborate. It is at

all times of high importance to keep in mind, that each partner's own modes of operations do not necessarily match with each other but partners should agree on each other's roles in the collaboration. Therefore, for a successful partnership, extensive MOUs (memorandum of understanding) must be composed regarding each actor's tasks, responsibilities, duties and rights, even before project initiation. Differences as well as similarities in definitions of the situation must be documented and disagreements openly discussed.

FRIENDS BE FRIENDS!

Be partners. Different agendas need not be problematic. Under the condition that partners accept differences and acknowledge (and use) the other's field of expertise, the available skills and strengths can and will be maximized. These skills should be clear and documented in the MOU. Real partners accept each other's roles, and maintain their relation. If, in the case of Gabon Ecotourism, the private investor had taken a more open stance towards his direct partners, knowledge that could have furthered the project, would have been shared. With the expertise of very experienced and skilled individuals (of comparable tourism models in comparable contexts), not only would the tourism/conservation operation be more institutionalized, it would also be part of a wide network of knowledge and increase the chance of success. Open communication is a pre-condition for all relations. It is only on good mutual trust that complex partnerships can be maintained. Frequent (group) meetings are exquisite for maintaining good relations. The MOU should contain a regulation on the frequency of these meetings.

COULD YOU PLEASE?

Delegate. This paper demonstrates that a loner strategy in the partnership harms relations on one hand, and compromises quality, on the other. Partners stick to what they are good at and make use of what the other partner is good at. All actors in a partnership are equally essential for the sustainability of a project, and should be included in processes. If tourism experts had been let in the project and their consultation was implemented, the project (and the partnership!) would have grown more stable. Attempting to be the legal management authority of national parks without external support, is not an easy task to fulfill without prior experience. Moreover, it is traditionally seen as a national government's task. The reaction from the

government's side that they felt disrespected in their authority, is not an illogical one. It is probably more effective on the long term to assist in the development of regulations for a functioning management body than trying to do it yourself and harm valuable relations. Starting an airline, legally controlling a national park system and developing a national tourism development plan are highly specific and complex projects. They all require highly qualified and experienced experts - without external delegation, not likely to fully succeed.

Finally, as every element of a good partnership has its function and interacts with others, the same is valid for internal management of actors. As the word organization implies, management must be organized in such way that departments function independently, being fuelled - not driven - from above. Delegation refers to sharing management with people, but also implies that the company's vision is well transferred among all workers. People are crucial. It is people who carry out a mission, so it is the people who convey the vision. Positions, for example lodge management, should be filled by people with the right motivation. In the end it is the people who need to do the work, so there must be a strong match between the firm's vision and how the people convey that vision in their work on the ground. And delegation can only be performed by good and open communication, of which there seems to have been a lack of in the case study.

It is impressive what Gabon Ecotourism and its partners have accomplished in the country. The project opened up the country for tourism. It has played a crucial role in the establishment of park management and laid a foundation for further tourism development. Especially in terms of media coverage, GE brought the country enormous international attention. It is a shame that the project does not persist today, taken its potential. And even though the case is a very complex one, it can only be hoped that its lessons remain.

REFERENCES

-
- Ahebwa, W.M., Van der Duim, V.R. and Sandbrook, C.G. (2012). Tourism revenue sharing policy at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP), Uganda: A policy arrangements approach (PAA). *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(3), 377-394.
- ANPN (2012) Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux. Accessed May, 2012, from <http://www.parcsgabon.org>.

- Budowski, G. (1976). Tourism and environmental conservation: Conflict, coexistence, or symbiosis? *Environmental Conservation*, 3(1), 27-31.
- Butcher, J. (2007). *Ecotourism, NGOs and development*. London: Routledge.
- Holmes, G. (2012). Biodiversity for billionaires: Capitalism, conservation and the role of philanthropy in saving/selling nature. *Development and Change*, 43(1), 185-203.
- Lamers, M., Van der Duim, V.R., Nthiga, R., Van Wijk, J. and Waterreus, S. (2014). Implementing tourism-conservation enterprises: A comparison of three lodges in Kenya. In V.R. Van der Duim, M. Lamers and J. Van Wijk (Eds), *Institutional arrangements for conservation and tourism in eastern and southern Africa: A dynamic perspective*. Dordrecht: Springer (in press).
- Laurance, W.F., Alonso, A., Lee, M.E. and Campbell, P. (2006). Challenges for forest conservation in Gabon, Central Africa. *Futures*, 38, 454-470.
- Lee, M.E., Alonso, A., Dallmeier, F., Campbell, P. and Pauwels, O.S.G. (n.d.). The Gamba Complex of Protected Areas: An illustration of Gabon's biodiversity. *Bulletin of the Biological Society of Washington*, (12), 229-242.
- LeGabon.org (2012). Gabon, a country of opportunities. Accessed September 1, 2012, from <http://medias.legabon.net/PROD/0000000843.pdf>.
- Ministère de l'Economie Forestière, des Eaux, de la Pêche et de l'Aquaculture and World Resources Institute (2009). *Atlas forestier interactif du Gabon: Document de synthèse*. World Resources Institute. Accessed September 4, 2012, from http://pdf.wri.org/interactive_forestry_atlas_gabon_fr.pdf
- Ministère des Eaux et Forêts, de la Pêche, du Reboisement chargé de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature (1999). *Stratégie nationale et plan d'action sur la diversité biologique du Gabon*. Accessed 4 September, 2012, from http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&ved=0CDIQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbch-cbd.naturalsciences.be%2Fgabon%2Fgabondef%2Fcontribution%2Fdocumentsnat%2Fstrategienat%2Fsnpa_db.doc&ei=2xBGUKesAYi9oQWalyCgAQ&usg=AFQjCNFDCSHU6JzJkHitOx2tK9lPPHs2UA&sig2=nOD4VFCdczpUzdmelFFSzA.
- Ministère du Tourisme (2012). *Plan stratégique Gabon Emergent (PSGE)*, Département du Tourisme. Plan de Travail Ministériel Avril – Décembre 2012.
- Nthiga, R., Mwongela, B. and Zellmer, K. (2011). Conservation through tourism: The conservation enterprise model of the African Wildlife Foundation. In V.R. Van der Duim, D. Meyer, J. Saarinen and K. Zellmer (Eds.), *New alliances for tourism, conservation and development in eastern and southern Africa*. Delft: Eburon, pp 107-125.
- Portail Gabon (website of President Ali Bongo Ondimba) (2012). *Le Gabon Émergent*. Accessed May 16, 2012, from <http://www.presidentalibongo.com/le-projet-de-societe/le-gabon-emergent>.
- Sumba, D., Warinwa, F., Lenaiyasa, P. and Muruthi, P. (2007). *The Koija Starbeds Ec lodge: A case study of a conservation enterprise in Kenya*. AWF Working Papers. Nairobi: African Wildlife Foundation.
- The Richest (2012). Highest oil-producing countries in Africa in 2011. Accessed June 1, 2012, from <http://www.therichest.org/business/highest-oil-producing-countries-in-africa/>.
- The Telegraph (2009) Omar Bongo (June 8, 2009). Accessed May 16, 2012, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/politics-obituaries/5478816/Omar-Bongo.html>.
- UNDP (2012) Gabon. Africa adaptation programme. Accessed August 27, 2012, from <http://www.undp-aap.org/countries/gabon>.
- US Department of State (2012). Background note: Gabon. Accessed May 8, 2012, from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2826.htm>.
- Van der Duim, V.R. (2005). *Tourismscapes. An actor-network perspective on sustainable tourism development*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Wageningen University.
- Van der Duim, V.R. (2007). *Tourismscapes: An actor-network perspective*. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(4), 961-976.
- Van der Duim, V.R., Meyer, D. and Saarinen, J. (2011a). Introduction: New alliances. In V.R. Van der Duim, D. Meyer, J. Saarinen and K. Zellmer (Eds.), *New alliances for tourism, conservation and development in eastern and southern Africa*. Delft: Eburon, pp.13-25.
- Van der Duim, V.R., Meyer, D., Saarinen, J. and Zellmer, K. (2011b). *New alliances for tourism, conservation and development in eastern and southern Africa*. Delft: Eburon.

Van Tatenhoven, J., Arts, B. and Leroy, P. (2000). Political modernisation and the environment. The renewal of environmental policy arrangements. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Van Wijk, J., Lamers, M and Van der Duim, V.R. (2014). Promoting conservation tourism:

The case of the African Wildlife Foundation's tourism conservation enterprises in Kenya. In V.R. Van der Duim, M. Lamers and J. Van Wijk (Eds), Institutional arrangements for conservation and tourism in eastern and southern Africa: A dynamic perspective. Dordrecht: Springer (in press).

‘PUSHING STUDY TRIPS TO BECOME A TWO-WAY TOOL’ – A NEW SPIN ON KNOWLEDGE CREATION PARTNERSHIPS

JONATHAN KARKUT³ & JULIE SCOTT⁴

The ‘graduate employability agenda’ has become a high priority for universities, notably in the UK, Australia and the USA, responding to changes in the educational and job climate (Simm et al 2012). Providing opportunities for learning outside of the classroom – often referred to as ‘practice based’, or sometimes ‘authentic’ or ‘experiential’ learning – is widely regarded as a key element in this response. Such opportunities, taking the form of field trips, and various forms of internship, work placement and ‘on the job’ learning, make a number of assumptions about the relationship between theory and practice, the academy and the world outside, and the means and purposes for which knowledge is created and shared. In this paper we reflect on these assumptions via our experience of developing an innovative tourism field trip model designed to contribute both to graduate employability and to sustainable development outcomes.

The field trip module, ‘Theory and Practice in Tourism and Development’, was developed as part of a Masters course in International Tourism Management and Development at a British university, and taken by five successive cohorts of international students, in five different international destinations, each with different opportunities and challenges. In each case, the student cohort – numbering from five to 25 members with a variety of social, national, and disciplinary backgrounds and work experience – was introduced into an on-going project and required to adapt the classroom based preparation and learning acquired in the preceding three months to the demands of collaboration with existing networks of stakeholders ‘in the field’ over a period of roughly 10 days. Central to this enterprise was the embedding of project practice in sustainable project management principles, as

exemplified in the PM4ESD project management methodology currently being rolled out in tourism projects across the European Union. In what follows, we describe the nature and value of the ‘experiential learning’ derived from the field trips, with more detailed reference to particular moments in the field. Before that, however, we contextualise that discussion in current debates on the status of tourism-related knowledge inside and outside the university setting.

KNOWLEDGE AND TOURISM

The questions of where knowledge about tourism resides, who creates it, and wherein its value lies, are highly contentious and reflect the tension between tourism’s exponential development as a phenomenon, and, less dramatically, as a field of study and research in institutions of higher education. Whilst vocational training for careers in tourism and hospitality could be clearly framed around the acquisition of a set of skills and competencies required by ‘the industry’, tourism’s arrival in university departments of geography, business, economics, development, and the critical social sciences, complicated the relationship between education and industry by forcing a new set of encounters, driven by diverse disciplinary research agendas, epistemologies and ontologies. These, argues Tribe (2006), have been dominated by the technical, positivist orientations characteristic of business and economics. Nevertheless, there is a growing, countervailing body of work, coming from phenomenological and constructivist approaches, which has repositioned ‘tourism’ as a set of practices within a social and cultural field, and subjected these to critical scrutiny (Franklin and Crang 2001). This critical turn could be said to have cemented a divide between ‘tourism studies’ and ‘tourism management’ as academic subjects – the former

³ Touch TD Ltd., Studio 5, 155 Commercial Street, London E16BJ UK
jonathan@touchtd.com

⁴ Touch TD Ltd., Studio 5, 155 Commercial Street, London E16BJ UK

characterised, according to Tribe (2006), by its intention of producing knowledge aimed at increased understanding and emancipation, the latter, with its emphasis on the production of 'technical, useful knowledge' for industry (Botterill 2003, quoted in Tribe 2006: 372). Non-positivist approaches are widely acknowledged to have been marginalised inside both industry, and the university business schools where tourism is usually located. On the other hand, there have been a number of fruitful engagements with tourism as a technical practice from a critical, constructivist perspective, providing access, in Tribe's (2006) terms, to alternative 'truths' about tourism which have the potential to be useful, emancipatory, and to deepen understanding, all at the same time (c.f. Abram 2010, Bianchi 2012, Higgins-Desbiolles 2006).

Without going into a detailed discussion of alternative approaches to tourism practice from anthropology, political economy and development, we should like in this short paper to highlight two particular shared features which have particular relevance for our case.

The first of these concerns what could be described as a sense of tourism as 'contingent'. Tourism activity is enmeshed in political, social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions and priorities that are played out at national, regional, global and extremely local levels, and on which tourism is largely contingent. Nevertheless, as Burns (2004) has succinctly pointed out, the 'tourism first' view is deeply entrenched in the attitudes of governments and industry, and raises the question, *cui bono?* Whom is tourism intended to benefit? This question is particularly pertinent in relation to conflict situations, where the cart of tourism's security and operational requirements frequently goes before the horse of broader justice, humanitarian and civil society needs which may impact on, or be impacted by, the tourism industry (Salazar 2006, Scott 2012). Likewise, recognition of the significance of civil society and environmental concerns risks being co-opted into commodified elements of niche tourism products, rather than incorporated into government and industry decision making and priority setting structures (Tosun 2000, Wallace 2005).

Secondly, and following from this, appreciation of tourism's contingent nature requires a shift in the knowledge regimes regarded as appropriate to tourism operation, teaching, and research, to make room for non-positivist approaches which offer a more nuanced take on the nature of the realities in which tourism is embedded. The recognition that knowledge may be 'embodied' in daily

practices, rather than exist in the form of readily verbalisable thoughts; that it is socially distributed, and thus 'positioned' through factors such as age, gender, ethnicity; that it is ideological, and filtered through discourse – opens the way to seeking relevant knowledge, skills, interests and expertise in a range of sources, not necessarily limited to the professionalised tourism sector.

Whilst such arguments have become part of the currency of intellectual debate within the academy, finding ways of integrating these insights into discourse and methods at the practitioner level remains a challenge. Resistance on the part of industry, as Abram has argued, may be ideological as well as interest driven, but also rests on the fuzziness of categories – what, for example, is tourism? Where is it to be found? (Abram 2010: 231) Translated into the language of policy and projects, do farmers, hairdressers, schoolchildren, have an equal voice alongside industry interests and policy makers as tourism stakeholders? And what are the consequences for political and power relationships and processes, and for the allocation of resources, of their having a seat at the table?

One way of addressing the problems of mainstreaming these issues in tourism policy and planning, is to integrate them into forms of practice that demonstrate their technical usefulness. Project management methodologies, used in a wide range of commercial, industrial, and development activities, offer striking examples of the routinisation of technical approaches, which have a taken-for-granted and largely concealed knowledge underpinning. The PM4ESD methodology, recently developed from an adaptation of the widely used PRINCE2, offers a good example of the mainstreaming of sustainability concerns as a way of achieving technically efficient project outcomes. Extrapolating from the principles outlined in the PM4ESD manual and website, and from participation in the training during July 2013, we highlight the following three key principles of relevance to the current case:

1. Tourism projects take place within, and are inevitably subject to, a wider policy framework. Policy establishes the broader strategic social, political and economic aims for a given area, to which tourism is expected to contribute, and ultimately determines the regulatory and resource environment on which even local community tourism initiatives depend. The Madrid Declaration, establishing priorities for the European tourism sector, is a key policy statement for the European Union, but how this statement

is interpreted and operationalised at national and local level will be mediated by other factors and priorities. Understanding the articulation between these different policy levels, and translating them in terms of local conditions and needs, is a key element in the sustainability of tourism initiatives.

2. Stakeholders are to be found in all corners of the tourism economy – public sector, private sector, knowledge community, and host community. Although stakeholder involvement has become a mantra of sustainable tourism discourse, as Burns notes: ‘The paradox ... is that steering committees are almost without exception technical in nature, dominated by representatives of government, and industry based’ (Burns 2004: 28). Recognising the range of stakeholders with an interest in tourism means moving beyond industry-centric models and tokenistic consultation processes to acknowledge other areas of knowledge and expertise, where necessary taking steps to enable stakeholders to play their part.
3. Sustainable tourism project outcomes depend not only on recognition of the triple bottom line, but also on recognising to whom the benefits of particular outcomes accrue. The project is only temporary – embedding sustainable outcomes means identifying ‘benefit owners’ to take forward and maintain the work initiated in the project.

To sum up, in an applied area of study such as tourism, the challenge facing academics and researchers is to translate these theoretical insights into an agenda for a professional practice which, to return to Tribe’s (2006) analysis, can be both critical and useful – but useful to whom? Who are the stakeholders in the various projects of knowledge creation? And, of particular relevance to the current discussion, what are the implications for the way tourism is taught in universities, and for the relationship between the academy and the world of tourism practice?

LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Incorporating opportunities for practice-based learning into university tourism teaching responds to multiple agenda. These initiatives are in large part market driven. As Breakey et al (2008) write:

‘Students are demanding vocational outcomes, not just an education, and the market is demanding industry-ready, not just certified, graduates’ (Breakey et al 2008: 224)

In this view of graduate-as-market-ready-product, knowledge, ‘... taken to be information with meaning, and what rests within an individual’ (ibid 226) is commodified and becomes part of the cultural capital of the student. There are a number of ways in which practical or industry-experience is regarded as adding value to the graduate’s cultural capital: by enabling the student to refine their theoretical knowledge through reflective practice, by enhancing their motivation, and by equipping them with skills and competencies not easily taught in a classroom setting, such as communicative skills, empathy, decision-making, planning, and improvisation abilities (Saenab et al 2014, Zehrer and Mössenlechner 2009). Through internships and work placements, students themselves begin to acquire embodied knowledge through practice, and become socialised into the culture and bodily disciplines of the work environment.

By becoming recruited into ‘real communities of practice’ through these ‘authentic learning’ experiences (Robertson et al 2012) students are also drawn into collective processes of knowledge creation and exchange, through which institutional relations of reciprocity can be established and maintained. Internships can be used to ‘leverage business resources to enhance the theoretical classroom learning so as to construct applied meanings for students’ (Breakey et al 2008: 226). This can include updating theoretical knowledge in the light of developments in practice, as well as learning the practical obstacles to applying approaches derived from theory in the light of the ‘messy realities’ of relations on the ground. Writing from the perspective of tourism planning, Burns for example, observes: ‘In the “real” world the choices facing the planner are nuanced and have to balance idealism ... with pragmatism’ (Burns 2004: 27). Reflective practice in the field can introduce students to the laws of unintended consequences and the workings of formal and informal power.

The incentive for industry stakeholders to participate in providing ‘authentic learning experiences’ is that they benefit from a two-way flow of knowledge. Through student interns organisations gain access to knowledge of the latest research and academic developments, and also have the opportunity to feed back into the developing knowledge of the academy via the student’s experience in the work placement. This can occur informally, via supervisor visits to the work placement, or via the

reflective journals students interns are frequently required to keep as part of their assessment. In the case of the innovative internship scheme organised by the University of Queensland - School of Tourism, student interns were incorporated into an ongoing knowledge sharing partnership between the University and the Roma-Miles Tourism Development Unit through organised participation in knowledge transfer workshops and networks (Breakey et al 2008). In this case, the tourism community was also able to leverage additional publicity and marketing benefits from their association with the university and the wider interest generated by their ground-breaking initiative.

THE STUDY TRIP MODEL

Employed for over a decade in a UK university business school, the current authors had long combined teaching with applied projects and research in the fields of tourism, culture and development, with a strong focus on the role of tourism in conflict and post conflict situations, and in supporting sustainable livelihoods (c.f. Scott 2012, Selwyn and Karkut 2007, Scott and Karkut 2008). Collaborative relationships, developed with a network of partners over the years, offered opportunities to expose our postgraduate students directly to the experience of project work in the field, rather than pre-digested by their lecturers, and also to offer a number of potential benefits for our partners. Some of these – such as the group's capacity to offer a theoretically informed external perspective on a relevant local tourism issue, to generate local interest and media coverage, to access information from visiting tourists relevant to local product development and marketing, or, indeed, to make a valuable contribution to the local economy through spending on local accommodation, goods and services – could be anticipated in advance. Others emerged unexpectedly – for example, in the course of formal briefings and meetings the group often gained privileged access to politicians and officials, enabling them to put forward and publicise the case for local project stakeholders. Such serendipitous encounters had a powerful impact on field trip participants, with the most effective learning taking the form of a series of epiphanies, as well as planned learning experiences.

An innovative aspect and differentiating feature of the study trips was the role the students were required to adopt of short-term consultants working to a client brief or terms of reference document (ToR), which was developed collaboratively,

in advance of the field trip, by the lecturers and the local partner. That partner, subsequently referred to in the ToR as the 'client', was specifically chosen because of their operative role in the 'live' project where the trip is visiting. This structure, forced the students to shift from the position of detached academic commentators and observers, to active participants, who had to negotiate sometimes difficult or opaque professional relationships, make and justify their decisions, organise their work, and produce outputs as a team, in line with the brief, and to a tight deadline.

The process of drafting the ToR involves a number of exchanges and iterations. The final form the document takes, being dependent both upon the aspects of tourism and heritage practice that are being presented in the module or course, and on the actual issues, challenges and objectives that the partner on the ground and the associated project they are involved in, is seeking to deliver – ie how they may arrive at delivering certain project results. The shared ToR document is thus closely tied to the messiness of actual project situations, warts and all.

Although each ToR is site and client specific, the structure of the document shares certain common features regardless of where it is being delivered. These features mirror the general format of ToR documents that are presented in calls for tender as used by most national and trans-national funding agencies. Firstly, there is a brief background section, laying out the scene of the locality and the project. Next a short summary is presented to introduce the client and the nature of its role in the project. Then the particular objectives and tasks that the students or trainees must address is laid out in few brief sentences. This component remains as clear and succinct as possible. Finally a schedule of activities and outline as to what aspects are to be engaged with individually or collectively as a group, are mapped out.

The locations where the study trips have thus far been carried out could hardly be more contrasting. They include North Cyprus, West Bengal, Palestine, Gran Canaria and Iceland. Equally, the clients that were partnered for the ToR were varied and reflected the diversity of stakeholders that one could anticipate to meet in an average tourism or heritage development project. As the study groups have been parachuted from outside, in to the live projects for a short period, the ToR tasks and objectives have also addressed different phases and timings within the project cycle. So for example at one location the trip could be connecting with questions of sustainability at the end of project. Whilst

on another occasion it could relate to an evaluation regarding the levels of stakeholder involvement in a particular package during the middle of project delivery.

By being given a task in the ToR that is actually tied to the circumstances on the ground where the trip is taking place, the students/trainees may be faced with situations where completion of the assignment requires them to overcome obstacles or outline new opportunities. Equally they are faced with very real time pressures. The trips are short, compressed and slot in to on-going work at the location visited. Once again this reflects the realities of the project cycle where many components are often squeezed in to tight schedules with little allowance for significant slippage. The last element we have introduced in to the trip is an ideal opportunity to gather the experiences, risks and opportunities, then map out the tools that can be used to control or respond to the situations observed on the ground. This element takes the form of an interim oral presentation by the group in front of the hosting 'client', comprising in some cases the Minister for Tourism, government officials, civil society bodies, national tourist boards or other tourism stakeholders. The organisation and delivery of the presentation is also an opportunity to further hone presentation, organisational and team building skills in front of an unfamiliar audience.

A final assignment consists of a 5000 word individually authored report, incorporating the feedback received from the client, and submitted two weeks after returning from the field. In writing up these final reports, students reflected not only on the theoretical models they applied to the interpretation of their brief, but were also required to develop proposals for concrete outputs, and demonstrate their viability and sustainability.

In terms of our presence as trip leaders, we have generally planned to step back as much as possible, and act as facilitators encouraging the participants to share and reflect of the experiences or events of the day. Particularly during the daily debriefing sessions each evening, there is often a need too to remind the group about the objectives of their task at hand, and to re-contextualise that in alignment with the theoretical frameworks they have engaged with in the lecture room.

VIGNETTES FROM THE FIELD

The above section has established the ideal setting for a 'two-way' applied study trip approach. But how does the reality eventuate and what can

the experiences around the trips bring to the understanding and stronger visualisation of the key principles in PM4SD? Those questions can best be answered through the introduction of certain vignettes drawn from recent trips. These aim to lay bare the tensions that sit between theory and practice, whilst demonstrating why the processes of learning from experience and understanding things in their context are central to the rationale within PM4SD.

The first illustration is taken from the 2014 study trip to Katla geopark in Southern Iceland. The 'client' Katla geopark, is an autonomous independent corporate body. Its mission and aims are co-operation among all of the partners (the three municipalities; Kirkjubæjarstofa research and cultural centre; Skogar museum; Katla Centre, Vik; University of South Iceland; University of Iceland's Institute of Regional Research Centres) with the aim of sustainable development of the whole territory in the field of Geotourism, together with the preservation of natural and cultural values. The partners regard it as important for the whole area that conservation and economic benefits are not conflicting aspects, but a holistic strategy for the area as a whole.

The task for the trip was outlined as follows:

"As a new young Geopark reaching the end of an initial phase of external funding, Katla Geopark is at a critical stage in its development, and faces the pressures of embedding the sustainability and commercial viability of its activities. Your brief is to

- provide an initial assessment of the contribution of the cultural component of the Geopark's offer to its sustainability and the achievement of its founding objectives
- outline a 'cultural strategy' for Katla Geopark, paying particular attention to optimizing its potential in the following areas:
 - attracting new markets
 - increasing tourist spend and length of stay
 - enhancing the marketing and promotion of the Geopark
 - contributing to local livelihoods
 - safeguarding cultural sites and intangible cultural heritage expressions"

Expertly guided by colleagues from the geopark, the trip incorporated a busy itinerary covering engagements with many of the significant partners and stakeholders associated with the wider geopark project. Amongst these the group make a brief, but informative visit to the 'Eyjafjallajökull Erupts' visitor centre at Þorvaldseyri farm.

In the early stages of the geopark project, Þorvaldseyri farm had little to do with the programme of activities. Ólafur Eggertsson, ran a successful agricultural business based initially around dairy cattle and later expanding to include the cultivation of barley and rapeseed - both very unusual and innovative crops for this far Northern corner of Europe. But that was to change dramatically in the spring of 2010. The farm happened to be one of the closest settlements to the previously little known volcano, Eyjafjallajökull. An image taken by Ólafur captured substantial media attention, and the farm became one of the epicenters helping to convey the human story linked to the eruption. A place where the abstract tale of tiny volcanic particles bringing the whole of the civil aviation industry in Western Europe to a halt, could be immediately and tangibly understood as buildings, crops and livestock at the farm were covered in a thick blanket of fine grey ash and everyday routines came to a standstill.

The clean-up operations during and following the volcanic eruption were challenging enough, but as our group heard first hand from Ólafur's wife Guðný, the farm also faced new tasks in coping with the arrival of unfamiliar groups of curious visitors. These uninvited 'guests' came both from the media building the back story to aviation chaos in Europe and a growing number of 'volcano tourists' wanting to experience the eruption as closely as safely possible.

From a situation that was initially out of their control, Ólafur and Guðný's early response was to seek to control the disrupting situation around their farm and at least steer the new 'guests' away from the entrance to their property. They owned a derelict building across the road from the entrance, and started to receive visitors there in order to explain how the eruption had impacted their lives and livelihood. The cessation of the volcanic eruption didn't halt the flow of arrivals, so the couple decided to move from a position of not much more than 'crowd control', to the establishing of a visitor centre connected to the volcano and the 2010 eruption in particular. Seizing an opportunity out of a moment of crisis, the visitor centre has grown to such an extent that the family now has to divide its labour, with Ólafur concentrating on the familiar agricultural tasks, whilst Guðný has taken the central role in running an increasingly successful tourism business.

The centre has become the stage for a small cinema where a short documentary film made at the time of the eruption, chronicles the experiences of Ólafur and Guðný's family during 2010. Beyond this there is a display explaining some of the sci-

ence behind the eruption and the linkage with other Icelandic volcanoes. A further corner of the centre has become a shop with souvenirs as well as produce from the farm such as dried barley.

The students observed that the shop contained a number of souvenirs that were more generic and not connected directly to the local area. This raised questions about authenticity, but also other thoughts about sustainability, supply chains and the viability of a small start-up business in a remote rural setting. Clear answers to these issues were not forthcoming, whilst the 'messiness' and complexity of the situation and solutions sought, was openly visible.

Whilst interviewing Guðný, the students also established that the already dynamic situation for the geopark project, which had seen a change in stakeholder positioning, was more complex still. The circumstances whereby the farm had additionally become a tourism attraction almost by default, has not necessarily been embraced with open arms. It became apparent that stakeholders could be ambivalent, as well as willing in some cases or unwilling in others. Retracing the objectives of the Katla geopark project, which sought to manage this remote rural, volcanic landscape as a cultural resource, the story from Þorvaldseyri farm highlighted that the process of management also involved a range of ownership issues. Each property did not necessarily sign up to the wider policy, and even those that did, had more complex feelings about their position.

The episode around Þorvaldseyri farm and the creation of the visitor centre provided an opportunity to review the dynamic nature of a project setting. When considering PM4SD core principles, this brief example demonstrates how stakeholder positions and individual roles and responsibilities are not rigid, but can significantly alter as circumstances unfold. As well as being placed in a new situation running a tourism business, Guðný explained how this also brought her more directly in contact with the geopark project. That shift ensured that she was now seeking to understand the geopark strategy and make new collaborative links that had not been necessary prior to 2010. Once more thinking back to the foundations of PM4SD, this case ideally highlights the benefits drawn from continuously placing policy at the centre of actions, particularly as the precise shape and direction of that policy can respond to heterogeneous connections which themselves do not necessarily remain static.

We draw a second snapshot from the 2011 study visit to West Bengal, India. On this occasion the cli-

ent was a social enterprise called Banglatak Dot Com. This rapidly expanding organisation is based in Kolkata, but with projects all over West Bengal and other states in India. For the past 10 years, its focus has been on the potential to harness the arts for development, and to raise the livelihoods of cultural practitioners, thereby also securing a future for both the arts and the artists. The EU funded project in which we also featured as a partner, marked their first venture directly featuring tourism development as an issue.

The brief for the trip was focused around activities that were being conducted during the latter stages of the second year of the project. Students were directed towards the following task:

“Banglanatak has organised two festivals in two of the villages of the project, for November 2010, and January 2011.

- The November festival took place in the Patanchitra village of Naya, in the district of Pingla, and attracted around 7000 festival visitors over its three days
- The January festival is another three-day festival scheduled to take place in the Baul village of Gorbhanga, in the district of Nadia

The project wants to use the opportunity of these two festivals to assess the tourism preparedness of the villagers; the impacts of tourism on the villages; and the potential of tourism to build on, and spread the benefits of, the improvements in village artists' standing and livelihood.

Your task is to assess the tourism dimension to these two events, and to make recommendations, based on your findings, with regard to the future direction of tourism development by the project.”

The trip was conducted during an intensive period of an on-going project. The pressures to deliver a long list of activities on time and to budget were seen to focus the attention of the coordinating social enterprise. But was there a similar attention to deliver the anticipated results? This was indirectly the essence of the student's brief. Through participating first hand in the festivals, and having the opportunity to obtain views and perspectives from a range of project stakeholders, including the final beneficiary communities, the student group was able to generate a more widely informed position than could be gained solely from second hand documentation.

The subsequent discussions and the interim presentation to the 'client' outlined how the group were able to draw much from the experience and

not be afraid to examine and convey some of the tensions they could identify between the ideal reported situation and the practice as seen and heard during their observations and interviews in the field. Concerns were raised regarding the possible problems that could ensue if large numbers of tourists regularly entered the villages without more widespread understanding and preparation from their 'hosts'. The group also expressed the view that there was a need for more capacity building for the receiving villagers, to allow them to make more informed decisions as to what tourism entailed, and in what form they would want to pursue it.

The responses from the client were equally informative for the group and once again outlined the degrees of complexity one could witness around a project in the field. For instance it became apparent that the form of scholarly critique delivered by the students in their presentation, may not always be so readily understood or accepted outside of its academic context. Equally, the engagement between the student group and their client raises further questions around the relationships that connect policy, funding and delivery of project results. The specific motivations or demands of individual stakeholders for example, become a further factor to bring in to consideration. Thus, what is perceived as successful delivery of results for one agency, may still appear to be partial success for another.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have briefly outlined how the employability agenda in UK universities stimulated an attempt to combine critically informed knowledge and technically useful practice in an 'authentic learning experience' for students. Key to this endeavour were the partnerships built up over time in the field, and the model of project practice formalised in PM4SD methodology. Theory and practice are shown to stand in a recursive relationship with each other, rather than defined by two separate and distinct realms of 'the academy' on the one side, and 'reality' on the other. Although the experience of the study trips undoubtedly added to the cultural capital of the individual student participants, leading to long and short term employment and further placement opportunities for many, models of 'knowledge transfer' do not adequately describe the processes of knowledge creation observed in the course of the study trips, with knowledge emerging from the interaction between partners as they negotiated their collaboration and practice.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abram S (2010) 'Anthropology, Tourism and Intervention'. In J Scott and T Selwyn (eds) *Thinking Through Tourism* Oxford: Sage pp. 231-253
- Bianchi R (2012) 'A Radical Departure: A critique of the critical turn in tourism studies'. In J Wilson (Ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Tourism Geographies: New Perspectives on Space, Place and Tourism*. London: Routledge pp. 46-54
- Botterill D (2003) 'An Autoethnographic Narrative on Tourism Research Epistemologies' *Loisir et Société* 26(1): 97-110
- Breakey N M, R N S Robinson, L G Beesley (2008) 'Students Go a "Waltzing Matilda" – A Regional Tourism Knowledge Exchange Through Innovative Internships' *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism* 8(2-3): 223-240
- Burns P (2004) 'Tourism Planning – A Third Way?' *Annals of Tourism Research* 31(1): 24-43
- Franklin A and M Crang (2001) 'The Trouble with Tourism and Travel Theory?' *Tourist Studies* 1(1): 5-22
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F (2006) 'More than an "industry": The forgotten power of tourism as a social force' *Tourism Management* 27: 1192-1208.
- Robertson M, O Junek and L Lockstone-Binney (2012) 'Is This for Real? Authentic Learning for the Challenging Events Environment' *Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism* 12:225-241
- Saenab S, A Mahmud, G D Dirawan, A Ahmad (2014) 'The Role of On the Job Training (OJT) in Improving Student Knowledge in Tourism Vocational School' *International Journal of Academic Research* 6(2): 311-315
- Salazar N B (2006) 'Building a "Culture of Peace" through tourism; reflexive and analytical notes and queries' *Universitas Humanistica* 62 (July–December), 319–333
- Scott J (2012) 'Tourism, Civil Society and Peace in Cyprus' *Annals of Tourism Research* 39(4):2114-2132
- Scott J and J Karkut (2008) 'Building Stories' in *London Journal of Tourism, Sport and the Creative Industries* 2: 54-65
- Selwyn T and J Karkut (2007) 'The politics of institution building and European cooperation: reflections on an EC TEMPUS project on tourism and culture in Bosnia–Herzegovina' In: P. Burns & M. Novelli (Eds.) *Tourism and politics: Global frameworks and local realities* Oxford: Elsevier pp. 123–145
- Simm D, A Marvell, R Schaaf and H Winlow (2012) 'Foundation Degrees in Geography and Tourism: A Critical Reflection on Student Experiences and the Implications for Undergraduate Degree Courses' *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 36(4):563-583
- Tosun C (2000) 'Limits to community participation in the tourism development process in developing countries' *Tourism Management* 21(6): 613-633
- Tribe, J (2006) 'The Truth About Tourism' *Annals of Tourism Research* 33(2): 360-381
- Wallace, T. (ed.) (2005) *Tourism and Applied Anthropologists: Linking Theory and Practice* NAPA Bulletin 23 Wiley-Blackwell
- Zehrer A and C Mössenlechner (2009) 'Key Competencies of Tourism Graduates: The Employers' Point of View' *Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism* 9:266-287

COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING IN TOURISM SECTOR: AN APPLICATION OF THE EUROPEAN TOURISM INDICATORS SYSTEM IN THE “A.T.L. DEL CUNESE”

MASSIMILIANO CODA ZABETTA, SARA LEVI SACERDOTTI AND
STEFANIA MAURO

ABSTRACT

Collaboration among key stakeholders is a fundamental ingredient for the sustainable development of the tourism sector. In today's complex environment, both in institutional and economic terms, all the key players have to operate under the pressure of different interests and influences, which destination managers should assess and evaluate to adjust them with destination-specific objectives. Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) practices could be considered a useful tool in dealing with all the different stakeholder interests in order to achieve common sustainability results thus sharing intents, saving resources and achieving greater levels of accountability and data quality. However, although such approach represents an alternative to “mainstream top-down” tourism management, there are relatively few studies of their actual impact and effectiveness, largely because most community-based monitoring initiatives have not been rigorously evaluated. One of the most recent application of CBM practices that has been applied to the tourism sector, is represented by the ETIS (European Tourism Indicator System) initiative. ETIS was launched by the European Commission and several expert partners (University of Surrey, Sustainable Travel International and INTASAVE) in order to provide tourism destination stakeholders and, in particular, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) across Europe a tested, improved and easy-to-use toolkit and system of indicators, with which they can assess, monitor and manage the sustainability of their tourism destinations. The aim of this article is first to discuss the importance of CBM practice in the tourism sector by examining former studies, and then to illustrate how it has been performed in the tourist destination of the “ATL del Cuneese” (Hospitality and

Tourism Promotion Local Agency) within the Piedmont Region as an application of the ETIS initiative.

Keywords: Community-Based Monitoring, Tourism Sector, ETIS (European Tourism Indicator System)

INTRODUCTION

Over the last three decades, improving governance and public service delivery through Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) is an approach that has gained prominence around the world and especially in underdeveloped countries.

CBM derives from a holistic perspective, encourages an interdisciplinary approach, is driven from a “bottom-up” approach in management, and focuses on the collaboration and cooperation among the civil society: in fact citizens, government agencies, industry, academia, community groups, and local institutions collaborate to monitor, track, and respond to issues of common community concern. However, despite the enthusiasm for such alternative approach in the pursuit of sustainable development, CBM often represents an under-achieved component of local resources management and its actual impact and effectiveness is relatively lowly studied - mostly because CBM initiatives have not been rigorously evaluated so far.

This article addresses this last issue reporting the results of the implementation of the ETIS (European Tourism Indicator System) initiative in the territory of the “ATL del Cuneese” (Hospitality and Tourism Promotion Local Agency).

In fact, Since the Communication of the European Commission (EC) COM (2007) 671 of the 19th October 2007 on the European Agenda for a

Sustainable and Competitive Tourism, and especially after the Communication COM (2010) 352 - Europe, the World's no.1 Tourist Destination, the importance of tourism has been recognized at the European level as "relevant economic activity, with a very positive impact on economic growth and employment in Europe". In particular, since tourism is an activity that substantially involves cultural and natural heritage, it is important to determine development that reconciles economic growth and sustainability in the sector to ensure a long-term competitiveness.

With regard to this, the Communication of 2010, strongly promoted by the Vice President of the European Commission (Tajani), identified four groups of priorities divided into 21 actions aimed at making European tourism more sustainable, competitive and visible on the international markets. These actions include, among the others: the development of a European brand "quality tourism" for tourist services; encouragement of the increasing the tourists flow from European countries through public awareness campaigns; development of a "Virtual Observatory" on tourism, as well as a number of actions to improve the accessibility of tourist services and the professionalism of the operators.

The development of a system of indicators for the sustainable management of destinations is one of the key actions (Action 16) on which the Communication relies. The ETIS aims at contributing to the improvement of sustainable management of tourism destinations by providing stakeholders with a tool capable of identifying trends, developments and impacts of the tourism system. The ETIS "Toolkit" is a vademecum consisting of a 67 indicator dataset - designed to provide a means to control information and facilitate conscious decision-making while allowing stakeholders to share their own progress and performance in an environment of collaborative benchmarking.

The structure of the paper is as follows. [Section 2 summarizes the main development and approaches in CBM in order to establish a baseline theoretical background for the analysis. Section 3 provides an overall view and evidence from a relevant empirical case study concerning CBM in the tourism sector. Section 4 presents the application of the ETIS in the ATL del Cuneese both discussing the methodological path and the implementation strategy. Section 5 presents the main results and draws some conclusions.]

CBM: LITERATURE, APPROACH, CASE STUDIES

CBM is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement where citizens and civil society organizations directly or indirectly participate in extracting accountability (Malena et al., 2004). CBM is described by Whitelaw et al. (2003) as "a process where concerned citizens, government agencies, industry, academia, community groups, and local institutions collaborate to monitor, track and respond to issues of common community concern".

CBM was developed in the early 1990s under the Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic Adjustment Policies (MIMAP) Project - Philippines to provide policymakers with a sound information base for understanding the impacts of socio-economic reforms. It consists from an organised procedures for data collection, processing and evaluation as key steps to monitor phenomena, formulate corrective actions (to mitigate any deviations with respect to existing policies) and formulate new policies (for local planning). What makes it special, compared to any other monitoring program, however, is that it promotes evidence-based policymaking and program implementation while empowering communities to participate in the process. Examples of CBM include water quality (USEPA, 2012), animals wildlife (NSSA, 2012) and human resource use (NRMN, 2012; Duflo and Rema, 2005).

CBM has also been used in monitoring public officials. For example, in Olken (2005) CBM is used to monitor corruption in road construction projects in Indonesia, even though they experienced some problems in actively involving non-elite community members, and it is unclear if they had any means of influencing outcomes during or at the end of the intervention. Banerjee, Deaton and Duflo (2004) applied CBM to check the level of absenteeism health centre personnel in an Indian state. They had no problem in getting reliable information but the intervention had no impact in attendance. Strömberg (2003, 2004) studied the relationship between information dissemination through the media and; accountability of politicians to citizens; and the mechanism through which citizens can make politicians and policymakers accountable.

CBM is considered to have several potential advantages, both from social and economic points of view, as it allows:

- Improving data quality of existing databases and having constantly updated databases;
- The preparation of socioeconomic profiles and diagnosis as well as the preparation of development and investment plans;
- Advancing the allocation of resources by making it easier to prioritize interventions based on the diagnosis;
- Decentralizing monitoring activities thereby reducing the cost for the DMOs: it is cheaper for the beneficiaries to monitor performances by sharing tasks in a group which can also be better informed about the overall status of services than an hypothetical external agent assigned to supervise.

Public opinion is even more significant, since stakeholders involved may also have means of punishing, that are not available to others, such as verbal complaints or social opprobrium (Banerjee and Duflo, 2005). Beneficiaries may be able to induce higher effort from workers by providing non-pecuniary rewards (social rewards) for good performances.

Although many positive aspects to this approach can be glimpsed, many difficulties can also be identified in applying it. DMOs, citizens and communities can typically face several constraints in initiating local collective action to improve service delivery outcomes:

- Following Khemani (2006), the lack of reliable information on outcomes may be a problem that can result from a lack of adequate skills of the monitor.
- Some stakeholders may want to protect their interests and therefore may not adequately detect situations that would be important to bring out.
- CBM is possibly subject to large free-riding problems since everyone would rather have someone else monitor the performance.
- The community may lack the ability to sanction poor performances or reward good performance.

Naturally, there is no guarantee that community monitoring will work even if the community is informed and can coordinate actions and there is

demand for the service. In the end, if and to what extent community monitoring works, is an empirical question: that's why it could be very valuable to have numerous case-studies on this topic.

CBM IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

Ongoing monitoring is not systematically done by tourism destinations, even though it is being increasingly recognized as a critical step in making a destination dynamic and sustainable and capable of timely capturing the destination's competitiveness level. For example the "life cycle of tourist destinations", borrowed from Butler's (1980) theories, identifies seven steps of tourism development: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and finally decline or rejuvenation. Regular collection of information about tourism situations in destinations that are constantly changing, helps fully understand the level of development at which a destination lies and as a result, guide actions to achieve a desirable result or objective. Indeed, for a tourism destination to be successful, it should be monitored, evaluated, and should have a development plan that is updated on a regular basis according to DMO's vision, goals and objectives and in line with the principles of sustainable tourism development.

All the major stakeholders of a destination should, to some degree, be involved in the monitoring process. In a tourism context, the CBM is considered a means of sustainable development whereby the social, environmental and economic needs of local communities are met through offering of a tourism product. It is important, however, to remember that political decision makers are central to the monitoring process and their involvement is essential in the ongoing process of determining monitoring indicators as well as collecting and evaluating data. In fact, while gathering the monitoring data is a technical process, the evaluation of the data becomes very much a "political" process: leading to decisions and choices for balancing and managing the impacts.

Furthermore, monitoring is a highly effective, yet resource-intensive, component of a tourism destination's management plans. As such, CBM offers a viable solution to the problem of limited resources in management, facilitating the establishment and the continuation of a monitoring plan on a lower budget while creating a venue for civic engagement and activism.

Below we provide an application on community-based monitoring of tourism resources (CBM-T)

as an anecdotal case that shows how the ETIS fits into this scientific research framework.

CBM-T IN SHIH PAN TRAIL IN LINMEI

This is a very interesting case of tourism flow monitoring in a highly popular Chinese tourist attraction, developed through involvement of the local community (Dau-Jye L., Yu-Fai L., Hiao-Tien H. 2010). The Shipan Trail has, on average, over 200,000 visitors every year. It offers a great variety of natural attractions on the track with a short circular length (approximately 1.7 km). The self-guided tour has information boards established along the way.

Between 2008 and 2009, the National Taiwan University (School of Forestry & Resource Conservation), the North Carolina State University (Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management department) together with the Linmei Village community and the Forestry Agency initiated a participatory monitoring project in order to establish more informed and effective management of the trail. The basic idea was to move the monitoring task from the government agencies, perennially challenged by inadequate funding and staffing, to the local community.

Items relevant to tourism and visitor safety, such as tourism facilities and carrying capacity control, were included in the monitoring scheme. To detect the required data, the project promoters worked with the locals and the forestry agency to test appropriate monitoring formats and used at last, sheets, Public Participatory Geography Information System (PPGIS) and, additionally, spatial information provided by Google Earth and Global Positioning System (GPS), to identify monitoring locations and items. Moreover interviews, focus groups and direct observations were used as well as a training program for the local rangers to develop a standardized format for monitoring records.

The final community-based trail monitoring scheme consisted of two parts: one for the quick monitoring of the trail conditions to assess every few days, and a comprehensive monthly assessment by senior staff of the community organization.

The local community showed its capacity to successfully implement the monitoring scheme and reported to the forestry agency regularly for at least 3 months in the spring of 2009 but, unfortunately, not after that, due to limited qualified personnel that could execute the monitoring activities. Nevertheless, this experience made the Forestry

Agency realize the value of community participation in tourism management.

CBM-T THROUGH THE ETIS IN AN ITALIAN DESTINATION

In this part, we present the results of implementing ETIS in the “ATL del Cuneese” tourist destination⁵ in the Piedmont Region of Italy. In particular, what the paper wants to highlight, is how the 7 steps identified by the European Commission - “1. Raise awareness”; “2. Create a destination profile”; “3. Form a Stakeholder Working Group (SWG)”; “4. Establish roles and responsibilities”; “5. Collect and record data”; “6. Analyse results”; “7. Enable Ongoing Development and Continuous Improvement” – can not only be seen in accordance with the principles of the CBM-T process, but can also provide a clear and structured layout application, which can give effective operational support to DMOs and local communities.

The application of ETIS in the “ATL del Cuneese”, has been developed between 2013 and 2014 through the cooperation of three institutions that have held different roles during the experimentation:

- Piedmont Region: a regional institution that has provided the necessary institutional support. The Region is also part of NECSTouR - Network of European Region for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism as a full member;
- ATL del Cuneese – Cuneo Alps and Cities of Art: a hospitality and tourism promotion agency, which has coordinated the initiative at the local level;
- SiTI - Higher Institute on Territorial Systems for Innovation: a non-profit association set up by the Polytechnic University of Turin and Compagnia di San Paolo that has technically supported the process. SiTI is also part of NECSTouR - Network of European Region for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism as an associated member and works within the NIT – NECSTouR Indicators Task Force of the Network.

⁵ <http://www.cuneoholiday.com>

THE GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

As can be seen in Figure 1, the Piedmont Region is divided into 9 ATLS (Hospitality and Tourism Promotion Local Agencies), established by the Regional Law No.75/1996. The ATLs support the development of local tourism by communicating and coordinating local tourist information and hospitality offices. Moreover, the Piedmont Region, through the Regional Tourist Observatory, disseminates some of its tourist data using the 9 ATL areas as territorial units.

The “ATL del Cuneese - Cuneo Alps and Cities of Art” therefore represents the right dimensions for pilot testing the ETIS initiative. The reference area covers 180 municipalities and about three-quarters of the province and it deals with the enhancement of local tourism resources through the promotion of the mountains and plains of the province of Cuneo.

INVOLVING LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

The first task of the project was to gather people together, and assure their commitment to the process - in particular all those groups of people, without

whose contribution, the tourism sector would not have had a chance to develop in the area. Given the importance of adequately communicating the decision to measure the sustainability of the destination to the greatest possible number of potentially interested stakeholders, an official presentation of the ETIS project was organized on October 2013 at the offices of the Chamber of Commerce of Cuneo (as seen in the “Step 1. Raise awareness” of the ETIS Toolkit). To ensure the widest possible dissemination of the event, “ATL del Cuneese”, Piedmont Region and SiTI prepared a joint press release and published the news and a summary sheet of the project on their websites and social media profiles.

At the end of the official presentation, relevant stakeholders (identified following the detailed instructions provided by the Toolkit) and local actors essential for the implementation of the initiative were invited to formally sign their willingness to be part of the Working Group (“Step 3: Form a Stakeholder Working Group (SWG)”). The “core group” of local key people engaged in the monitoring was formed and was composed by the stakeholders listed in Table 1.

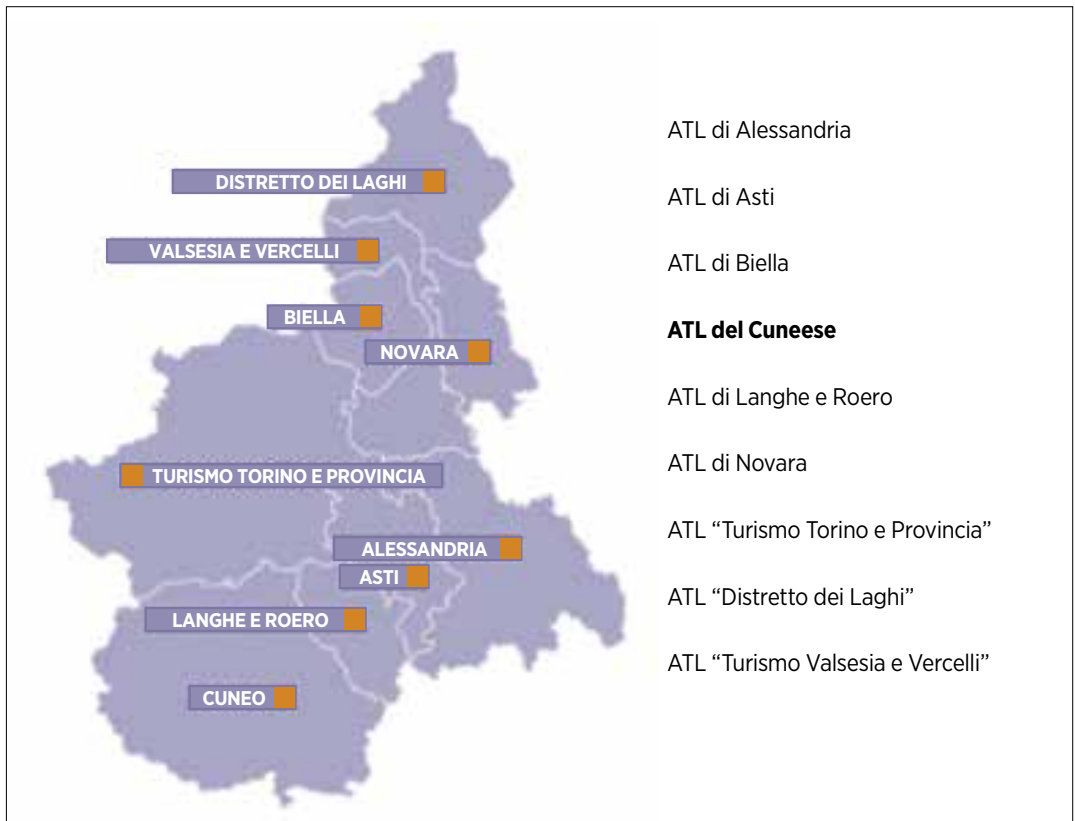


Figure 1. Geographical distribution of the 9 ATLS in the Piedmont Region

Table 1. ETIS Stakeholder Working Group in the “ATL del Cuneese”

Stakeholder Working Group	
<i>Local institutions</i>	ATL del Cuneese Province of Cuneo (tourism and mobility sector)
<i>Local Chamber of Commerce</i>	Chamber of Commerce of Cuneo
<i>Private sector representatives</i>	Conitours (consortium of tourism operators) Alps of Mondovi (consortium of tourism operators)
<i>Organizations for the protection of local culture and heritage</i>	Monregaltour association
<i>Protected Areas managers</i>	Parco Fluviale Gesso e Stura Natural Park of Maritime Alps

In the ETIS Toolkit, it is recommended that before commencing with local activities, it would be important to have a meeting between the local coordinators and other project personnel to discuss the project aims and methods in more detail. In this way, in order to avoid misunderstanding, it can be emphasized that the aim of the project is not to give local people money for their tourism operations per se, but instead to give them an easy and ready-to-go tool to help them understanding the actual tourism situation of their territory.

It is well-known, that for successful implementation of the ETIS initiative, all members of the SWG need to be given an opportunity to express their opinions and ideas on tourism development, but it is also important that someone takes the overall responsibility for leading the process. Thus the formally formed Working Group has been involved in four working meetings led by “ATL del Cuneese” and SiTI:

- First working meeting: to present the ETIS Toolkit in more detail and to reach a clear agreement on the roles and responsibilities among the members of the group about the indicators to implement (“Step 4. Establish Roles and Responsibilities”).
- Second working meeting: to present the progress in the implementation of the Dataset. Problems and issues that had arisen during the work were made clear and related solutions were agreed upon.
- Third working meeting: to show the first rough results derivable from the Dataset and receive their feedback; to modify the database on the basis of the considerations that emerged from the discussion with the Working Group.

- Fourth working meeting: to review and analyze the results of the implementation of the Dataset in detail. The meeting was also designed to bring out and gather opinions about the ETIS initiative.

These meetings were a very important method for building team spirit and trust among local participants and the timing of the meetings was also critical for maintaining the motivation and interest of the community.

Together with the SWG (following “Step 2. Create a Destination profile”), a destination profile sheet was compiled on “ATL del Cuneese” in order to precisely delineate the “boundaries” of the destination - not only geographically, but also the main sights; internal and external accessibility; and the number of visitors. This gave all stakeholders a general overview of the status of the destination before the monitoring phase.

MONITORING INDICATORS AND ASSESSMENT PHASE

After a preliminary check of the feasibility and the relevance of indicators proposed by the ETIS Toolkit (27 core indicators and 40 optional indicators on “Destination Management”, “Economic Value”, “Social and Cultural Impact”, “Environmental Impact”) to monitor the destination, data was collected in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to the Working Groups and implemented by SiTI. Furthermore, to get data otherwise difficult to find, a survey to tourism enterprises was done through an online questionnaire distributed by e-mail to Chamber of Commerce and A.T.L del Cuneese associated tourist members. The survey was prepared using a ETIS toolkit template as starting point. A response rate of about 25% was reached setting the stage for a much more successful future

implementation of the system. The ETIS Dataset indicators that were actually implemented at the end of the testing phase numbered 27.

The data collected and implemented was analysed both through the charts already defined in the ETIS Toolkit Dataset, and through ad hoc elaborations deemed most informative to study the topics of greater interest. Community meetings served as a platform for local people to express their opinions, which were then discussed, and local people were able to network with those who shared the same ideas and eventually start working together towards common aims ("Step 6. Analyse Results").

THE RESULTS OF THE ETIS IMPLEMENTATION

The overall experience of the ETIS testing phase within the territory of the "ATL del Cuneese" can be seen positively as a successful CBM-T experience. The stakeholders that were part of the working groups, have participated actively and responded promptly to the needs identified during the operational meetings thus fulfilling the responsibilities allocated to them.

The meetings were often an opportunity to participate in discussions and a sign of interest towards sustainable management of tourism within the destination.

The participants were, from the first working meeting, aware of the "pilot" and "test" nature of this experiment, and perhaps for this reason, were so determined to carry out their duties and devote genuine effort especially to highlight difficulties that emerged during the implementation. All agreed that it was important to assess the path and the procedure, emphasizing weaknesses and their possible solutions, in order to constructively contribute to the improvement of the system as a whole.

During the last SWG working meeting, a focus group was designed to collect comments and final observations about the ETIS testing phase. The focus group discussion involved the following areas of analysis:

1. Usefulness of ETIS: effectiveness and efficiency
2. Effort required to perform the testing in terms of time and adequacy
3. Willingness to participate in future application of the system and provide suggestions for improvement.

With regard to the usefulness of ETIS, all the participants acknowledged that the potential of the instrument relied on its ability to bring together tourism industry actors to talk about its' management. The model was considered useful because it allows to picture the current situation of a destination. However, it was not clear how to bridge the gap regarding the need to delineate significant initiatives to enhance sustainability and competitiveness, especially the "education" of operators.

The double value of the ETIS lies in its ability to be both an incentive to achieve results, and a self-assessment tool. What is lacking, perhaps, is a summary index for the entire destination. This overview index could be compared with other destinations results in a benchmarking exercise.

The effort required to implement the ETIS dataset was not too demanding in terms of time when the needed data was already available, but the lack of clarity of what is required by some indicators, may lead to difficulty in finding the relevant data.

Time to implement the monitoring, was deemed adequate, and allowed participants to engage in a credible and constant experimentation in the initiative. Monthly meetings were held and responsibility for one or more indicators was attributed to each member in the group.

The perception of the majority of the working group was, that much of the complexity in the application of the system, was due to the size of the destination, and consequently a destination defined at the municipality level, could have implemented more indicators more easily. It is therefore be important to understand, how to apply the system in an appropriate manner, on the local level of the destination under consideration.

All participants in the working group said they were interested and willing to take part in a possible new application of ETIS if there is an effective opportunity to compare their territory with other similar ones. This contact with good practices would accelerate the improving process of the destination in terms of sustainability. What mattered most to the members of the working group, was the exchange of experiences, so it is important that the destinations that have adopted ETIS are comparable. Another condition deemed crucial to ensure that a future application would be useful, is greater involvement of political actors in order to share produced technical data to support policy decisions.

Finally, the focus group proposed that it would be better to have a dataset composed by fewer indicators that would still provide an accurate picture

of the current situation and also an idea of where the destination is directed. Too many indicators make the system detailed, but can make the results complex to understand.

REFERENCES

- Banerjee, A. and E. Duflo (2005), "Addressing Absence", *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20 (1), 117-132.
- Banerjee, Abhijit, Angus Deaton and Esther Duflo (2004), "Wealth, Health, and Health Service Delivery in Rural Rajasthan", *American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings* 94(2): 326-330.
- Butler, R. W. (1980). The concept of a tourism area cycle of evolution: Implications for the management of resources. *Canadian Geographer*, 24 (1), 5-12
- Conrad, C. T. and Daoust, T. (2008). Community-based monitoring frameworks: Increasing the effectiveness of environmental stewardship. *Environmental Management* 41: 358366.
- Dau-Jye L., Yu-Fai L., Hiao-Tien H. (2010), "Community-based trail monitoring as a mechanism for capacity and partnership building: Lessons learned from Linmei Village, Ilan County, Taiwan", in «Recreation, tourism and nature in a changing world» MMV 5 proceedings, p. 260-261.
- Duflo, E. and H. Rema (2005), "Monitoring Works: Getting Teachers to Come to School", Working Paper, Department of Economics and Poverty Action Lab, MIT.
- European Union (2013), "The European Tourism Indicator System. Toolkit for Sustainable Destinations", European Commission – DG Enterprise and Industry. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/indicators/>.
- Khemani, S. (2006), "Can Information Campaigns Overcome Political Obstacles to Serving the Poor", mimeo, The World Bank.
- Malena, C., Forster R. and J. Singh (2004), "Social Accountability: An Introduction to the Concept and Emerging Practice", *Social Development Papers*, 76, 1-18.
- NRMN (Natural Resources Monitoring Network), (2012). Monitoring Matter. Available at: <http://www.monitoringmatters.org/>.
- NSSA (Nova Scotia Salmon Association), (2012). Projects & Programs: River Watch. Available at: <http://www.novascotiasalmon.ns.ca/projectsandprograms/>
- Olken, Ben (2005), "Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia", NBER Working Paper No.11753.
- Strömberg, David (2003), "Mass Media and Public Policy", *European Economic Review* 45(4-6): 652-63.
- Strömberg, David (2004), "Radio's Impact on Public Spending", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119(1): 189-221.
- USEPA (US Environmental Protection Agency) (2012), Monitoring And Assessing Water Quality – Volunteer Monitoring. Available at: <http://water.epa.gov/type/rsl/monitoring/index.cfm>.
- Whitelaw, G., Vaughan, H., Craig, B. and D. Atkinson (2003), "Establishing the Canadian Community Monitoring Network", *Environ. Monit. Assess.* 88(1-3), 409-418.

THE POTENTIAL GREEN CARE ACTORS' INTEREST AND STARTING POINTS TO THE GREEN CARE OPERATION IN SOUTH OSTROBOTHNIA – SURVEYS RESULTS

M.SC. MARIA SUOMELA

ABSTRACT

Promoting human wellbeing through natural elements is an old way to utilize the connection between human and nature. It is known that natural environments usually have positive impacts on human health and humans seek forests or parks when feeling stressed (Korpela et al 2001). Green Care is a concept, in which this relationship between human and nature, is utilized to rehabilitate or empower humans. The concept is relatively new even though the theory behind it is old.

Green Care is an umbrella term for a variety of nature-based practices aiming to promote human wellbeing. The concept is already well known in some European countries. However, in Finland it is still developing and finding its place as a part of social and health care services and tourism. Pilot projects have been carried out all over the country, and in South Ostrobothnia taking part in this national development work, has been a topic of interest as well. As a part of a project called “Green Care for Health, Welfare and Growth to South-Ostrobothnia”, two surveys for figuring out the starting points and interest toward Green Care, have been carried out. It was noticed that Green Care –related practices were commonly known in the region. However, more education and understanding of the concept are needed.

Keywords: Green Care, Nature based practices, Human wellbeing, South Ostrobothnia

INTRODUCTION

Green Care at its simplest, is an umbrella term for the promotion of human wellbeing with the help of nature. The definition varies between countries

and actors, but the main idea is to use natural elements to increase the wellbeing of humans. People have a natural need to be close to nature, of which summer cottages, parks, beaches and natural trails are good examples (Tyrväinen et al 2007). The most well-known Green Care interventions around the world are care farming, animal-assisted interventions (AAI), social and therapeutic horticulture (STH), healing gardens, or facilitated green exercises (Haubehofer D. K. et al, 2010). This paper deals with Green Care in general and in Finland. The main focus is on two surveys carried out in South-Ostrobothnia. The surveys looked into the starting points and interest toward Green Care in the region. A discussion about the situation in the region and some proposals for the development of local Green Care are presented.

DEFINITION OF GREEN CARE

Many authors have proposed conceptual frames for Green Care to clarify the term. Haubehofer et al (2010) and Sempik et al (2010) present some examples of different definitions, in which they both underline the need to pay attention to the outcomes of Green Care interventions, and to notice that all forms of green used in promoting health, are not Green Care. In Green Care, health promoting activities should always use biotic or abiotic elements of nature and the target should be maintaining or promoting the social, physical or mental wellbeing of humans. For a more detailed description, they have itemized some factors and characteristics of Green Care:

1. Green does not have to happen in the nature even if it is linked to natural environments.

2. The content and definition of Green Care varies between countries. It is therefore important to recognize the basic elements of Green Care; to gain health-related, social or educational benefits with the help of nature
3. Green Care is not only the act of health-care but can also be used for promoting and maintaining health.
4. Green Care is not always an appropriate health-care solution for all: two clients receiving the same approach may benefit differently.

There are a number of studies that show the positive impacts of nature (Kaplan & Austin 2003, Tyrväinen et al 2007, Korpela et al 2010, Nillson et al 2011, Sitra & MTT 2013, Sempik et al 2010, Kaplan 1995, Herzog et al 1997). The scientific research about the effects of nature on human health are usually decreased levels of stress symptoms like stress hormones, blood pressure, high pulse etc. Many of the studies are based on people's experience of wellbeing when spending time in natural environment or handling natural elements. The experiences of nature's healing are commonly described by feeling of relaxation, calming down the mind, refreshing the whole body and restored ability to work efficiently. There are studies to see differences between urban environments and forests. There is a dissimilarity in the health impacts of built and natural green environments (Korpela et al, 2010). The results have shown that an urban environment is not as effective as a natural environment in creating positive reactions. However, in Korpela et al (2010) the impacts of different environments were evaluated through people's favorite places and how they experienced those affected their recovery. Natural favorite places were found to be most effective for recovery. However, a comparison between urban green environments and totally constructed urban areas showed that green areas were experienced to be more effective for recovery. (Korpela et al, 2010). The significance of the green environments in the urban areas were the possibility for outdoor activities, aesthetic views, peacefulness, a feeling of freedom and so on.

Green Care practices are not a new invention. Various types of natural care have been used for centuries, only the term and concept are relatively new. The need for the concept has awaked after urbanization, technology, social problems and estrangement from the nature have become more common in many societies. In addition, the population age structure has been changing in many western countries creating pressure on social services and a need for new innovations and development

of the services (Soini et al, 2011). New opportunities for rural livelihoods are also needed to ensure income in rural areas in the future as well. Green Care is now seen as one possible answer.

GREEN CARE IN FINLAND

In Finland, the habit of spending holidays in the summer or vacation cottages is very common as 33 percent of Finnish's yearly trips to nature are directed there (Sievänen & Neuvonen 2010). Approximately 96 percent of adults do some outdoor recreation a couple times per week and 47 percent of Finns do at least one trip to nature yearly (Sievänen & Neuvonen 2010).

In Finland, the term Green Care was presented for the first time in 2006 by Agrifood research Finland (MTT) (Soini & Vehmasto, 2014). Implementing the concept has been quick within Finnish actors in the agricultural and rural sectors. For example, Green Care is mentioned as a part of Finland's Rural Policy Programs 2009-2013 and 2014-2020 (Maaseutu ja hyvinvoiva Suomi, 2009, Mahdollisuuksien maaseutu, 2014). In these programs, Green Care has been recognized as a potential way to improve rural welfare services as a part of business and social service development. After the concept Green Care had been recognized among Finnish actors, there was a need for more organized and target oriented development of the sector. In 2010, people interested in Green Care formed an association called Green Care Finland (GCFinland), which acts as a communication and development support network for all Green Care actors. The most common Green Care activities in Finland are animal involved treatments (horse therapy and social pedagogical horse activities) and therapeutic gardens (Maaseutu ja hyvinvoiva Suomi, 2009, Haubenhöfer et al, 2010).

The basic elements for Green Care in Finland have been described in a national project called "VoiMaa! – Green Care yrittäjyydestä elinvoimaa maaseudulle" ("Rural viability through Green Care –entrepreneurship", 2011-2013). The main challenge of the project was to clarify the definition of Green Care. As a result, the project group defined Green Care practices by proximity of nature, social relations and functionality. The basic preconditions are professionalism, goal orientation and responsibility (Soini & Vehmasto, 2014). Furthermore, two different Green Care service markets were classified: Green Rehabilitation and Care (luontohoiva) and Green Empowering (luontovoima) (Figure 1). In Green Rehabilitation and Care, the main idea is

to use nature as a part of a healing or rehabilitation process. The main focus groups in this sector are elder people, mental health patients or mentally disabled people. In the Green Empowering sector, the Green Care clients are not classified into certain groups because the nature's recovering impacts can be useful for anyone. In Figure 1, the classification of different Green Care service markets are described. Other main differences between these two sectors besides the focus groups are the actors. In the Green Rehabilitation and Care sector, public organizations are usually the payers and the providers of these services. Activities need to be implemented by health sector professionals. For example, a farmer can offer an operational environment for Green Rehabilitation and Care, but without health-care professionals activities cannot be implemented. In the Green Empowerment sector there are no restrictions for the service providers except for those imposed on all service providers' (eg. law on consumer safety (Finlex, 2011)).

The detailed definitions and contents for Green Care activities in Finland are still under the development. However, VoiMaa project's outcomes make it easier to inform about the basis of the concept and its main targets to those who are still unfamiliar with or unsure about the concept.

GREEN CARE FOR HEALTH, WELFARE AND GROWTH IN SOUTH-OSTROBOTHNIA

Various projects for piloting and studying the opportunities and interests toward Green Care are and have been ongoing in different areas of Finland. In South-Ostrobothnia, the Vocational Adult Education institution "Sedu" produced a preliminary study "Green Care in South-Ostrobothnia" (2011 - 2013) for promoting Green Care knowledge in the region. After the preliminary project, Sedu started Green Care education for rural companies. In 2013, Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and Ruralia institute, University of Helsinki, participated in regional Green Care development with a project: "Green Care for Health, Welfare and Growth to South-Ostrobothnia". The project aims evaluate the possibilities for Green Care in the region, to promote Green Care development in the area and create a regional strategy for Green Care. To reach these objectives, data of the current status and interest toward Green Care in South-Ostrobothnia was collected and the results of these data collection surveys are presented in the next sections.

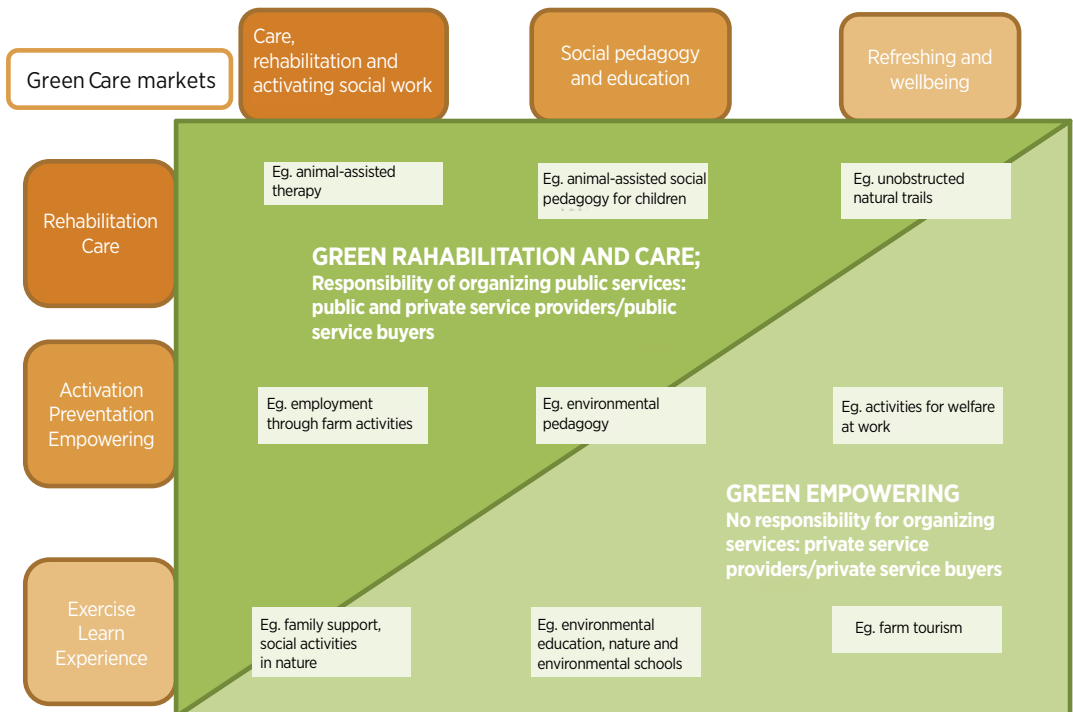


Figure 1. Markets for Green Care and examples of the activities in different sectors (Soini & Vehmasto, 2014)

SURVEY FOR POTENTIAL PRIVATE SECTOR GREEN CARE ACTORS IN SOUTH-OSTROBOTHNIA

In the project Green Care for health, welfare and growth to South-Ostrobothnia, one of the aims was to map potential Green Care actors in the region and to find out the level of the knowledge regarding Green Care interventions. In this survey, the target group were actors in the private sectors; houses for assisted living, kindergartens and companies in welfare tourism. The target group was chosen to represent the type of enterprises that could use Green Care as a part of their activities. The main targets were to find out the current status of and interest toward Green Care and if there are some common challenges in Green Care activities.

METHODS

From the potential target group, 120 actors were invited to participate in the interview by a phone call. 76 agreed to participate. The main reason for refusing, were changes in the organization or lack of interest toward the topic.

Three different categories were separated in the interviews: houses for assisted living (54 companies), kindergartens (15 companies) and companies in welfare tourism (7 companies). The same questionnaire was used for all groups and the interviewing was done by phone. There were eight questions in the questionnaire. The interviews were carried out in the spring of 2014. A short defini-

tion of Green Care was given to all interviewees at the beginning of the interview.

RESULTS

In all persons interviewed, the majority expressed interest toward Green Care (49/76) (Figure 2). 17 did not know what to say or the answer was “maybe”. Only nine of the interviewed were not interested in Green Care and said the reason was upcoming changes inside the organization or small amounts of resources. The highest number of interested interviewees were in houses for assisted living, from which 79 percent expressed their curiosity toward Green Care (Figure 3). Among kindergartens, the number of interested people was 53 percent and in

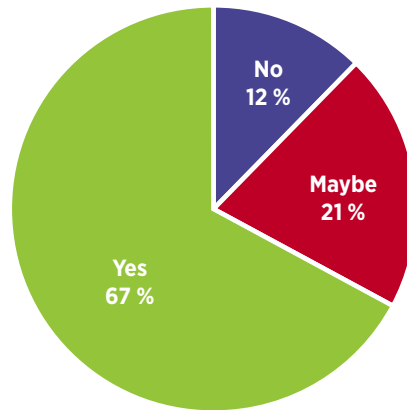


Figure 2. Interest to Green Care: Do you find Green Care interesting and topical in the company you are presenting? (N=76)

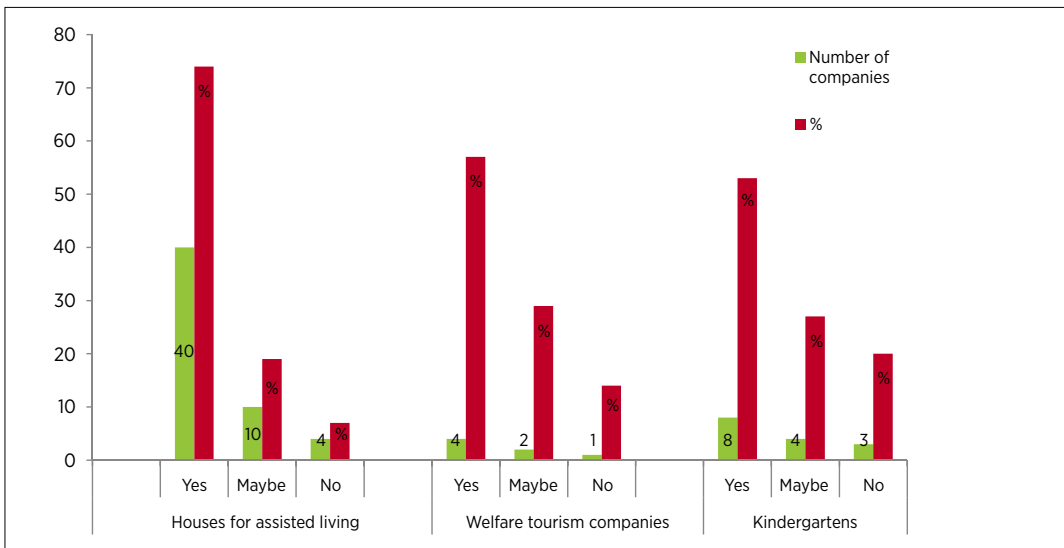


Figure 3. Interest toward Green Care

welfare tourism companies 57 percent. The highest number of non-interest was in kindergartens (3/7).

Backgrounds in Green Care differed between the enterprises (Table 1). In houses for assisted living, the common Green Care practices were gardening and animal-assisted activities like care dogs, pets and animal farm visits. Some of the specialties mentioned were geocaching, lean-to trips and healing gardens with edible flower beds. In kindergartens, trips to the forest and farms were mostly mentioned as Green Care practices. Other Green Care elements mentioned were local food, animals and environmental education. There were no notable differences in practices between different customer groups. However, riding was not done with the elderly but different kinds of trips could be offered for all customers (see table 2).

In the welfare tourism companies Green Care-related (nature-based) activities were always pres-

ent. The activities included services for welfare at work, farm tourism and natural treatments with natural ingredients (eg. honey). The levels of activities varied between self-directed tourism to organized activity packages (eg. canoeing trips).

When asking about the Green Care services already offered, it was apparent that the concept is still somewhat unknown. Nine of the houses for assisted living and seven of the kindergartens told that they do not have any Green Care activities. However, houses for assisted living still mentioned activities like day trips to the nature or horse riding for mentally disabled and kindergartens told about trips to forests or farms. Only one of the houses for assisted living did not mention any activities related to Green Care. In kindergartens, three of the interviewees did not specify activities they do. The most common practices of different companies are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Most common Green Care related practices done in all interviewed groups

Green Care related practices	Houses for assisted living	Kindergartens	Welfare tourism	Total
Trips; forest/farm	xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxx	xxxxx xxxxx		32
Gardening	xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx			30
Care dogs or other animals	xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xx	x		33
Riding	xxxxx		x	6
Nature used in degoration or utilized as an surrounding	xxxxx xxxxx xx	xxx	xx	17
Fishing	xxxxx			5
Activities in nature(eg. canoeing, orienteering, natural trails)	x		xxxx	5
Natural treatments			x	1
Environmental education	xx	xxx		5
Local food		xxxx		4

Table 2. Green Care related practices in houses for assisted living according to customer groups

Green Care related practices	Elderly (27)	Mental health patients (19)	Mentally disabled (14)	Child welfare clients (6)
Trips; forest/farm	xxxxx xxxxx x	xxxxx xxxxx x	xxxxx xx	xxxxx x
Gardening	xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxx	xxxxx xxxxx xxx	xxxxx x	xx
Care dogs or other animals	xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxx	xxxxx xxxxx	xxxxx xx	xxx
Riding		x	xx	xx
Nature used in decoration or utilized as an surrounding	xxxxx xxx	xxxxx	xxx	xx
Fishing	x	x	xx	x
Activities in nature(eg. canoeing, orienteering, natural trails)				x
Natural treatments				
Environmental education			xx	

The target groups differed from each other in their customers and possibilities for Green Care –related activities. In houses for assisted living, customers were the elderly, mental health patients, mentally disabled or child welfare clients. The biggest group was organizations working with the elderly (36/54, table 2). In welfare tourism, the typical customers were private customers or other organizations.

Houses for assisted living and kindergartens typically said that the municipality pays for the resources needed to implement Green Care practices. In houses for assisted living, the municipality paid at least some of the costs (98 % of respondents). Only one company said that the customers are the only payers. About half of the interviewees told that the costs are divided between the municipality and the customer (Figure 4). In kindergartens, the costs for Green Care activities were usually shared between the municipality and the families. In welfare tourism companies, the responsible payer was usually the customer with some help from the municipality or some other authority.

The interviewees’ opinion about customers’ willingness to pay more for Green Care was also asked. In kindergartens and houses for assisted living, the common view was that the customers would not pay more. Especially in kindergartens, the interviewees thought that it would be unequal

to even ask some extra money for Green Care. In welfare tourism companies, the extra payment for Green Care had already been included in the costs. Because of this, the interviewees in these companies thought that the customers are willing to pay some extra when they choose the services to buy.

There was also a question about the feedback customers had given regarding the offered Green Care- related practices. The feedback had been usually positive. Only a couple neutral comments had been given, which did not refer to natural elements but to social situations during the practices or possibilities to have a cigarette when being outdoors. However, the positive feedback was commonly referred to the diversity and change compared to usual activities that Green Care related practices enabled. Social situations in the activities and freshened feelings that customers experienced after the practices, were also mentioned. Many looked forward to animals and some houses for assisted living mentioned that Green Care was the reason the customers came.

Finally, estimated or experienced Green Care development needs were asked. The most common needs in all answering groups were education, resources and co-operation. Help for building up or maintaining Green Care environments were also mentioned (eg. garden, natural trails or paddocks).

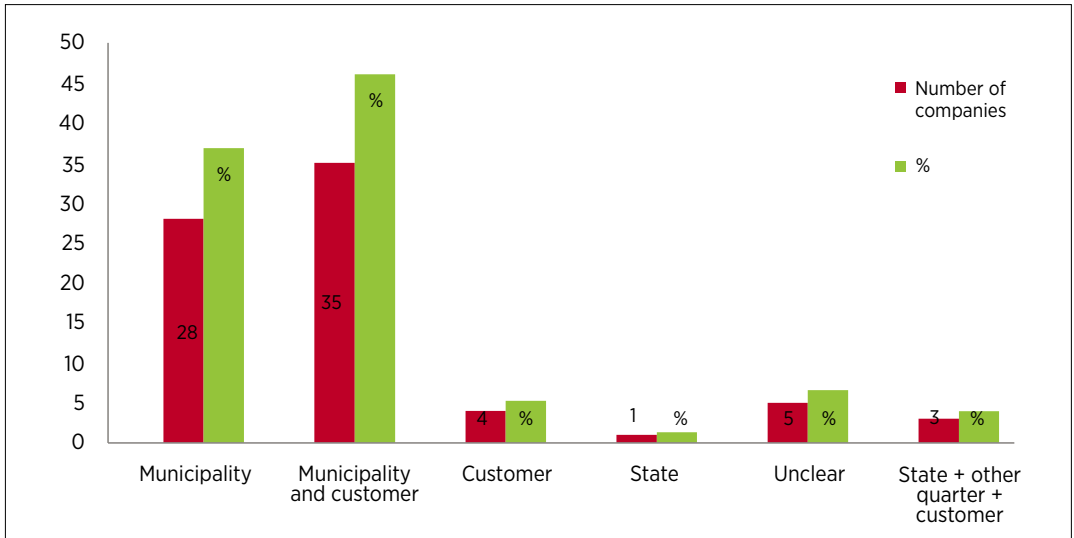


Figure 4. Who is paying the Green Care activities offered? n=76

Nevertheless, many of the interviewees could not mention any particular needs or actors who should help them with Green Care development. In kindergartens, almost half mentioned that they are not in need of any help.

SURVEY FOR POTENTIAL GREEN CARE ACTORS IN SOUTH-OSTROBOTHNIA

The second survey aimed to find out Green Care awareness among the public sector and their the interest to being involved in Green Care development of in South Ostrobothnia as well as experiences or impressions regarding the challenges of Green Care development.

METHODS

The questionnaire was sent, by email, to approximately 300 recipients of which 51 answered. An electronic questionnaire with 10 questions (4 yes/no questions, 6 open questions) was used. The link was sent to social and education services, the regional hospital district, associations and other local actors in the field of nature. The collection of answers was done in the spring 2014.

RESULTS

The term “Green Care” was unfamiliar to almost half of the interviewees. 23 of the respondents did

not know the term. However, even if the term was unknown, the content was usually familiar. Most of the interviewees gave examples of nature-related practices even when they said they did not know the term Green Care.

When asked about the target groups of Green Care, most of the answers referred to the people in need of social assistance; mentally disabled people, the elderly, mental health patients, drug rehab patients as well as children and youngsters (Figure 5). The biggest groups mentioned were the elderly and children (mentioned in 23/36 answers received). The group “other” included target groups such as employees, farmers or other entrepreneurs and relatives of those who are being rehabilitated.

The payment of Green Care practices was found difficult. Many of the interviewees could not say who should act as a payer (24/51). From those who mentioned some actor, the most usual answer was the municipality. Other options mentioned were customers, projects or associations.

One of the questions aiming to collect information and opinions about Green Care as an added value. The main result was, that Green Care was commonly seen as an added value to services already offered by increasing diversity of the activities (Figure 6). Green Care or nature-based practices were noted to increase the activity of customers. Green Care was also seen as a possibility for secondary income for farms as well and opportunity to expand livelihoods alternatives in rural areas. Environmental education, good experiences and well-being were also outlined as a parts of added value.

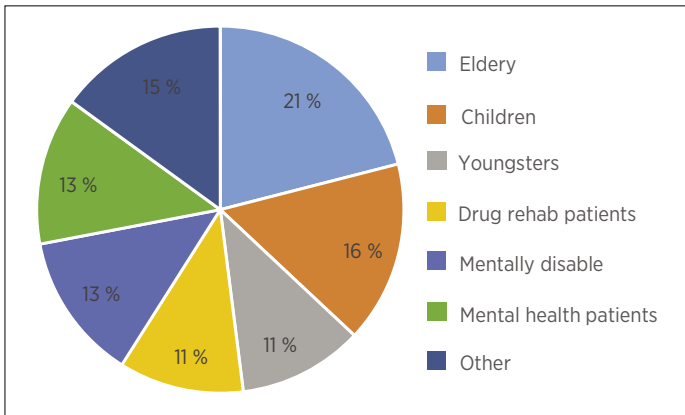


Figure 5. Green Care target groups according to interviewees. n=36

Interviewees found the biggest challenges for Green Care development to be negative attitudes and limited knowledge of the concept. Deficiency in resources and Green Care actors were commonly mentioned as well. Some employers, employees and authorities were perceived to have negative attitudes towards Green Care due to the lack of interest or knowledge towards the concept. Lack of time was also seen as problematic for already overloaded employees. Even though there is interest, there is not enough staff to start the activities because of the limited resources.

Interest toward taking part in regional Green Care development work, was also asked. About half of the interviewees expressed that they would like to take part in local Green care development work

(25/51). However, those who could name some particular role in the development work, were few. Many of the interviewees told that they would at least like to follow the development, but also take some part if needed. Some of them said they would like to test the practices at their own workplace or were ready to take part in new pilot projects. From the interviewees, 16 expressed a will to comment the upcoming regional Green Care strategy paper.

CONCLUSION OF THE SURVEYS

Both of the surveys aimed at figuring out the level of Green Care -awareness in South Ostrobothnia. Results from both questionnaires indicate that the term is still unfamiliar to many, even if the content is known. Green Care as a term includes the nature's healing or empowering impacts, which can be seen as differing from common nature-based practices. Interviewees were not always aware of this difference when asked about Green Care practices included in offered services. Many of the answers referred to nature-based practices - not only Green Care practices. This is important to notice when analyzing the results. Green Care practices were this common in most of the public and private sector's services offered. However, there is a need for clarifying the term and its content.

In the first survey for private sector companies, the main Green Care -related activities were animal-assisted practices and trips to forests or farms. Care dogs or other pets were commonly used for all target groups and liked among customers. For the development of Green Care, the practices applicable for different groups are important because those can be used among many actors. In the sec-

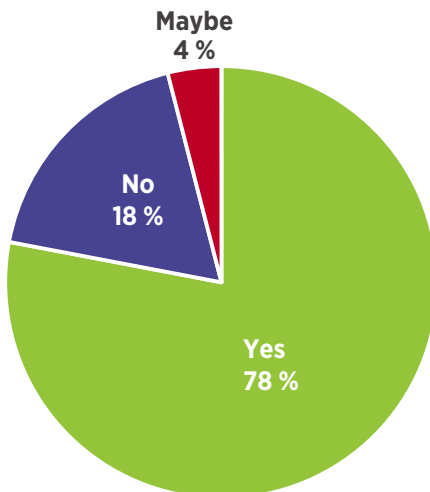


Figure 6. Does Green Care bring some added value to your work? (n=51)

ond survey for public actors, existing practices were not enquired. However, opinions for Green Care as an added value were enquired. The answers referred mainly to the diversity of activities and the refreshing impacts that Green Care offers to customers and employees. Similar answers were received from the first survey's question about the feedback customers have given regarding Green Care practices. These indicate that Green Care is seen as a potential and positive alternative for services offered.

Interviewees of both surveys identified education and knowledge of the concept as the main problems for Green Care development. The shortage of resources was another challenge commonly mentioned in both surveys. The need for more knowledge can also be related to the need for more resources. The concept and related practices are still unfamiliar for many. Green Care practices do not necessarily need much money or effort to be implemented. Trips to the forest, for example, can be completed with Green Care interventions with low expenses. However, the problem might be that there is no time and money to educate employees even regarding these simple activities. To solve this problem, it could be useful to take the education to the workplaces, if possible. In this way, limited time could be utilized efficiently. It was also noticed that many interviewees felt that they need professional gardeners or farmers to take care of the Green Care environments, because the interviewees do not have the know-how to grow plants themselves. This may again relate to the lack of understanding of Green Care practices. A simple garden can easily be maintained without professionals. However, based on these answers, it would be important to offer easy and cheap education in Green Care. Green Care practices that are simple to learn and maintain, could be a good way to start to increase common knowledge of the concept among different actors. Education could also help with the negative attitudes mentioned as a problem in the second survey. Possible suspicions can usually be reduced by increasing knowledge and understanding of the subject. It was commented by some of the interviewees that the term should be translated into Finnish for easier understanding and marketing of the concept.

In both surveys, the municipality or a municipality with the customer were seen as responsible for paying for Green Care practices. This is understandable as the biggest interviewee group were actors in the social or healthcare sector. Because of this, it is natural that Green Care is seen as a part of the possible services offered, not a specialty that

customers should pay for separately. The exceptions for these views were among representatives from the welfare tourism companies. They usually saw the customer as the main payer. Herein it is important to remember the two markets for Green Care presented in the introduction section (Figure 1), in which the responsibility for payment relates to the responsible [actor for organizing and offering the services] (Green empowering vs. Green rehabilitation and care). The possible group of actors in the market for Green Empowering was very small in these surveys (only welfare tourism companies). Thus only suggestive conclusions for this sector can be done. However, in both surveys the question of payment for Green Care was found difficult among interviewees.

Finally, the interviewees' activity in regional Green Care development work, can be expected to increase. In the second survey, an interest to be part of the development work, was expressed by half of the interviewees. In the first survey, an interest toward nature-based practices could be noticed among actors through the activities already implemented. By informing and educating local actors, interest toward Green Care could be increased. It was noticed from the surveys' results that the attitudes among actors in the public and private sectors toward Green Care are relatively positive. However, spreading knowledge requires more work, and possibilities to experience and try the Green Care practices locally, must be offered.

REFERENCES

- Finlex. (2011). Kuluttajaturvelliisuuslaki (Law for consumer safety) 22.7.2011/920. Retrieved from <http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2011/20110920>
- Haubehofer, D.K., Elings, M., Hassink, J. and Hine, R. E. (2010). The Development of Green Care in Western European Countries. *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*; 6 (2), 106-111.
- Herzog, T. R., Black, A. M., Fountaine, K. A. and Knotts, D. J. (1997). Reflection and attentional recovery as distinctive benefits of restorative environments. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 17, 165-170
- Kaplan, R. & Austin, M. (2003). Out in the country: sprawl and the quest for nature nearby. *Landscape & Urban Planning* 69, 235-243
- Kaplan, S. (1995). The restorative benefits of nature: toward an integrative framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 15, 169-182

- Korpela, M., Ylen, M., Tyrväinen, L. & Silvennoinen, H. (2010). Favourite green, waterside and urban environments, restorative experiences and perceived health in Finland. *Health Promotion International* 25(2), 200-208
- Korpela, M., Päivänen, J., Sairinen, R., Tienari, S., Wallenius, M. & Wiik, M. (2001). Melukylä vai mansikkapaikka? Asukkaiden ja asiantuntijoiden näkemyksiä asuinalueiden terveellisyydestä. *Suomen ympäristö* 467. 187 p. Helsinki, Ministry of the Environment.
- Maaseutu ja hyvinvoiva Suomi. (2009). Maaseutupoliittinen kokonaisohjelma 2009-2013 (Rural Policy Programme 2009-2013). A Publication of the Working Group on Rural Policy number 5 (Maaseutupolitiikan yhteistyöryhmän julkaisuja 5), The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.
- Mahdollisuuksien maaseutu. (2014). Maaseutupoliittinen kokonaisohjelma 2014-2020 (Rural Policy Programme 2014-2020). A Publication from the Ministry of Employment and Economy (työ- ja elinkeinoministeriön julkaisuja: Alueiden kehittäminen 9). The Ministry of Employment and Economy.
- Nilsson, K., Sangster, M., Gallis, C., Hartig, T., de Vries, S., Seeland, K., Schipperijn, J. (2011). *Forests, Trees and Human Health*. 427p. Springer New York Dordrecht Heidelberg London.
- Sempik, J., Hine, R., Wilcox, D. 2010. Green Care: A Conceptual Framework. A Report of the Working Group on the Health Benefits of Green Care COST 866, Green Care in Agriculture. Retrieved from: http://www.agrarumweltpaedagogik.ac.at/cms/upload/bilder/green_care_a_conceptual_framework.pdf
- Sievänen, T., Neuvonen, M. (2011). Luonnon virkistyskäyttö 2010. Metlan työraportteja 212 (Working Papers of the Finnish Forest Research Institute). Retrieved from: <http://www.metla.fi/julkaisut/workingpapers/2011/mwp212.htm>
- Sitra & MTT. (2013). Keskustelupaperi (Discussion paper): Kestävää hyvinvointia luonnosta. Retrieved from: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/148717783/Keskustelupaperi-Kestavaa-Hyvinvointia-Luonnosta-2013-6-12>
- Soini, K. and Vehmasto, E. (2014) Kohti suomalaista Green Care –toimitapaa. In Vehmasto, E. (Ed.). *Green Care –toimitavan suuntaviivat Suomessa* (pp. 8-28). MTT Kasvu 20. Retrieved from: <http://www.mtt.fi/mttkasvu/pdf/mttkasvu20.pdf>
- Soini, K., Ilmarinen, K., Yli-Viikari, A. and Kirveennummi, A. (2011). Green care sosiaalisena innovaationa suomalaisessa palvelujärjestelmässä. *Yhteiskuntapolitiikka*, 76 (3), 320–331
- Tyrväinen L., Silvennoinen H., Korpela K. & Ylen, M. (2007). Luonnon merkitys kaupunkilaisille ja vaikutus psyykkiseen hyvinvointiin. *Metlan työraportteja* 52, 57-77p

STRATEGY THROUGH STORYTELLING; A STRENGTHENED IDENTITY FOR THE RUPELSTREEK

THE REGIONAL NARRATIVE OF THE RUPELSTREEK AS PART OF THE STRATEGIC PROJECT

ELIZABETH VAN DEN BERGH⁶

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the regional narrative or the story of the Rupelstreek and check whether the three dimensions (socio-cultural, economic and environmental) of the golden triangle of sustainability are represented.

The regional narrative of the Rupelstreek is made up of the story of the Rupelstreek as well as a list of well-defined actions. The Rupelstreek is an area in the Province of Antwerp in Belgium, with five municipalities (Rumst, Boom, Niel, Schelle and Hemiksem) characterised by a tidal river and a history of clay extraction and brick production and pools in the former clay pits.

The regional narrative is an example of storytelling used for strategic purposes; in this case the strengthening of the regional identity to support tourism development. Information is obtained through desk research as well as interviews and a site visit. The regional narrative of the Rupelstreek is analysed following the dimensions of the golden triangle of sustainability.

The question that this paper will try to answer is “are the socio- cultural, economic and environmental dimensions present in the regional narrative?” The conclusion will confirm whether the three dimensions of the golden triangle of sustainability are represented in the regional narrative of the Rupelstreek.

Key words: Golden triangle of sustainability; Socio-cultural, environmental, economic; Sustainable tourism; Regional narrative; Strategic storytelling; Clay, water, landscape; Identity

INTRODUCTION

The regional narrative or strategic storytelling of the Rupelstreek is an essential part of the broader strategic projects 2010- 2013 and 2014- 2017 that focus on transforming the fragmented area into a coherent, recognisable area.⁷ The regional narrative started out as a small project and serves today as an anchorpoint for all strategic work in the Rupelstreek. The strategic projects are built on four pillars; mobility, experiencing the area, economy and nature and landscape.⁸

This paper will analyse the regional narrative, not the entire strategic projects of which the narrative is a part. The regional narrative is analysed through the model of the golden triangle of sustainability from the Project Management for Sustainable Development (PM4SD) methodology. It is worth noting that the regional narrative includes a list of recommended actions.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

‘Sustainability’ is a concept (Barbone, 2013), which inspires policy makers and tourism planners, but is still difficult to implement. The concept of ‘sustainable tourism’ has grown out of the concept of ‘sustainable development’. Literature is filled with numerous definitions of sustainability. Many dimensions of sustainability have emerged; the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines the tourism dimension as follows:

⁶ Tervuursteeenweg 431, 1982 Elewijt. montisonline.be

⁷ Ontwerpbureau Baileul, 2013

⁸ interview Verreet and Denissen

“Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. 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, biological diversity, and life support systems”, or expressed simply:

“Sustainable tourism is tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE OF SUSTAINABILITY

The UNWTO further (Barbone, 2013) stipulates that “sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.”

The principles are represented in the golden triangle of sustainability in the PM4SD methodology:

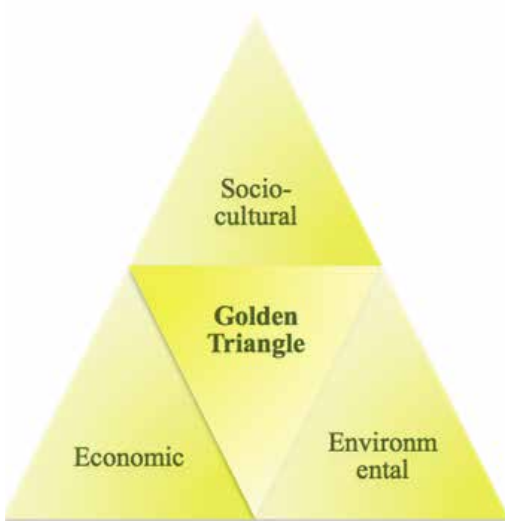


Image recreated from original image in (Barbone, 2013)

Thus, sustainable tourism should:

- 1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element of tourism development, maintaining essential ecological

processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity.

- 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to alleviating poverty.

It is clear from this concept that sustainable tourism does not refer to one type of tourism (e.g. nature tourism), but that all forms of tourism have the responsibility to become more sustainable.

BACKGROUND INFO ON THE RUPELSTREEK

The Rupelstreek in the Province of Antwerp in Belgium offers huge touristic potential because of the presence of water and unique landscapes. As a result of the extraction of clay in the past to make bricks and tiles, a lot of clay pits were dug. Today, these pits are filled with water and waste.

The river Rupel served as a waterway to transport bricks. Along the Rupel, one can walk or cycle on the dykes. In and around the former clay pits, new and wonderful fauna and flora has emerged. One brick factory is still active. The area's tourist attractions are developed around themes from the regional narrative; clay, water and landscape. The Rupelstreek has a unique history and current standing in Flanders. Over centuries, the tidal river Rupel has left its mark on the landscape. The Rupel comes with a very specific ecosystem featuring mudflats and associated fauna and flora.

Unique to Flanders is the fact that a geological layer (stratum) touches the surface in this area. This particular layer offers clay that is perfect for the production of bricks. Brick production activity reached its peak in the last century and saw the erection of dozens of brick factories along the river. At that time, demand for bricks was high, clay was available, around 5,000–6,000 workers ready to work, and the river Rupel was in the vicinity to transport the bricks on ships to places across Belgium and further afield where construction was bustling.⁹

⁹ Ontwerp bureau Baileul, 2013

The brick factories closed one by one at the end of the sixties, leaving the area desolated. Most of the retired brick factory workers stayed, spending their last years in poverty because of small pensions. A lot of industrial waste was dumped in the area between the late seventies and the early nineties.¹⁰ In 1986, the Province of Antwerp bought the domain De Schorre from the municipality Boom, following political agreement on the revaluation of the Rupelstreek. Hit by poverty, pollution and unemployment, this first step injected new life into the Rupelstreek. In the following years, De Schorre became a well-known recreational area. It is also the location of the renowned music festival Tomorrowland.¹¹ The two strategic projects mentioned earlier aim to further develop the area.

THE REGIONAL NARRATIVE

The story of the Rupelstreek is told in a handful of small museums and on information boards. There are often different and fragmented versions but the story is told with the best intentions by a few and with few resources at hand. Nowhere does the visitor get the full story; nowhere does the visitor find information about the context, connecting all the parts of the narrative. Yet the same narrative offers new opportunities for this extraordinary area, a place with a strong identity, a place where it is pleasant to live, work and visit. Because of these new opportunities, the regional narrative that connects people and places has been drafted for the Rupelstreek in the form of a brochure.

The Rupelstreek is characterised by the following:¹²

- A green area in the middle of a densely populated territory
- A common past among different municipalities
- Local and fragmented initiatives telling the story

THE REGIONAL NARRATIVE OF CLAY, WATER AND LANDSCAPE

The Rupelstreek has three assets¹³: clay, water and its landscape. These three elements form the basis of the regional narrative, linking locations, sub-themes and initiatives. The regional narrative or strategic storytelling is developed for the future based on what has been done already.

The focus of the regional narrative is on:

- The rediscovery of the Rupel, the water and new natural areas
- Economic activity
- Tourism and recreational activities

THE AIM OF THE REGIONAL NARRATIVE

A global narrative on how the region's inhabitants interact with their surroundings appeals to them. Every inhabitant knows a piece of the overall story. The regional narrative puts all these pieces together in a bigger context and gives more meaning to them. The regional narrative invites inhabitants to find out about other snippets of the story and helps them build a stronger regional identity. This principle also works for visitors. Many of the visitors are familiar with the area because of bike rides on the dykes, an event at De Schorre or because friends or family live there. These visitors could also be invited to discover the bigger picture via the regional narrative that covers Rupelstreek's three assets.

But a solid narrative on an area is not enough to attract day-trippers, let alone short-term overnight tourists. One goal is to develop touristic entrance gates to the area. Four specific places are suitable for this role:

1. Noeveren, which present the history of brick production in the area
2. The water tower of Rumst presenting active clay extraction
3. The abbey of Hemiksem, that could potentially become a tile museum with international attraction
4. Boom and De Schorre, an infrastructural junction. De Schorre is well-known already, with a dyke that is a favourite starting point for cyclists

As entrance gates, these sites point tourists to other sites for further exploration. This way, a network of referrals and sites emerges, making the entire area attractive for tourists. Each entrance gate will cover all three aspects of the narrative.¹⁴

It is important to note that the Rupelstreek does not profile itself as a destination as described in the PM4SD methodology. PM4SD refers to the concept of destination defined by the World Tourism Organisation, as follows: "A local tourism destination is a physical space in which a tourist spends at least one overnight. It includes tourism products such as support services and attractions and tourist resources within one day's return travel time. It has physical and administrative bounda-

¹⁰ Deposit of industrial waste, 2010

¹¹ Op ontdekking in de Rupelstreek, 2009

¹² Ontwerpbureau Baileul, 2013

¹³ Ontwerpbureau Baileul, 2013

¹⁴ Ontwerpbureau Baileul, 2013

ries defining its management, and images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness. Local destinations incorporate various stakeholders often including a host community, and can nest and network to form larger destinations.”¹⁵

OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDERS

POLICY:

- For the previous Strategic Project: only the municipalities Boom and Rumst
- For the current Strategic Project: all five municipalities: Rumst, Boom, Niel, Schelle, Hemiksem
- At municipality level: the aldermen and the officials of: spatial planning, environment, mobility, culture and tourism.

ENTREPRENEURS:

- NV Wienerberger (last active brick factory),
- the company Coeck (concrete) in Niel,
- Paul Cornelis (owner of industrial areas Hoek 76 and Scherpenhoek).

All these entrepreneurs collaborate with the Province of Antwerp to create an industrial area that is as sustainable as possible with attention for biodiversity.

- Cummins: a company in Rumst that collaborates for civic engagement. It is an American company that abides by American policy requesting every employee invests 1% of his time for society. The Province of Antwerp proposes projects and they put together a team for execution. They have for example collaborated on an inventory project on a heritage site in Hellegat.

NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT STAKEHOLDERS:

- Natuurpunt Rupelstreek
- Regionaal Landschap Rivierenland
- Agentschap Natuur en Bos

TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS:

- Toerisme Rupelstreek
- Toerisme Provincie Antwerpen

OCCASIONAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- Hiking clubs
- Heritage association in the region

ANALYSIS OF SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSIONS IN THE REGIONAL NARRATIVE

OPTIMAL USE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

The regional narrative focuses on the environmental resources present. Regarding the three elements of the regional narrative - clay, water and landscape - we see a clear reference to the environmental resources present. The clay extraction is at the origin of new landscapes and new eco-systems. Water is present as a river and in numerous pools.

A good example of how environmental resources are being put forward to visitors is the pedestrian and cyclist path that was created in 2011 within the first Strategic Project for the Rupel between the villages of Reet and Terhagen. This path is a shortcut for pedestrians and cyclists through a former clay extraction area. New and endangered fauna such as the natter jack, the crested newt and the sand martin have moved into the areas that have been recently exploited for clay winning. The department of Sustainable Environmental and Nature Policy has created pools for these species, together with the only remaining operational brickworks, Wienerberger. These pools can be seen from the path and are promoted among tourists. Migratory birds are drawn towards the former pits and water sources.

Walking through the natural area of Walenhoek, de Schorre or the clay pits of Rumst and Terhagen, visitors can discover different eco-systems and their particular flora and fauna. But to be sufficiently attractive to tourists, the landscape as well as the particular development of nature, should be explained in a way that is accessible to visitors and walkers. Visitors may see a green area, but probably do not wonder how it came about; the regional narrative helps by introducing the themes clay and water.

SOCIO-CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY OF HOST COMMUNITIES

The aim of the narrative is to strengthen the area's identity. A strong regional identity starts with a strong feeling of identity among its inhabitants. The regional narrative wants to establish exactly that. The socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities is therefore well respected via the storytelling of the regional narrative. The cultural

¹⁵ A Practical Guide to Tourism Destination Management, UNWTO, 2007

heritage is found in the recent history of the clay extraction and its surrounding brick production industry.

Some examples of places crucial in the preservation of socio-cultural authenticity of host communities:

- Café de Koophandel in Noeveren, still in business and managed by the same family for over 100 years is regarded as an important historic venue.
- Site Frateur in Noeveren, a well-preserved site for seeing the brick production process. More attention will be given to the display of the story of the brick production.
- Site Lauwers in Noeveren, similar to Site Frateur. Because they are similar the story of the life around the factory will be privileged here instead of the brick production process so both sites complement each other and offer more value to visitors.
- The objectives for the Museum Rupelklei is to bring a bar or a restaurant onsite, strengthen the link with the water and focus instead on geomorphology and natural development.
- The Abbey of Hemiksem hosts the Gilliot & Roelants Tile Museum as well as the National History museum Heymissen. After refurbishment and improved exploitation, this museum has the potential to draw a new kind of visitors to the regions, those interested in cultural heritage.

Together with other places of interest, the above examples focus entirely on the socio-cultural heritage and how to present it best to visitors. Existing initiatives often overlap; better organisation of these initiatives will ensure they complement each other; this is clear in the objectives for Site Lauwers and Site Frateur, both situated in Noeveren.

ECONOMIC DIMENSION VIA AUTHENTIC BARS AND RESTAURANTS

The economic dimension is an important aspect of the golden triangle. Tourism will only be sustainable when it is as well competitive. Sustainability is interdependent with competitiveness as stated by the World Tourism Organisation.

Some examples in the economic dimension of the regional narrative:

- Café de Koophandel, an authentic brick maker's bar in Noeveren is still open; a selection of regional dishes could be considered.
- Restaurant 't Steencyken situated next to the Nautical Visitor Centre and visible from the

dyke along the river Rupel. The Nautical Visitor Centre could enhance its focus on the aspect of water in the regional narrative. A better connection with the dyke should be established. Restaurant 't Steencyken could become more visibly part of the story of the water with a water themed stage setting.

- Tolhuis-Veer, a well-known restaurant and a former tollbooth, with an active ferry service adjacent to it, would be a good location to present the story of the transport on water.
- The existing bar at the Abbey of Hemiksem could attract more customers.
- One of the objectives for the Museum Rupelklei is to bring a bar or a restaurant onsite.

Actions to improve economic activity are mentioned in the regional narrative. However, more focus could be put on viable, long-term economic operations and how to ensure them. There is potential for paid water recreation activities on the river. Accommodation infrastructure for staying overnight is not mentioned in the regional narrative.

Social economy is an important part in the development of the area. This part is currently on hold because the approval of the new laws on social economy in Belgium was not obtained on time by the Belgian parliament before the elections of May 2014. There is already social employment in the region and this should be expanded. Improving mobility is also part of the regional narrative's action plan, although not developed in this paper. Improving mobility improves access to the area and this, in turn, is good for local economic activities.

CONCLUSION

All three dimensions of the golden triangle are present in the regional narrative. This makes the regional narrative a solid strategic contributor to the touristic development of the area and a tool for leadership and good governance. The environmental aspect is strongly represented in the regional narrative. Efforts should be sustained and tourists further attracted with good marketing and communication.

The socio-cultural aspect is strongly represented in the regional narrative. This aspect is important because of its direct link to identity building. Today the regional narrative and its list of actions truly engage inhabitants and visitors around one story.

The economic aspect is present, but it seems it could be strengthened. What is missing is an ex-

PLICIT mention of an active policy to employ people living in the area in the local tourism initiatives. Once more visitors start to come to the Rupelstreek, more business investment in for example recreational activities on the water or hotels might follow.

The strategic strength of the regional narrative is that it connects all touristic initiatives to one story of clay, water and landscape. Any new initiative can easily be linked and added to it because the narrative functions as an umbrella story.

The regional narrative therefore bears the seeds to further successfully transform what once was a poor, polluted and heavily fragmented area into an attractive area known for its beautiful nature, good bars and restaurants, recreational and sports activities and local history and culture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the PM4SD perspective, the use of indicators as an effective tool for addressing sustainability principles at project level for the Rupelstreek, is recommended.

The European Commission (European Tourism Indicator System Toolkit, 2013) has developed a “European tourism system of indicators for sustainable management (ETIS)”: a comprehensive system, a toolkit of indicators, simple to use, flexible and especially suitable for tourism destinations. ETIS is designed as a locally owned and led process for monitoring, managing, and enhancing the sustainability of a tourism destination. It would be sensible for the Rupelstreek to create a set of suitable set of indicators.

Examples of ETIS indicators are:

- The percentage of visitors who note that they are aware of destination sustainability efforts (Section A: Destination Management, Subsection 4: Information and Communication)
- Direct tourism employment as a percentage of total employment (Section B: Economic Value, Subsection 3: Quantity and Quality of Employment)
- Percentage of the destination covered by a policy or plan that protects cultural heritage (Sec-

tion C: Social and Cultural Impact, Subsection Protecting and Enhancing Cultural Heritage, Local Identity and Assets)

- Percentage of local enterprises in the tourism sector actively supporting protection, conservation, and management of local biodiversity and landscapes (Section D: Environmental Impact, Subsection Landscape and Biodiversity Protection)

The use of indicators would help the Rupelstreek become more sustainable and the process would allow all stakeholders to be involved. Thus creating even bigger leverage for sustainability.

REFERENCES

- Silvia Barbone, Jacobus Groot, Roger Horam, Vincenzo Imerti, Serena Liuni (2013) Project Management for Sustainable Development, Managing Tourism with Success. (p.37 – 43) United Kingdom: The Stationary Office.
- Ontwerpbureau Baileul (2013) De Rupelstreek. Samen Schrijven we ons verhaal [pdf]. Retrieved from: nl.maxigreen.eu/download-file/2
- Deposit of industrial waste (2010) Retrieved from: <http://www.30jaarovam.be/exhibits/show/milieubewustzijn/milieuproblemen-als-trigger/opslag-van-industrieel-afval>
- Ontwerpspeech: Op ontdekking in de Rupelstreek (2009) [pdf]. Retrieved from: http://www.provincieantwerpen.be/binaries/Toespraak%20op%20ontdekking%20in%20de%20Rupelstreek_08102009_tg_tcm7-128804.pdf
- European Sustainable Indicaotr System Toolkit (2013) European Commission [pdf]. Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/indicators/documents_indicators/eu_toolkit_indicators_en.pdf
- Interviews with Marieke Verreet, Policy Officer Landscape at the Province of Antwerp and Sabine Denissen, Senior adviseur publiekswerking Recreatie, Sport en Toerisme bij Provincie Antwerpen

HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

CASE STUDIES FROM LEBANON

ABOU ARRAGE, JAD¹⁶; KHREIS, ALI; EL-KURDI, AMAL; MIKHAEL, MAHA; AND NASR, FAHD¹⁷

ABSTRACT

The application of the Sustainable Development Concept (SDC) in the tourism industry has been debated for over twenty years. Many studies have been conducted on the social, environmental and economic sustainability of tourism destinations. However, little comprehensive research took into consideration the holistic approach of sustainable landscape and heritage management.

This paper reports on testing a holistic analytical framework for tourism sustainability in ten Lebanese landscapes and tourism destinations distinguished by their rich and diverse cultural and natural heritage. The studied areas offer many types of tourism services and activities with different management approaches. The analytical framework tackles four dimensions of sustainability: economic, social, environmental, and management, with emphasis on the ecological issues and on the role of local communities and municipalities in managing and sustaining their tourism resources.

The study was conducted between February 2013 and February 2014 by a team of researchers from the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management (FTHM) of the Lebanese University. In-depth interviews were made with 16 stakeholders in 10 different sites. The stakeholders are involved in the sites' management, preservation, as well as tourism services provision. They are represented by municipality members, nature reserves managers, tourism facilities owners, tourism experts and NGOs.

The research findings confirm the value of using a holistic sustainability measurement tool particularly in terms of balancing the environmental, social, economic, and management dimensions of sustainable tourism. The results highlight several concerns in achieving sustainable tourism management of cultural and natural landscapes in Lebanon. They also show the lack of innovative tools and new technologies used in landscape management and protection, especially in terms of biodiversity conservation. Moreover, they demonstrate the importance of legal protection frameworks and integrated management systems to ensure tourism development that respects all dimensions of sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Sustainable Tourism, Sustainability Indicators, Landscape Management, Destination Management.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism literature is replete with accounts of adverse social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts, caused by mass tourism. The list of observed impacts ranges from localized inflation, potential increases in crime, economic exploitation of local populations to social dislocation, destruction of heritage and severe environmental damages (Hall & Page, 2002; Mason, 2003; Budeanu, 2005; Schianetz et al, 2007). This is especially true in fragile landscapes such as coastal zones and rural areas where the lack of proper sustainable tourism management and the development of infrastructure can contribute to the degradation of the natural and cultural resources. However, if correctly planned and managed, tourism can also contribute to environmental protection and conservation of

¹⁶ Jad ABOU ARRAGE, Phone: 00961 3 567 880, Email: jad.abouarrage@

¹⁷ Lebanese University – Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management. Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management. Bir Hasan – UN Street. Salwa Abdel Hadi and Sons Building

biodiversity, and to the sustainable use of natural resources (Bruzzi et al, 2011).

In the last three decades concerns grew about the physical environments of destinations used for tourism. Mass tourism activities in the Mediterranean basin are causing irreversible damages on the natural and cultural landscape. Mediterranean regions are systematically losing their attractiveness. Moreover, it is becoming evident that, over the next few decades, more pressure will be placed on attractive Mediterranean landscapes. In this context, Lebanon's rural areas are experiencing important changes at many scales. The local communities' and governments' responses to these changes will have a significant influence on cultural diversity, ecological, economic and social values in the future. Sustaining these values while using them in the tourism industry cannot be achieved without building a common understanding of sustainable landscape and tourism management. The management of tourism destinations needs to be supported, realized and valued according to specific criteria and indicators. Therefore, the monitoring and evaluation of the tourism impacts on the landscape, through a clear list of sustainability indicators, is a necessity.

Nowadays, such approach cannot be implemented without the use of new technologies and innovative tools in the tourism sector, in order to help all stakeholders in the planning and decision making processes, and to guarantee sustainable landscape management. Therefore, the aim of this paper is twofold:

- A) Understand the gap that still seems to exist between tourism development and sustainable landscape management in Lebanon; and
- B) Show how local communities and municipalities can use sustainable tourism indicators in order to assess their actual situation and to base their future decisions and actions on new innovative approaches in heritage and landscape management.

The main question of the research is to explore, if there is any difference in the level of tourism sustainability between protected landscapes and non-protected ones. The hypothesis is "protected landscapes in Lebanon tend to be more sustainable in terms of tourism development and management".

CONCEPTUAL LINKAGES: LANDSCAPES, TOURISM, AND SUSTAINABILITY

The relationship between landscape and tourism is essential. This relationship emerges from the tradition and practice of both cultural geography and tourism studies and from the socio-cultural evolution of the landscapes of tourism per se (Terkenli, 2002; Terkenli, 2005).

An increasing human population and pressure on land use is damaging natural and cultural resources around the globe, resulting in the modification of the world's most significant landscapes. The conditions of these natural environments and man-made landscapes are very important in determining the viability and attractiveness of tourism destinations. Hence, the tourism industry has traditionally constituted a source of pressure on natural resources. Typically, the concern of tourism stakeholders has been how tourism development may provide enhanced opportunities for the effective management of environmentally sensitive areas and the preservation of unique landscapes. Therefore, designs and plans that will achieve a sustainable use and management of landscapes are becoming increasingly critical, especially in the tourism industry. (Dwyer et al, 2009; Gordon et al, 2009; Selman 2004)

Landscapes are an abundant natural resource and form an important basis for the tourism industry (Pérez, 2002). Lovell & Johnston (2009) define multi-functional landscapes as "landscapes which provide multiple environmental, social and economic functions and are able to achieve multiple societal needs including energy and food production, management of waste, conservation of biodiversity and the management of water quantity and quality across the landscape; the improvement of landscape heterogeneity and therefore resilience; and the provision of recreational opportunities". However, the improper planning and management of tourism and recreational activities can easily disturb fragile landscapes that may eventually lose their values and attractiveness.

The concept of landscape health is based on principles of landscape ecology and function. Landscape health is defined by the capacity of landscapes to: (i) maintain basic processes such as capturing energy, retaining water and cycling nutrients; (ii) provide habitats, food, and shelter, for sustaining populations of all native animals, plants and microorganisms at appropriate scales in time and space and (iii) provide people with their cultur-

al, spiritual, aesthetic and livelihood needs (Whitehead et al, 2000). According to Selman (2004) the maintenance of valued landscapes often requires the active collaboration of local communities in their planning, management and sustainable development.

The tourism industry has been repeatedly denounced as an exploiter, a defiler of landscapes, and as a modern medium of globalizing or homogenizing standards of identity and development for contemporary landscapes (Terkenli, 2005).

The issue of sustainable tourism development has received substantial scholarly attention in the past three decades, and various definitions have been formulated. A widely used one is that of the United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO): "Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. 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, biological diversity and life support systems" (WTO, 2001). Thus, sustainability in the context of tourism, means regulating the use of tourist resources so that they are not consumed, depleted, or polluted in such a way as to be unavailable for the use by future generations of tourists. Sustainable tourism is also oriented toward the economic viability of the tourism industry, referred to as the "economic sustainability of tourism" or "tourism imperative". It can also refer to a business that perseveres and flourishes over a long period of time or an industry that acknowledges biophysical and social limits and intentionally remains small in scope. (Baros & David, 2007; Burton, 1995; Holden 2000; Larson & Poudyal, 2012; McCool & Moisey, 2008)

Ólafsdóttir & Runnström (2009) consider that the expansion of tourism provides innovative resources for an economic boost to many peripheral communities. However, the natural ecosystems are extremely vulnerable. It is therefore of vital importance for such communities to plan the growth of tourism sustainably. To achieve sustainable tourism development in fragile environments, tourism should be maintained in a way that would not cause negative disturbance to nature, culture, society and economy. Therefore, tourism development is sustainable only when none of the core components are neglected over others. (Baros & David, 2007; McGehee et al, 2013)

In order to secure long-term benefits from tourism, decision makers need straightforward plan-

ning tools, with which they can monitor the impact of tourism with regard to environmental, cultural and economic sustainability. Variations in the sensitivity and vulnerability of both natural and cultural heritage of each site, must be recognized and mapped. The challenge is to provide the infrastructure that tourists need, as well as to identify viable strategies for sustainable use of natural resources. (Ólafsdóttir & Runnström, 2009)

Since the Rio World Summit of 1992 and with the emergence of the sustainable tourism paradigm, tourism practitioners and scholars have made many researches understand how tourism sustainability can be objectively achieved, assessed and measured. Ko (2005) argues that if sustainable development is one of tourism industry's major contemporary objectives, then the industry needs to be able to measure its performance and impacts. Several researches on tourism sustainability indicators assume the existence of an integrated relationship between the social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Therefore, destinations' managers should adopt sustainability principles to underpin tourism development. This is consistent with the widespread view that destinations should measure tourism success, not by the number of visitors, but by "yield" per visitor, defined narrowly as an economic measure or more broadly as incorporating economic, social and environmental dimensions (Dwyer et al, 2009). Mitchell et al (2013) consider that there is much social and political support for tourism sustainability, but very little empirical research into its value, particularly in public sector organizations. Many studies proved that local authorities play an important role in tourism management through planning activities, policies and programs (Richins, 2000; Andriotis, 2002; Harril, 2004; Emilsson & Hjelm, 2007; Bruzzi et al, 2011). Moreover, recent studies have shown the important links between governance features and the sustainability performance of tourism with the need for multi-stakeholder debates that should consider these links (Dinica, 2009; Eagles; 2009). Therefore, besides the three main dimensions of sustainability, the management and governance dimensions will be also adopted in this study. (Figure 1)

From an environmental perspective, Bruzzi et al (2011) link the tourism sustainability concept with the need to harmonize the protection of the environment with satisfactory economic and social development. The misuse of natural resources can cause a degradation of the tourist appeal of the destination, bringing it finally to economic decline. Hence, environmental sustainability plays an important role in sustainable tourism because it is



Figure 1. Integrated approach of tourism sustainability indicators

the precondition and assessment standard. (Jiang, 2009)

To understand how the sustainable tourism model may function in this context, this study gives specific attention to the measurement of tourism sustainability indicators, especially in terms of management and local governance. In 2004, the WTO referenced Sustainable Indicators as "Information sets which are formally selected for a regular use to measure changes in key assets and issues of tourism destinations and sites" (WTO, 2004). However, the utilization of sustainability indicators in the tourism industry is a complex process. In order to measure and value such indicators in an accurate and efficient way, baseline information of tourism policies should be provided, especially for a highly fragmented tourism sector, where impacts are often hidden by this fragmentation. Secondly, indicators are supposed to streamline statistical systems and data collection - in an industry where the weakness of the statistical data is often underlined. Thirdly, the construction of indicators is, at least in theory, linked with a decision-making process, and should be developed alongside with a policy process. (Dubois, 2005)

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This study combines qualitative-descriptive and quantitative-analytical methods as well as the hypothetical deduction method. The study was conducted between February 2013 and February 2014 by the HELAND team at the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management (FTHM) of the Lebanese University. The HELAND project is funded by the European Neighborhood Partnership Ini-

tiative (ENPI) involving 10 partners from 6 Mediterranean countries. The duration is 40 months (2012-2015). The main objectives of the project are the exploitation and promotion of cultural heritage and landscape protection to foster quality and sustainable tourism. HELAND aims at addressing the needs and challenges of concerned stakeholders in the management of touristic sites in order to enhance their capacities in the field of sustainable tourism through the improvement of management tools, the adequate investment in new technologies, and the adoption of innovative policies.

Based on a literature review and field observations, 10 important Lebanese landscapes, considered as tourism destinations, were selected. The choice of the sites took into consideration their significant socio-cultural and ecological values and their important contribution to the rural tourism sector in Lebanon. To assess and measure the sustainability of each site, a set of indicators were used and regrouped in four dimensions, as determined in Figure-1. Each dimension contained a number of criteria based on the following considerations:

1. The management dimension analyses the capacity of the site-destination to engage in tourism development and management. Tourism is a people-oriented business and depends on planning and quality management. Understanding the actual and potential tourism management schemes and procedures for a destination is critical in determining to what degree a community can meaningfully participate in the development of sustainable tourism.
2. The socio-cultural dimension gauges the community's involvement and acceptance of tourism activities within its landscape.
3. The economic dimension explores the positive impact of tourism on the local economy and its potential to address rural development problems such as employment, income generation, and poverty alleviation.
4. The environmental dimension measures the influence of tourism infrastructure, services, and activities on the natural resources and potential benefits for landscape protection and biodiversity conservation.

Each of the four dimensions gives rise to a number of indicators as essential factors in assessing and measuring tourism sustainability. These indicators are derived from a considerable extent of literature on the various positive and negative impacts of tourism and from various tourism sustainability frameworks and matrixes. (WTO, 1993; WTO, 1995; WTO, 1998; WTO, 2004; Dubois, 2005; Gut-

ierrez et al, 2005; Ko, 2005; Cernat & Gourdon, 2007; OECD, 2008; Jovicic & Ilic, 2010; Jovici, 2013; EU, 2013).

A draft version of 88 indicators was tested on the field before elaborating the final list with a total of 51 indicators. The final list and the quantitative analysis of the indicators took into account the lack of quantitative data in Lebanon, especially in the rural tourism industry. The following tables (1-2-3-4-5) show the detailed list of indicators used. In order to transform the qualitative indicators into a

measurable form to assess the level of sustainability, two different scoring systems were adopted. For the Yes or No answers the following scores were used: 0 if not existing, 1 if existing but needs improvement, and 2 if existing and well governed and managed. As for the level of application, a Likert scale was used with the following scores: 0 for weak, 1 for fair, 2 for good, and 3 for very good. Each dimension was weighted in percentage, depending on the total score, so that the overall sustainability score totalled 100%.

Table 1. Indicators for Management Sustainability

Number of indicators: 11	Scoring system			
Existence	Not existing	Exists but needs improvement	Exists and is well governed and managed	
Existence of a management organization	0	1	2	
Existence of a strategic plan	0	1	2	
Existence of a management plan	0	1	2	
Existence of an action plan	0	1	2	
Existence of a monitoring and evaluation plan	0	1	2	
Existence of databases	0	1	2	
Existence of safety and security measures	0	1	2	
Qualitative assessment	Weak	Fair	Good	Very good
Consultative management	0	1	2	3
Communication of sustainability efforts to visitors	0	1	2	3
Networking and partnerships	0	1	2	3
Databases information quality	0	1	2	3
Total score: 26 (Weight 20%)				
Evaluation: 0-4 very weak; 4.1-8 weak; 8.1-12 fair; 12.1-16 good; 16.1-20 very good				

Table 2. Indicators for Economic Sustainability

Number of indicators: 7	Scoring system			
Existence	Not existing	Exists but needs improvement	Exists and is well governed and managed	
Existence of training programs	0	1	2	
Qualitative assessment	Weak	Fair	Good	Very good
Tourism contribution to the destinations' economy	0	1	2	3
Income distribution from tourism	0	1	2	3
Visitors spending in the destination	0	1	2	3
Tourism contribution to local employment	0	1	2	3
Utilization of local resources, fair trade goods, and services	0	1	2	3
Gender equity in employment	0	1	2	3
Total score: 20 (Weight 15%)				
Evaluation: 0-3 very weak; 3.1-6 weak; 6.1-9 fair; 9.1-12 good; 12.1-15 very good				

Table 3. Indicators for Environmental Sustainability

Number of indicators: 22	Scoring system			
Existence	Not existing	Exists but needs improvement	Exists and is well governed and managed	
Existence and usage of local/soft mobility transport services	0	1	2	
Existence of climate change adaptation strategy or planning	0	1	2	
Existence of Solid Waste Management plan	0	1	2	
Existence of Wastewater Management plan	0	1	2	
Existence of fresh water management plan	0	1	2	
Existence of landscape protection scheme	0	1	2	
Existence of biodiversity protection scheme	0	1	2	
Existence of biodiversity management plan	0	1	2	
Existence of biodiversity databases	0	1	2	
Existence of biodiversity monitoring and evaluation plan	0	1	2	
Qualitative assessment	Weak	Fair	Good	Very good
Involvement of tourism enterprises in climate change mitigation schemes	0	1	2	3
Solid Waste reduction and recycling	0	1	2	3
Wastewater treatment	0	1	2	3
Utilization of new technologies to reduce water consumption	0	1	2	3
Utilization of renewable energies in tourism	0	1	2	3
Landscape protection level	0	1	2	3
Biodiversity protection level	0	1	2	3
Tourism enterprises supporting nature conservation	0	1	2	3
Quality of information in the biodiversity databases	0	1	2	3
Respect of the carrying capacity of the site	0	1	2	3
Utilization of new technologies in landscape management and monitoring	0	1	2	3
Utilization of new technologies in nature conservation and monitoring	0	1	2	3
Total score: 56 (Weight 43%)				
Evaluation: 0-9 very weak; 9.1-18 weak; 18.1-26 fair; 26.1-35 good; 35.1-43 very good				

Table 4. Indicators for Socio-cultural Sustainability

Number of indicators: 11	Scoring system			
Existence	Not existing	Exists but needs improvement	Exists and is well governed and managed	
Existence of databases on cultural sites	0	1	2	
Existence of schemes for cultural sites protection	0	1	2	
Existence of code of conduct	0	1	2	
Qualitative assessment	Weak	Fair	Good	Very good
Residents satisfaction with tourism in the destination	0	1	2	3
Gender equity in tourism management and employment	0	1	2	3
Accessibility for disabled	0	1	2	3
Cultural databases information quality	0	1	2	3
Integration of cultural sites in tourism products	0	1	2	3
Level of cultural sites protection	0	1	2	3
Level of application of the code of conduct	0	1	2	3
Level of conflict resolution arising from tourism	0	1	2	3
Total score: 30 (Weight 22%)				
Evaluation: 0-4.5 very weak; 4.6-9 weak; 9.1-13 fair; 13.1-17.5 good; 17.6-22 very good				

Table 5. Overall Sustainability

Dimensions	Weighted score
Management sustainability	20%
Economic sustainability	15%
Environmental sustainability	43%
Social sustainability	22%
Total score: 100%	
Evaluation: 0-20% very weak; 21-40% weak; 41-60% fair; 61-80% good; 81-100% very good	

Between February 2013 and September 2013, the HELAND research team at the FTHM conducted 10 field visits to the 10 selected sites for data collection. In-depth semi-structured interviews were held with 16 key informants involved in landscape management and tourism development. The organizations and institutions represented included

municipalities, nature reserves, tourism businesses, and non-governmental associations. Between October 2013 and December 2013, the key informants' interviews, the field observations, and the collected data were transcribed and entered into the analytical model for processing.

LANDSCAPES AND TOURISM IN LEBANON: BETWEEN DEGRADATION AND CONSERVATION

Located on the eastern Mediterranean, Lebanon is in many ways a microcosm of the urbanizing Mediterranean problematic (Makhzoumi et al, 2012a). Although small (10,452 square kilometres), Lebanon is known for its rich and diverse cultural and natural heritage. The Lebanese rural landscape is a combination of natural ecosystems and cultural heritage, characterized by a rich and diverse mosaic of woodland patches and scattered villages in addition to terraced perennial cropping of olives trees, fruit trees, and vineyards. Four principal factors have interacted to produce the exceptionally rich and unique landscapes of the country: biogeography, geology, ecology and historic human settlements. Coastal areas, mountains, hills, valleys, the inland plain, and rivers provide a climatic diversity that harbours a wealthy biodiversity with many endangered and endemic species.

Strongly affected by land management plans, the natural and cultural landscapes of Lebanon are facing tremendous challenges. Land management practices contribute to the erosion of the country's natural resources and landscapes (soil, forests, caves, rivers, springs, mountain peaks, valleys, etc.). Landscape degradation problems are pertinent for rural and mountain areas, where traditional agriculture systems are still the main carriers of values and landscape pattern.

Failure in planning and management are further aggravated by political marginalization that has left rural communities in Lebanon in need of social and economic development. Civil war (1975-1990), Israeli occupation in south Lebanon (1978-2000), unbalanced reconstruction and development plans neglecting the three dimensions of sustainability (1990-2006), and the 33 days war in July 2006, depopulated much of the countryside, disrupted traditional rural lifestyles and undermined traditional rural economies. (Makhzoumi et al, 2012b)

The old land use systems have, for the last fifty years, been under a strong processes of change towards simplification and homogenization, leading to a decrease in both authenticity and multifunctionality. Over the years, the landscapes of Lebanon have been threatened by a multitude of factors that have caused the loss of biodiversity, the fragmentation or destruction of habitats and different forms of pollution. Human activities have caused pollution through urban sprawl, land en-

croachment, industrialization, improper management and discharge of wastewater and solid waste. Among these human activities, uncontrolled tourism infrastructure development and mass tourism forms constitute an increasing pressure and threat on the natural and cultural resources.

In response to the degradation of the natural landscape, between 1992 and 2013 the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Tourism designated a number of Protected Areas. In 2013, the existing classification of Protected Areas in Lebanon included 13 Nature Reserves, 3 UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves, 24 Natural sites, 5 Himas (tradition way of landscape protection by municipalities and local communities), 12 Protected Forests, 14 Touristic Sites. In total, these protected areas cover around 6% of the Lebanese territory. A multitude of other landscapes and natural landmarks (forests, valleys, rivers basins, mountain peaks, caves, specific geological landforms, etc.) remain without any form of protection, and are facing many challenges. Most of these sites constitute an important asset for the tourism industry in Lebanon, in particular rural and nature-based tourism forms.

The tourism industry in Lebanon has always been an important economic sector, constituting one of the main sources of income and employment. Between 1990 and 2002 tourism has rebuilt itself in parallel with the reconstruction of the basic infrastructure of the country. Tourism services and activities grew mainly in urban and coastal cities, while they remained neglected in most of the rural and mountainous areas. Since 2002, despite the unstable political situation in the last ten years, the Lebanese tourism industry has witnessed positive changes. New market trends are appearing and new tourism types are prospering all over the country, particularly nature and adventure-based tourism, which take place in many rural areas and natural landscapes. To benefit from this trend, all concerned stakeholders need to be prepared to welcome more domestic and international tourists in the near future. Tourism development in rural areas and natural landscapes should be planned, and the management of the attractions should be improved, in order to prevent damages to natural and cultural heritage, and to maximize benefits for local communities.

The application of the SDC in the public sector in Lebanon, is becoming more and more significant. In the last five years, an important number of municipalities initiated local development projects with support from local and international donors. However, these projects remain scattered in

time and space. Very few municipalities integrate sustainable development dimensions in long-term visions and policies, especially when it comes to landscape management and tourism development. Moreover, the SDC is not clearly reflected in the managerial procedures and skills of municipalities' members and employees. In this context, this study will focus on 10 major cultural and natural landscapes in Lebanon used as tourism destinations. The studied sites are spread all over the

country: eight are located in mountainous areas on the Western slopes of Mount Lebanon facing the Mediterranean sea; and two are located in the Beqaa plain. Each landscape offers one or several types of touristic services and activities (cultural, nature-based, adventure and sport, educational, and recreational tourism), with different land ownership patterns, management systems, and protection schemes. The following table shows the main characteristics of the 10 sites (Table 6).

Table 6. Characteristics of the studied landscapes and tourism destinations

Site name	Type, legal protection, year of establishment	Management & Governance	Tourism exploitation	Land ownership
Shouf Biosphere Reserve (SBR)	Nature Reserve Law 1996	Ministry of Environment Reserve Committee Reserve management team	Open for tourists since 2000	Public
Bkassine Pine Forest (BPF)	Protected Forest Decision 1997	Ministry of Agriculture Local Municipality Private (business)/Public management system since 2013	Open for tourists since 2000	Public
Baatara Pothole (BP)	Protected site Decision 2004	Local Municipality Private (NGO)/Public management system since 2012	Open for tourists since 1996	Private
Tannourine Cedars Forest Nature Reserve (TCFNR)	Nature Reserve Law 1999	Ministry of Environment Reserve Committee Reserve management team	Open for tourists since 2004	Public
Bcharreh Cedars Forest (BCF)	World Heritage Site & Protected Forest Decree 1997	Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Tourism Ministry of Culture Local committee	Open for tourists since 1998	Private
Qadisha Valley (QV)	World Heritage Site & Protected Site Decree 1997	Ministry of Tourism Ministry of Culture Local committee Municipalities	Open for tourists since 1998	Public (20%) Private (80%)
Kfardebian Village (KFR)	No protection	Municipality Local community Ministry of Tourism for the Faqra ruins	-Faqra ruins open for tourists since 1996 -Ouyoun el Siman open for tourists since 1960 - Faqra bridge restricted access and controlled by the municipality	Private (Except for Faqra ruins and the high mountain of Ouyoun el Siman)
Aammq Wetland (AW)	Private protection 1996	Land owners	Exclusively for educational tourism and research	Private
Taanayel Farm (TAN)	Private protection 2008	Land owners in partnership with local NGO	Open for tourists since 2009	Private
Baskinta village (BKT)	No protection	Municipality Local community Local NGO for the Baskinta Literary Trail	-Open for tourists since 1960s -BLT open for tourists since 2008	Private

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study findings are presented in the following tables and figures with a comparison of the 10 stud-

ies landscapes. Table 7 and Figure.2 show the management sustainability level.

Table 7. Comparison of the management sustainability

Indicator	Scores of the sites/landscapes									
	SBR	BPF	BP	TCFNR	BCF	QV	KFR	AW	TAN	BKT
Existence of a management organization	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1
Existence of a strategic plan	2	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	2	0
Existence of a management plan	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	1	2	0
Existence of an action plan	2	2	1	2	2	1	0	0	2	0
Existence of a monitoring and evaluation plan	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
Existence of databases	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
Existence of safety and security measures	2	2	0	2	2	1	1	1	2	1
Consultative management	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	1
Communication of sustainability efforts to visitors	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	0
Networking and partnerships	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	3	1
Databases information quality	2	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	2	0
<i>Total score (over 26)</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>4</i>
Weighted score (20%)	18.5	13.8	10.0	16.2	13.8	10.0	5.4	9.2	17.7	3.1
Evaluation	VG	G	F	VG	G	F	W	F	VG	VW

VW: very weak, W: weak, F: Fair, G: good, VG: very good.

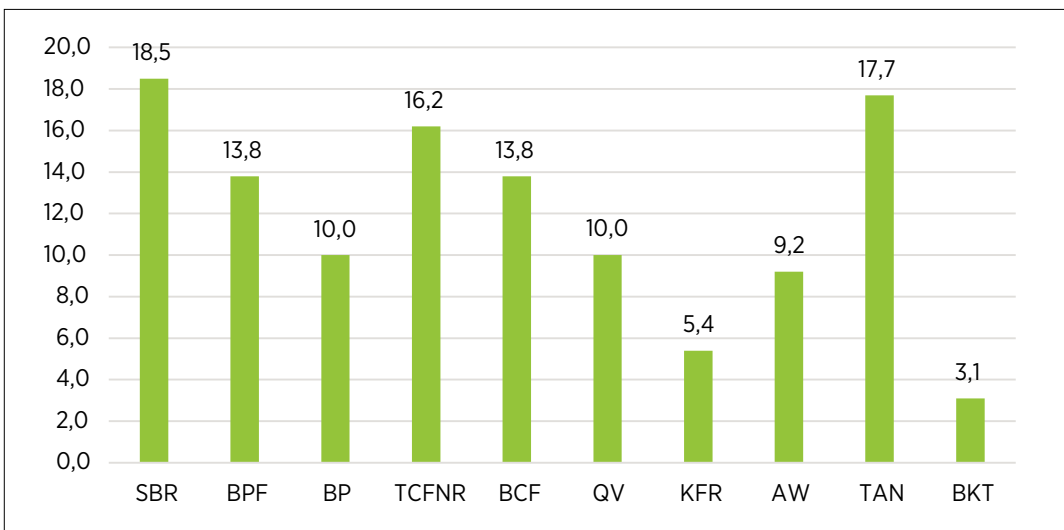


Figure 2. Comparison of the management sustainability

The Shouf Biosphere Reserve, the Tannourine Cedars Forest Nature Reserve, and Taanayel Farm have very good management sustainability (18.5/20, 16.2/20, and 17.7/20). Baskinta and Kfardebiane villages have very weak and weak management sustainability (3.1/20 and 5.4/20). At this level of sustainability, the hypothesis is ac-

cepted since the SBR and the TCFNR benefit from public and legal protection schemes, and the TAN has a private protection; while KFR and BKT do not benefit from any public or private protection schemes. Table 8 and Figure 3 show the economic sustainability level.

Table 8. Comparison of the economic sustainability

Indicator	Scores of the sites/landscapes									
	SBR	BPF	BP	TCFNR	BCF	QV	KFR	AW	TAN	BKT
Existence of training programs	2	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	1
Tourism contribution to the destinations' economy	3	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	2
Income distribution from tourism	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1
Visitors spending in the destination	2	2	1	1	3	1	2	1	2	2
Tourism contribution to local employment	3	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Utilization of local resources, fair trade goods, and services	3	3	1	2	2	1	1	2	3	1
Gender equity in employment	3	3	1	2	2	1	1	2	3	1
<i>Total score (over 20)</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>10</i>
Weighted score (15%)	13.5	12.8	4.5	9.0	11.3	6.0	7.5	7.5	12.0	7.5
Evaluation	VG	VG	W	F	G	W	F	F	G	F

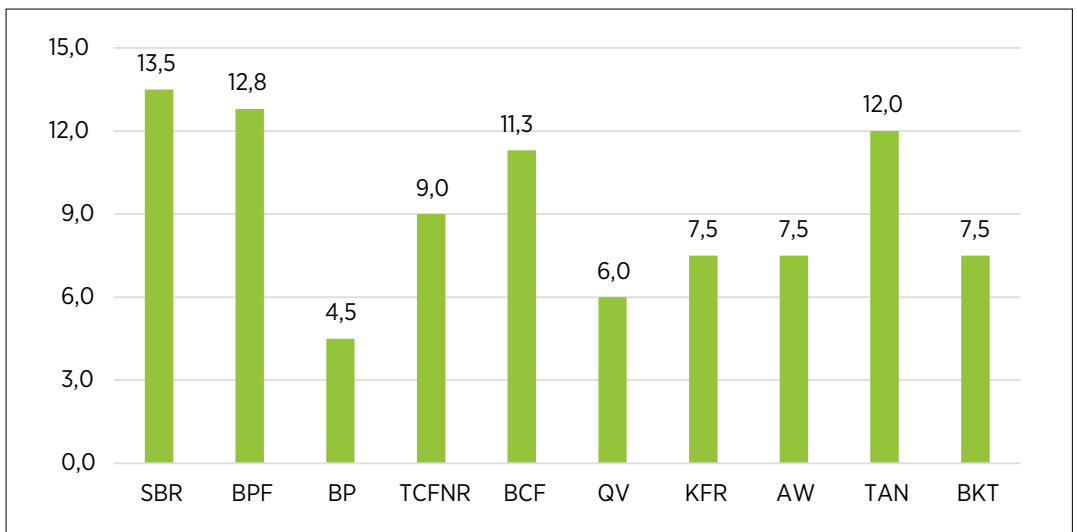


Figure 3. Comparison of the economic sustainability

Shouf Biosphere Reserve and Bkassine Pine Forest have very good economic sustainability (13.5/15 and 12.8/15). Baatar Pothole and Qadisha Valley have weak economic sustainability (4.5/15 and 6/15). At this level, the hypothesis is rejected since all the four sites benefit from public and legal protection schemes. Moreover, we notice that the SBR

benefiting from the highest protection scheme (by law) has the highest economic sustainability level, while TCFNR which also benefit from protection by law has a fair economic sustainability level (9/15). Table 9 and Figure 4 show the environmental sustainability level.

Table 9. Comparison of the environmental sustainability

Indicator	Scores of the sites/landscapes									
	SBR	BPF	BP	TCFNR	BCF	QV	KFR	AW	TAN	BKT
Existence and usage of local/soft mobility transport services	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
Existence of climate change adaptation strategy or planning	2	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	2	0
Existence of Solid Waste Management plan	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Existence of Wastewater Management plan	2	2	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	1
Existence of fresh water management plan	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	2	2	0
Existence of landscape protection scheme	2	0	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	0
Existence of biodiversity protection scheme	2	0	0	2	2	1	0	2	1	0
Existence of biodiversity management plan	2	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	0
Existence of biodiversity databases	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	1	0
Existence of biodiversity monitoring and evaluation plan	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	0
Involvement of tourism enterprises in climate change mitigation schemes	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Solid Waste reduction and recycling	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Wastewater treatment	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Utilization of new technologies to reduce water consumption	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
Utilization of renewable energies in tourism	2	2	2	2	1	1	0	2	2	0
Landscape protection level	3	2	2	3	2	1	1	2	3	0
Biodiversity protection level	3	0	0	3	2	1	0	2	2	0
Tourism enterprises supporting nature conservation	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Quality of information in the biodiversity databases	3	0	0	3	0	1	0	2	1	0
Respect of the carrying capacity of the site	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	3	2	1
Utilization of new technologies in landscape management and monitoring	3	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	3	0
Utilization of new technologies in nature conservation and monitoring	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	0
<i>Total score (over 56)</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>3</i>
Weighted score (43%)	32.3	15.4	13.8	26.9	15.4	10.8	5.4	22.3	29.2	2.3
Evaluation	G	W	W	G	W	W	VW	F	G	VW

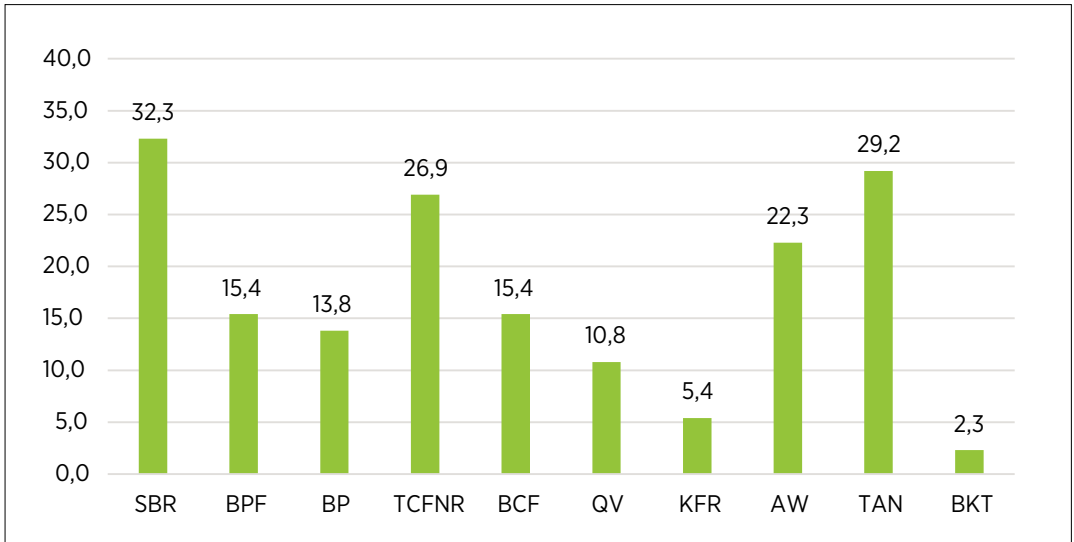


Figure 4. Comparison of the environmental sustainability

None of the studied sites have a very good environmental sustainability level. The Shouf Biosphere Reserve, Tannourine Cedars Forest Nature Reserve, and Taanayel Farm have good environmental sustainability (32.3/43, 26.9/43, and 29.2/43); Ammiq Wetland has a fair environmental sustainability (22.3/43), and the other 6 landscapes have weak and very weak environmental sustainability.

For this dimension, the hypothesis can be accepted since the SBR, TCFNR, TAN, and AW are all protected by law and by private initiatives; while the two sites with the lowest environmental sustainability, BKT (2.3/43) and KFR (5.4/43), do not benefit from any form of protection. Table 10 and Figure 5 show the social sustainability level.

Table 10. Comparison of the socio-cultural sustainability

Indicator	Scores of the sites/landscapes									
	SBR	BPF	BP	TCFNR	BCF	QV	KFR	AW	TAN	BKT
Existence of databases on cultural sites	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Existence of schemes for cultural sites protection	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Existence of code of conduct	2	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	2	1
Residents satisfaction with tourism in the destination	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Gender equity in tourism management and employment	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1
Accessibility for disabled	2	2	0	0	2	1	1	1	3	1
Cultural databases information quality	3	2	1	1	3	3	2	2	2	3
Integration of cultural sites in tourism products	3	1	0	1	3	3	1	1	2	3
Level of cultural sites protection	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Level of application of the code of conduct	3	0	0	2	2	1	1	2	3	1
Level of conflict resolution arising from tourism	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	3	1
<i>Total score (over 30)</i>	25	15	9	13	22	17	15	15	23	16
Weighted score (22%)	18.3	11.0	6.6	9.5	16.1	12.5	11.0	11.0	16.9	11.7
Evaluation	VG	F	W	F	G	F	F	F	G	F

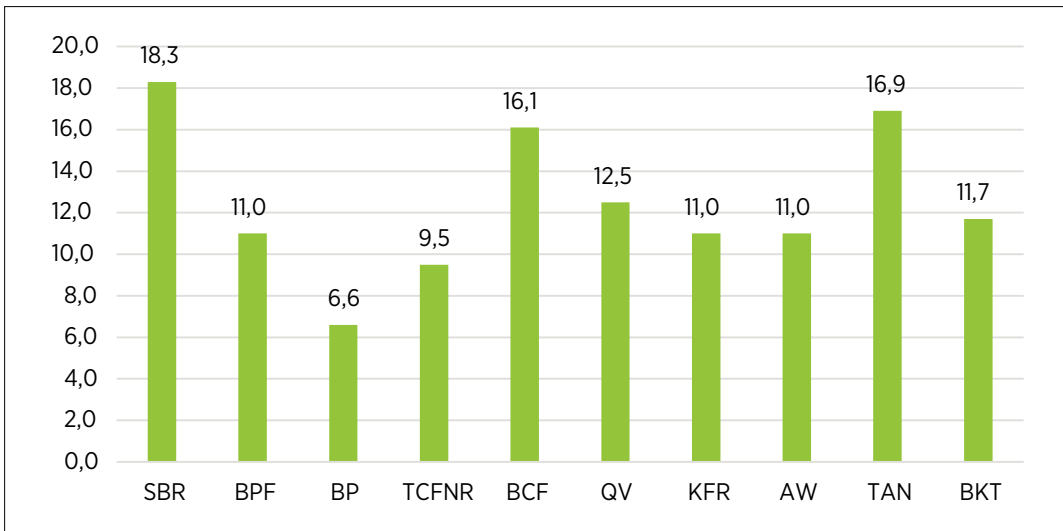


Figure 5. Comparison of the socio-cultural sustainability

The Shouf Biosphere Reserve has a very good social sustainability (18.23/22). Bcharreh Cedars Forest and Taanayel Farm have good social sustainability (16.1/22 and 16.9/22). Only Baatarah Pothole has a weak socio-cultural sustainability. Among the sites assessed as fair in terms of socio-cultural sustainability, we have protected (BPF, TCFNR, QCF, AW) and non-protected (BKT and KFR) landscapes. Therefore, for this dimension, the hypothesis is rejected.

The overall sustainability measure, with the four dimensions combined, shows that SBR has the highest score and was considered a “Very Good” landscape where social, environmental, and economic dimensions are being managed in a professional way with a clear strategy and objectives. The TCFNR and TAN are considered “Good” landscapes in relation to sustainability issues. The scores of the BPF, the BCF, and AW gave them a “Fair” sustainability evaluation. As for the landscape sustainability of the BP, the QV and BKT it was evaluated as “Weak” (Table 11).

Table 11. Comparison of the overall Sustainability

Dimension	Weighted score	SBR	BPF	BP	TCFNR	BCF	QV	KFR	AW	TAN	BKT
Management sustainability	20%	18.5	13.8	10.0	16.2	13.8	10.0	5.4	9.2	17.7	3.1
Economic sustainability	15%	13.5	12.8	4.5	9.0	11.3	6.0	7.5	7.5	12.0	7.5
Environmental sustainability	43%	32.3	15.4	13.8	26.9	15.4	10.8	5.4	22.3	29.2	2.3
Social sustainability	22%	18.3	11.0	6.6	9.5	16.1	12.5	11.0	11.0	16.9	11.7
Overall sustainability	100%	82.6	53.0	34.9	61.6	56.6	39.3	29.3	50.0	75.8	24.6
Evaluation		VG	F	W	G	F	W	W	F	G	W

Table 12 shows the sustainability ranking compared with the score and the evaluation of the 10 visited sites for the 4 studied dimensions, as well as

the overall sustainability, the average sustainability (50.4%) and the standard deviation (19.0).

Table 12. Sustainability ranking for the 10 visited landscape sites

Site	Management			Economic			Socio-cultural			Environmental			Overall Sustainability		
	Rank	Score/20	Evaluation	Rank	Score/15	Evaluation	Rank	Score/22	Evaluation	Rank	Score/43	Evaluation	Rank	Score/100	Evaluation
SBR	1	18.5	VG	1	13.5	VG	1	18.3	VG	1	32.3	VG	1	82.6	Very Good
TAN	2	17.7	VG	3	12.0	G	2	16.9	G	2	28.7	G	2	75.8	Good
TCFNR	3	16.2	VG	5	9.0	F	7	9.5	F	3	26.9	G	3	61.6	Good
BCF	4	13.8	G	4	11.3	G	3	16.1	G	5	15.4	W	4	56.6	Fair
BPF	4	13.8	G	2	12.8	VG	6	11.0	F	5	15.4	W	5	53.0	Fair
AW	6	9.2	F	6	7.5	F	6	11.0	F	4	21.9	F	6	50.0	Fair
QV	5	10.0	F	7	6	W	4	12.5	F	7	10.8	W	7	39.3	Weak
BP	5	10.0	F	8	4.5	W	8	6.6	W	6	13.8	W	8	34.9	Weak
KFR	7	5.4	W	6	7.5	F	6	11.0	F	8	5.4	VW	9	29.3	Weak
BKT	8	3.1	W	6	7.5	F	5	11.7	F	9	2.3	VW	10	24.6	Weak
Average for all sites													50.8%		
Standard Deviation													19.2		

The results presented in Table 12 provide a clear answer to research question and prove the hypothesis. Landscapes protected by a law (SBR and TCFNR) are ranked among the top three. Landscapes protected by decisions and decrees, and protected privately owned lands, are ranked from number 4 to 8 with fair and weak overall sustainability. Taanayel Farm, a protected privately owned property, is an exception and is ranked number 2. While the two landscapes containing public and private owned lands without any form of protection are ranked in the bottom with weak overall sustainability.

To conclude, it is worth mentioning that land ownership is a crucial factor that affects the management of tourism destinations and the protection of landscapes in Lebanon. Actually, the Lebanese legislation does not include any law or mechanism for the protection of privately owned lands. Therefore, private land ownership can be a major obstacle that hinders the protection of very important landscapes. Moreover, the absence of strategic management plans at the local level of the municipalities is leading to uncontrolled and chaotic development resulting in the deterioration of the physical and natural aspects of many landscapes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the usefulness of a tourism sustainability evaluation matrix, formed of 4 dimensions and a list of 51 indicators, for the assessment and evaluation of sustainable landscape management. The successful application of this tool depends on the availability of data and on the cooperation of all concerned stakeholders in providing accurate and up-to-date information about the landscapes they are managing or using for tourism purposes. Further landscape and natural and tourism destinations should be assessed, and the assessment tool developed in this study, should be refined and revised in order to adapt to the continuous advancement in the tourism industry, especially in terms of technology and innovation.

The analytical landscape and tourism sustainability framework was useful for understanding the relationship between landscape protection and the level of tourism sustainability. It was important in demonstrating that sustainability-oriented management is possible in any landscape and tourism destination. This approach should be adopted

by local stakeholders and public institutions, especially municipalities, which should improve their managerial skills.

Recognizing that there is still a gap between tourism development strategies and landscape management and protection tools and techniques, results in awareness of a need to act. Researchers, teachers, policy-makers, technical staff, local communities and others who are concerned with those landscapes cannot continue assisting the same trends without reacting, rethinking and becoming involved.

Stakeholders involved in local tourism development and management should monitor their management approach in order to avoid and reduce negative impacts on the cultural and natural heritage and should adjust their plans to better sustain the landscapes of Lebanon.

A sustainable strategic orientation for landscape management and tourism exploitation should incorporate regulation and harmonization of high quality tourism services and activities, professional public and corporate governance with local participation, visionary long-term management, development of innovative and adaptive policies and the use of new technologies.

Tourism stakeholders have, to some extent, the opportunity to fashion the future to their needs rather than simply to regard future events as beyond their control. In an increasingly turbulent and rapidly changing world, innovation and development driven by both internal and external circumstances will continue, but destinations and firms not adjusting their strategies as their environments change will have difficulty maintaining competitive advantages. How the country will manage its natural heritage will set the pace for rural and nature-based tourism in the future.

REFERENCES

- Andriotis, K. (2002). Local authorities in Crete and the development of tourism. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, 13 (2), 53-62.
- Baros, Z. & David, L. (2007). A possible use of indicators for sustainable development in tourism. *Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 18(2), 349-355. doi: 10.1080/13032917.2007.9687211
- Bruzzi, L., Boragno, V., Serrano-Bernardo, F.A., Verità, S., & Rosúa-Campos, J.L. (2011). Environmental management policy in a coastal tourism municipality: the case study of Cervia (Italy). *Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability*, 16(2), 93-113. doi: 10.1080/13549839.2011.558075
- Budeanu, A. (2005). Impacts and responsibilities for sustainable tourism: a tour operator's perspective. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 13, 89-97. doi: 10.1016/j.jclepro.2003.12.024
- Burton, R. (1995). *Travel geography*. Harlow, Essex: Pitman Publishing.
- Cernat, L. & Gourdon, J. (2007). Is the concept of sustainable tourism sustainable? Developing the sustainable tourism benchmarking tool. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD, United Nations, New York and Geneva.
- Dinica, V. (2009). Governance for sustainable tourism: a comparison of international and Dutch visions. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(5), 583-603. doi: 10.1080/09669580902855836
- Dubois, G. (2005). Indicators for an Environmental Assessment of Tourism at National Level. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 8(2-3), 140-154. doi: 10.1080/13683500508668210
- Dwyer, L., Edwards, D., Mistilis, N., Roman, C., & Scott, N. (2009). Destination and enterprise management for a tourism future. *Tourism Management*, 30, 63-74. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2008.04.002
- Eagles, P.F.G. (2009). Governance of recreation and tourism partnerships in parks and protected areas. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(2), 231-248. doi: 10.1080/09669580802495725
- Emilsson, S. & Hjelm, O. (2007). Managing indirect environmental impact with local authorities' standardized environmental management systems. *Local Environment*, 12 (1), 73-86.
- EU, (2013). *European Tourism Indicator System Toolkit For Sustainable Destinations*. DG Enterprise and Industry, European Union.
- Gordon, D., Garnett, D., Jacklyn, P., Landsberg, J., Ludwig, J., Morrison, J., Novelly, P., Walker, D., & Whitehead, P. (2009). A collaborative design to adaptively manage for landscape sustainability in north Australia: lessons from a decade of cooperative research. *Landscape Ecology*, 24, 1135-1143. doi: 10.1007/s10980-008-9236-5
- Gutierrez, E., Lamoureaux, K., Matus, S., & Sebnuya, K. (2005). *Linking Communities, Tourism & Conservation, A Tourism Assessment Process*. Conservation International and The George Washington University.
- Ko, T.G. (2005). Development of a tourism sustainability assessment procedure: a conceptual approach. *Tourism Management* 26, 431-445. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2003.12.003

- Hall, C.M. & Page, S.J. (2002). The geography of tourism and recreation: environment, place and space. London: Routledge.
- Harrill, R. (2004). Residents' attitudes toward tourism development: a literature review with implications for tourism planning. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 18 (3), 251-266.
- Holden, A. (2000). *Environment and Tourism*. London: Routledge.
- Jiang, Y. (2009). Evaluating eco-sustainability and its spatial variability in tourism areas: a case study in Lijiang County, China. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 16(2), 117-126. doi: 10.1080/13504500902808628
- Jovicic, D.Z.&Ilic, T. (2010). Indicators for sustainable tourism. *Glasnik Srpskog geograf skogdrustva*, 90(1), 277-305, doi:10.2298/GSGD1001277J
- Jovicic, D.Z. (2013). Key issues in the implementation of sustainable tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 17(4), pages 297-302. doi: 10.1080/13683500.2013.797386
- Larson, L.R. &Poudyal, N.C. (2012). Developing sustainable tourism through adaptive resource management: a case study of Machu Picchu, Peru. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(7), 917-938. Doi: 10.1080/09669582.2012.667217
- Lovell, S.T. & Johnston, D.M. (2009). Creating multifunctional landscapes: how can the field of ecology inform the design of the landscape? *Front Ecol Environ* 7:212-220
- Makhzoumi, J., Chmaitelly, H., &Lteif, C. (2012)a. Holistic conservation of bio-cultural diversity in coastal Lebanon: A landscape approach. *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures* 1, 27-37.
- Makhzoumi, J., Talhouk, S., Zurayk, R., &Sadek, R. (2012)b. Landscape Approach to Bio-Cultural Diversity Conservation in: Rural Lebanon, Perspectives on Nature Conservation - Patterns, Pressures and Prospects, Tiefenbacher, J. (Ed.), ISBN: 978-953-51-0033-1, InTech, Available from: <http://www.intechopen.com/books/perspectives-on-nature-conservation-patterns-pressures-and-prospects/landscape-approach-to-bio-cultural-diversity-conservation-in-rural-lebanon>
- Mason, P. (2003). *Tourism impacts, planning and management*. Amsterdam: Butterworth Heinemann.
- McCool, S.F. &Moisey, R.N. (2008). Introduction: Pathways and pitfalls in the search for sustainable tourism. In S.F. McCool & R.N. Moisey (Eds.), *Tourism, recreation and sustainability* (2nd ed., pp.1-16). Wallingford: CAB International.
- McGehee, N.G., Boley, B.B., Hallo, J.C., McGee, J.A., Norman, W., Oh, C.O., & Goetcheus, C. (2013). Doing sustainability: an application of an inter-disciplinary and mixed-method approach to a regional sustainable tourism project. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 21(3), 355-375. doi: 10.1080/09669582.2012.709862
- Mitchell, R., Wooliscroft, B., &Higham, J.E.S. (2013). Applying sustainability in national park management: balancing public and private interests using a sustainable market orientation model. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 21(5), 695-715. doi:10.1080/09669582.2012.737799
- OECD, (2008). *Conducting Sustainability Assessments*. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Publishing, Paris, France.
- Ólafsdóttir, R. & Runnström, M.C. (2009). A GIS approach to evaluating ecological sensitivity for tourism development in fragile environments: a case study from SE Iceland. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 9(1), 22-38. doi: 10.1080/15022250902761504
- Pérez, J.G. (2002). Ascertaining landscape perceptions and preferences with pair-wise photographs: planning rural tourism in Extremadura, Spain. *Landscape Research*, 27(3), 297-308. Doi: 10.1080/01426390220149539
- Richins, H. (2000). Influences on local government tourism decision-making: a study of authoritative opinion. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, 11 (2), 2-14.
- Schianetz, K., Kavanagh, L., & Lockington, D. (2007). Concepts and tools for comprehensive sustainability assessments for tourism destinations: a comparative review. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15(4), 369-389. doi: 10.2167/jost659.o
- Selman, P. (2004). Community participation in the planning and management of cultural landscapes. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 47(3), 365-392. doi: 10.1080/0964056042000216519
- Terkenli, T. S. (2002). Landscapes of tourism: towards a global cultural economy of space? *Tourism Geographies*, 4(3), 227-254.
- Terkenli, T.S. (2005). Human Activity in Landscape Seasonality: The Case of Tourism in Crete. *Landscape Research*, 30(2), 221-239. doi: 10.1080/01426390500044408

- Whitehead, P., Woinarski, J.C.Z., Jacklyn, P., Fell, D., & Williams, R.J. (2000). Defining and measuring the health of savanna landscapes: a north Australian perspective. Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre, Charles Darwin University, Australia
- WTO, (1993). Indicators for the sustainable management of tourism. International Working Group on Indicators of Sustainable Tourism (IWGIST), Winnipeg, Canada, World Tourism Organization.
- WTO, (1995). What tourism managers need to know: A practical guide to the development and use of indicators of sustainable tourism. Ottawa: Consulting and Audit Canada, World Tourism Organization.
- WTO, (1998). Guide for local authorities on developing sustainable tourism. Madrid, World Tourism Organization.
- WTO, (2001). Actions in assisting developing countries to implement Agenda 21 undertaken by the World Tourism Organization since 1992. World Tourism Organization, Document No. DESA/DSD/PC2/BP3), New York, NY: UN.
- WTO, (2004). Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destination: A Guidebook. Madrid, World Tourism Organization.

THE EUROPEAN TOURISM INDICATOR SYSTEM

CINZIA DE MARZO¹⁸

ETIS BACKGROUND

The European Tourism System of Indicators (ETIS) for Sustainable Management at Destination Level, was launched by the Tourism Policy Unit on 22 February 2013, together with a toolkit (guidelines), available in all EU languages on EC website: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/indicators/index_en.htm.

ETIS is specifically intended for tourism destinations. It is designed as a locally owned and led process for monitoring, managing, and enhancing the sustainability of a tourism destination. It has been developed as a result of lessons learned from previously existing indicator system initiatives and fine-tuned as a result of feedback collected from field testing, in a number of different destinations in Europe.

The main goal of ETIS is to help local authorities in measuring and monitoring the sustainable tourism performances of their destinations, providing a simple and user friendly system, aiming at sharing and benchmarking their progress.

The System is made up of a set of Indicators, a Toolkit, and a Dataset sheet, to record and store indicator data and it has a structure of 27 core and 40 optional indicators.

These can be used on a voluntary basis, together or integrated into existing destination monitoring systems. The System is flexible. It can be expanded or contracted to meet the needs of the destination, the interest of local stakeholders, and the specific sustainability issues that the destination faces.

The sustainability of tourism covers a number of aspects: the responsible use of natural resources, taking into account the environmental impact of activities (production of waste, pressure on water, land and biodiversity, etc.), the use of 'clean' energy, protection of heritage and preservation of the natural and cultural integrity of destinations as well as the quality and sustainability of jobs created, local economic fallout or customer care.

Facing those challenges requires us to make intelligent decisions (particularly policy makers) based on useful information collected through specific indicators such as single aspect of business.

USING THE INDICATOR SYSTEM

To establish the System in a tourism destination, there are 7 steps to follow, briefly explained in the table below:

¹⁸ National Expert, European Commission, DG Internal market, industry,

Step 1 – Raise Awareness	Communicate the destination's involvement with ETIS to as many people as possible, particularly local stakeholders.
Step 2 – Create a Destination Profile	Destination Profile Form, including basic information about the geography, tourism amenities, transport links and visitor numbers in the destination.
Step 3 – Form a Stakeholder Working Group (SWG)	It will be essential to have representatives from the private sector and destination management organisation, or tourism authority playing an active role in the SWG.
Step 4 – Establish Roles and Responsibilities	Once the SWG is established, there must be a clear agreement on responsibilities of the SWG members and time line for data collection.
Step 5 – Collect and Record Data	Data collection should be a process of bringing the various data sources together in one place to build a detailed picture of the destination's tourism industry.
Step 6 – Analyse Results	The SWG then review and analyse the results, decide on some realistic benchmarks or targets, and agree a plan on how to achieve these.
Step 7 – Enable On-going Development and Continuous Improvement	Once the SWG has an action plan in place to tackle immediate priorities, a strategy for longer-term improvement can be developed.

What are the main benefits of using ETIS

- Developing and creating awareness
- Assisting destinations in developing tourism in more sustainable manner
- Working together, as an interdisciplinary team
- Generating economic benefits, including improved destination reputation and greater visitor satisfaction
- Increasing visibility as sustainable destination

ETIS IMPLEMENTATION

The first pilot testing phase started in July 2013 and ended in April 2014. Through a dedicated call for expression of interest, around 100 destinations applied from all across Europe such as: Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Greece, Scotland, Netherland, Lithuania, Croatia, Sweden, England, Portugal, Turkey).

The second pilot testing phase started in May and will last the end of December 2014. About 106 destinations across Europe (also non EU countries like Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia and Norway), have volunteered to test the ETIS this time. As for the first pilot testing phase, the interest remains quite high from destinations from Croatia, Italy, Spain, Greece, Slovenia and Hungary. There are also destinations from France, Germany, UK, Ireland, Romania, Lithuania, Sweden, Austria, Malta, Portugal and Bulgaria.

On 4th July 2014, the Tourism Policy Unit organized a dedicated workshop on ETIS in Brussels.

The outcomes of the first testing pilot phase that aims at developing and improving the system, were presented. Also 6 destinations have been selected through a call for expression of interest, in order to present their experiences on having tested ETIS during the workshop.

The Commission has received about 49 mid-terms reports (out of 106 destinations), coming from Bulgaria, Croatia, Spain, England, Montenegro, Italy, Norway, Germany, Spain, Greece, Slovenia, Netherland.

The ETIS pool of experts are supporting the work of the Commission in making the preliminary analysis of those documents and in collecting the information about ETIS visibility (events, articles on magazines, etc.) and aiming at improving the promotion of ETIS.

After the end of the second ETIS pilot phase (December 2014), the pool of experts together with ETIS team, will make the analysis of the final questionnaires and will draft the recommendations to improve the system.

Around March 2015, a technical meeting will be organized in Brussels with ETIS pool of experts, in view of the organization of the ETIS final conference, foresee by summer 2015.

REFERENCES

European Union. (2013, February). The European Tourism Indicator System - Toolkit for Destinations.

STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT – TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

MIKE DOLLIN

Principle techniques in Project Management range from verbal reports to very detailed written reports which unfortunately are not always read and digested fully unless a post mortem is being undertaken. PM4SD picks up on this point and the fact it is the number one cause of Project failure. Here I want to look at some possible tools and their uses within a PM4SD project.

When teaching PM4SD or any other Project Management Approach or methodology, I focus on the importance of getting the right project management team in place: people that know and understand their given roles and responsibilities. This is fine for the actual stakeholders managing the project but what about those stakeholders outside the project management team? Also what do we mean by the term stakeholder?

Prince2 states that a stakeholder is anyone that can have an impact or be impacted by a project. For this purpose, a suggested template for a Communications Management Strategy is given. Agile is very similar except that setting up clear and concise communication between the different areas and levels of an organization and external stakeholders is not an easy task. Agile gives various suggestions that can be used by other project management methodologies and approaches, to overcome this.

PM4SD starts by recognizing that the four interests within the project need to be represented within the project management team and therefore has the minimum of four internal types of stakeholders represented. This minimum of four is also applied to the Project Board's interests (Business, User, Supplier and Sustainability). The Project Board are normally known as the primary stakeholders in a project and therefore need a very clear set of responsibilities to be set and understood by each of the board members.

Looking at the project as a whole PM4SD recognizes the following internal stakeholders.

- Strategy and policy-making level which is covered by corporate or Programme Management
- Directing level covered by the Project Board
- Managing level covered by the Project Manager and project support
- Delivering level covered by the Team Manager

So the question is, what tools or techniques could help. Here are some ideas that can be used to keep, firstly our internal stakeholders aware of the project and their involvement, followed by the external stakeholders.

The key for any form of management, is to understand roles and responsibilities, followed by communication needs. For a sustainable project, PM4SD gives us an organizational component, which defines the roles within the project from the Project Board level down. The Project Board is broken down to three main roles of Senior User, Executive, Senior Supplier and a shared role of sustainability. Each of these different roles need to be kept informed of the progress of the project as well as being available to give advice and make decisions as required. Progress can be seen through reports such as the frequent highlight report from the Project Manager as well as the end stage reports and viewing and approving updated project management products such as the project plan, business case and benefits realization plan to name a few.

For the teams working on the delivery of the projects products, they have been given the instruction for work to be done in a work page which will contain the details of how they are to keep the Project Manager informed of the progress of their work.

We will now look at some of PM4SD's products and techniques that can help which tie in with the twelve related motives and reasons for multi stakeholder collaboration as listed below.

1. To reflect multiple aims and agree on common targets
2. To ensure inclusiveness and equity
3. To sharpen focus and co-ordinate action
4. To raise awareness and engage those with power over outcomes
5. To link components in the tourism value chain
6. To strengthen long-term support and commitment
7. To pool knowledge and skills
8. To strengthen resources and funding
9. To widen contacts and strengthen communication
10. To add value and creativity
11. To share costs and risks – economics of scale
12. To cross boundaries

Starting with the Principles of PM4SD which have a very strong emphasis on a collaborative approach to working such as learning from experience, roles and responsibilities, managing by stages along with management by exception ensures that teams are empowered to get on with the work within agreed tolerances. Within the PM4SD components we deal with risk issue and change management, the Organization structure, Quality, Planning as well as progress control.

PM4SD also has a number of processes that help with all the stakeholders needs. The Project Board has a project direction process, with the Project Manager having Project Initiation, Stage Definition & Planning, Stage Control & Project Delivery as well as a Project Closure Process

However as communication is undertaken with stakeholders we need to remain very clear on each requirement and ensure that it is recorded as to ensure all stakeholders are kept informed. Our stakeholders need to be managed but also viewed more as an asset to the project in acting as an early indicator of any potential risks. Therefore we should encourage our communication as a two way relationship.

CASE STUDY FOREST HOLIDAYS

BLACKWOOD FOREST MICHELDEVER, HAMPSHIRE ENGLAND

The original plan, submitted March 2008 for approval to the local council was for up to 150 log cabins to be built within Blackwood Forest which was being managed by the Forestry commission as commercial woodland with informal recreational uses. Richard Palmer, as development director of

Forest Holidays, said: “Blackwood Forest was identified by the Forestry Commission as a possible location for this kind of low impact tourism scheme in which Forest Holidays specializes, because of its proximity to rail and road networks.

“The submission of the scoping report is just one step in a long process of establishing whether the woodland would accommodate holiday cabins without detriment to the character and therefore a suitable location. Forest holidays now needed to wait for Winchester City Council to consult a number of statutory bodies. They also needed to identify anything else they would need to be included in the environmental impact assessment.” Mr. Palmer said rural tourism led to economic and social benefits for the local community. But the proposals worried some local residents living nearby.

Five years later in June 2013 the holiday village opened with 60 log cabins sleeping between two and ten people, hidden deep in a 270 hectare beech forest. Built in harmony with their woodland surroundings and furnished with every comfort imaginable, the Blackwood Forest cabins now delight guests. The Blackwood Forest cabins were developed with the environment in mind. They are heated using wood pellets generators, which efficiently and ‘carbon neutrally’ convert biomass, in the form of wood pellets into heat while giving off almost no wood smoke. The carbon dioxide released by burning is balanced by that absorbed by the trees during their growth. The ash from the wood pellet fuel, which is rich in minerals, is then recycled to fertilize the forest.

Of course, at the end of the day, it is normally the customers’ opinions that really matter, and it seems they liked the development since opening a year ago. In 2013 an externally conducted phone survey revealed that 96.6% of guests would wish to holiday with the company again. On checking Trip Advisor (22June2014) 211 people had reviewed the Blackwood Forest cabins, of which 140 rated as excellent, 54 as very good, 13 as average, 2 as poor and 2 as terrible. The rating summary showing no less than 4/5 for each category.

So we have a development that has been scaled back by working with all stakeholders to deliver a sustainable holiday development for the future. The local community has benefitted from new jobs as well as an increase in spending in the area. Visitor numbers are continuing to rise after a year for not only the cabins but also for other attractions in the area.

This is a good example where managing a project based on PM4SD has a future. Too often tourist developments have focused on the financial return

of the investment made in the development rather than looking at the wider stakeholder picture. Here we have the developers working with and listening to all the stakeholders to ensure the end product not only makes the return of investment worth-

while, but more importantly has created a sustainable holiday park in the middle of a forest. Wildlife as well as the local community stand to benefit for years to come.

GREEN CARE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – INSIGHTS GAINED FROM FINNISH GREEN CARE AND A MULTI-ACTOR GREEN CARE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN SOUTH SAVO, EASTERN FINLAND

PÄIVI PYLKKÄNEN¹⁹, ANNE TÖRN²⁰ AND SARI IIVONEN²¹

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the definition and establishment of the emerging Green Care (GC) entrepreneurship in Finland. Over the past years, Green Care, or “luontohoiva” in Finnish, has been used as an inclusive term for many intervention types that use either the farm or natural environment as a framework in which to create processes to improve or promote human health and well-being. More specifically, this paper looks at the South Savo region, and investigates how the first Green Care actors understand the term and what tourism has to do with the emerging field. Although sustainable tourism is not a dominating focus of the green-care approach, the Finnish notion of the term clearly points in the direction where the Green Care concept and sustainable tourism come together under the notion of green recreation. In the end we discuss how Green Care and sustainable, nature-based tourism could benefit from each other through stronger dialogue and co-operation in sustainability claims and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Green Care is not universal. In many countries the term Green Care (GC), or its national language equivalent (e.g. Grön Omsorg; Inn på Tu-

net) refers principally to care activities in the farm context. Reference is thus made to the utilisation of agricultural farms – their animals, plants, garden, forests and landscape – as a base for promoting human health (physical and mental) and well-being (Dessein and Bock 2010). Since the release of the seminal Farming for Health Community of Practice (www.farmingforhealth.org) and the ensuing Green Care in Agriculture COST initiative (http://www.cost.eu/domains_actions/fa/Actions/866), research has revealed a wide variety of Green Care practices throughout Europe and beyond (see e.g. Dessein et al. 2013; Haubehofer et al. 2010).

Modern Green Care is claimed to bring together sectors that were not formerly linked. However, the idea cannot be considered a novelty of the 21st century. For example Stock and Brickell (2013) discuss 19th century asylums as a genealogical precursor to today’s Green Care and care farming movements.

In the following we will discuss the framing and demarcation of the Green Care notion in the region of South Savo (Finland), and more broadly in Finland as a whole. We will take a closer look at the sustainability aspect associated with the term, while analysing the Green Care notion.

For comparative purposes sustainable tourism, particularly nature-based tourism, is brought into the discussion. We discuss the sustainability claims of both fields, and also reflect more broadly how these related fields could enrich each other.

¹⁹ University of Helsinki, Ruralia Institute, Lönnrotinkatu 7, FI-50100 Mikkeli, Finland. Email paivi.pylkkanen@helsinki.fi

²⁰ University of Helsinki, Ruralia Institute, Lönnrotinkatu 7, FI-50100 Mikkeli, Finland, Email anne.torn@helsinki.fi

²¹ University of Helsinki, Ruralia Institute, Lönnrotinkatu 7, FI-50100 Mikkeli, Finland. Email sari.iivonen@helsinki.fi

THE NOTION OF GREEN CARE IN THE SOUTH SAVO REGION AND IN FINLAND

As stated above, Green Care is taken to refer to farm-based activities in many countries. Along this line, the notion of multifunctional agriculture is commonly seen as a general policy and frame for directing research. However, Dessein et al. (2013) argue that the multifunctional agriculture frame does not sufficiently grasp the multiple and complex reality of the Green Care field. Interestingly, a broader understanding of the field seems to have prevailed in Finland from the beginning, as can be seen from the South Savo and Finland materials.

South Savo is a typical Finnish rural area located in the eastern part of the country. The region has a large surface area (18 000 km²), low population density (11 /km²), abundant inland waters (25% of the total surface area) and ample forest resources. Tourism plays an important role in the economy, especially during the summer. The South Savo Green Care development project (2012–2014) brought together 20 small businesses interested in GC, to participate in related training, networking and product development activities organised by

the project partners (Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences, University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute and ProAgria Advisory Centre for South Savo). Under the applied research components, 17 enterprises enrolled in the Green Care development project (2012–2014) were interviewed to study e.g. their initial ideas of GC, the related networks and future aspirations. The business fields of the participant enterprises varied: eight offered nursing, caring or/and housing services for special groups, five gained their main income from agriculture or horse riding, and four were associated with rural tourism. The enterprises were micro- to small-scale organisations, employing from none to a few salaried staff, the biggest employing 40. All the enterprises, with the exception of one, estimated that their GC-specific activities would grow in the future.

But what does Green Care entail for these first interested actors in the region? The entrepreneurs were asked to define their own understanding of the term in the interviews conducted at an early stage of the South Savo Green Care project (2011–2012). Table 1 shows the main lines of reasoning with three selected direct quotes illustrating each discourse (Table 1).

Table 1. Answers in response to the question: “What do you understand by Green Care?”

Discourse	Illustrations
1. Green Care is about nature, farms and gardens	<p><i>“Well, you can take that the green is for nature, so it is like nature, or natural care”.</i></p> <p><i>“In my case, I guess, ‘green care’ and ‘natural care’ work as synonyms. Green Care particularly relates to the nature element, the utilisation of nature elements as a part of care and education work”.</i></p> <p><i>“For me Green Care is ideally a farm that involves a bit of everything: a nice environment, proximity to nature, forests, lakes and a mixture of animals, not only productive ones, but also pets”.</i></p> <p><i>(excerpts from interviews no. 2, 10, 11, 14 as translated by the authors)</i></p>
2. Green Care is about therapy and/or professional care	<p><i>“Gardening therapy has been around for a long time as a concept. That gives an idea what Green Care could be”.</i></p> <p><i>“I take it that the utilisation of nature in professional care work is a good alternative definition for Green Care”.</i></p> <p><i>“It is nature-assisted care work”</i></p> <p><i>(excerpts from interviews no. 1, 2, 9 as translated by the authors)</i></p>
3. Green care should be broader than therapy and professional care	<p><i>“It is about the conscious creation of activities and wellness services where nature, in particular, is a central element”.</i></p> <p><i>“When breaking down the term into parts: “green” and “care” the definition somehow leads only to professional care... hmm... I see it somehow in a broader way, and for that, there perhaps should be another name for it...”</i></p>

“Well, my idea is that Green Care activities could build around a [foster] farm. That’s where different kinds of group exercises could be developed for children or for other markets (e.g. individuals active in working life looking for recreation), according to demand. It does not really matter which audience it is about, all is fine”.

“When you add the word ‘care’ [professional care], it seems that it goes towards the professional care sector, more towards formal rehabilitation... I would think that in this case Green Care is not a suitable concept for what we do – What we do and offer is, although potentially therapeutic, a more preventive kind of Green Care.

(excerpts from interviews no. 5, 8, 10, 15 as translated by the authors)

All the interviews revealed an association between the green concept and nature. Thus, Green Care is connected to the utilisation of green elements or to nature and animals in some way or another. It was also commonly viewed that the “green” in Green Care could refer either to “wild” nature, or to farms and gardens. It was broadly believed that nature would bestow various health and welfare benefits.

Two broad lines of thought, either emphasising professional care and therapy, or taking a wider perspective on the healing elements of nature were revealed in the interviews. The lowest row in Table 1 illustrates how certain actors wished to broaden the notion of Green Care beyond professional care. Many felt that the use of animals, gardens, plants and the landscape would promote health for all humans, not just for specialised groups in need of professional therapy. The last quotes also show how a new concept can be negotiated to refer to several nature-bound services that have market potential. Broadening the concept is principally in the interests of actors working beyond the professional care sector.

When examined jointly, the actor interviews in South Savo show that several actors rooted in the rural contexts wished to see themselves as potential Green Care actors on an equal footing. Many actors also recognised a wider trend favouring green and natural values as a marketing tool. The concept hence also raised expectations regarding a new marketing label for nature-based business or emerging business ideas.

An example of an emerging Green Care business from the South Savo region is the case of Kuusenkuiske. Translated into English the name of this newly established micro enterprise would be “Spruce Whisper”. This case is interesting for illustrating a rural enterprise that could be classified

and branded as either a Green Care or a nature-based tourism business. The entrepreneur in this case is a trained biologist offering e.g. guided wild herb collection walks as well as guided relaxation in the natural environment (<http://kuusenkuiske.blogspot.fi>). The entrepreneur participated in the training, product development and study trips organised by the South Savo Green Care development project and assessed the project as an invaluable inspiration and support in developing the business concept.

Parallel developments in a number of Green Care initiatives occurred across the country concurrently with the early development efforts and discussions in South Savo, and supported by the related research, continued to establish the definition of Finnish Green Care. The result was a notion of Green Care as a two-fold and multi-marketed field (Figure 1).

According to the prevailing broad definition adopted in Finland, Green Care is taken as an umbrella concept to refer to various goal-oriented, professional and responsible uses of nature and rural environments in the social, health, educational and well-being services. Two different subdomains, markets and service types are acknowledged in the field: 1: Green Care, referring to cure, care and rehabilitating aspects of the term, and Green Empowerment, referring more to the recreational and well-being-related aspects of the term (Soini 2014; Vehmasto 2014; Green Care Finland ry 2014). By the broad definition of GC, potential actors and operational environments are not limited to farmers or farm environments, but to all potential actors purposefully utilising the health-promoting or empowering aspects of nature as they are broadly understood.



Figure 1. Establishing the Green Care and Green Empowerment markets (Vehmasto 2014).

SUSTAINABILITY CLAIMS AND CRITERIA IN THE CONTEXT OF FINNISH GREEN CARE

By the prevailing understanding in Finland, Green Care is described by the principles of goal orientation, professionalism and the responsible use of nature and the rural environment for social, health, educational and well-being services (Vehmasto 2014; MTT, THL and Lapin AMK 2014, 12).

But what is sustainability in the field of Green Empowerment? The goal of the Green Empowerment field as a dimension of the Green Care notion in Finland is, by definition, to be target-oriented, professional and responsible. According to Vehmasto (2014, 42) and MTT et al. (2014, 12) the responsibility principle in the GC is taken to refer to environmental, clientele and societal aspects. The aspects of sustainability are hence discussed under the principle of responsibility.

In the following we briefly discuss the claims suggested by the entrepreneurs concerning the aspects of “responsibility” or “sustainability”.

In the entrepreneur interviews associated with the South Savo Green Care development project, sustainability or responsibility was constructed primarily from the direction of social responsibility. It referred to a thoughtful attitude towards the clients – many of whom would come from particularly vulnerable groups. Some actors also referred to a specific commitment towards traditions and towards the surrounding rural community. A largely shared commitment existed to preserve or even revitalise something seen as fading and under

threat. It should be noted that references to certain responsibility dimensions emerged as a side result of the interviews, which primarily explored aspects of networking and co-operation. The discussion was hence not exhaustive regarding the theme of sustainability.

Green Care Finland ry., the umbrella interest association of Finnish actors engaged in the field of Green Care, discusses the natural environment and responsibility as part of the Green Care ethical principles.

“A Green Care service provider takes into consideration the impacts of her/his activities on nature, and furthers the preservation of nature for coming generations. S/he seeks solutions compatible with sustainable development. In the activities, s/he takes into account national and local culture, local people and their sources of livelihood. In operating within the natural environment, the Green Care actor maintains a respect for nature, and the common rights such as Everyman’s rights “jokamiehenoikeudet.” (Green Care Finland 2012. Translated by the authors)

The above quote shows that organised Green Care actors associate sustainability with entrepreneurial ethics. The stated ethical principles make an explicit reference to environmental and socio-cultural sustainability aspects.

What makes the responsibility claim under the Green Care umbrella credible? Discussions in connection to various Green Care initiatives in Finland have been pointing in the direction that an increasing need exists for a more articulated quality assurance system for the Green Care field, or a set of sub-systems varying by service. So far any Green Care

quality claims are principles without a certification system in place.

According to Lääperi (2014) the next stage in Green Care development in Finland is to promote the creation of a quality control scheme. Each of the stated principles characterising the field, be it responsibility, professionalism or goal orientation, would therefore be subjected to closer proof and (external) assurance. A voluntary manual currently exists to assist enterprises in structuring and documenting their quality-enhancing work (MTT, THL and Lapin AMK 2014). Considering the wide spectrum of Green Care markets and clients, it is more likely that somewhat differentiated quality schemes and certificates will be implemented for services directed at caring and empowering effects.

ON THE NOTION OF SUSTAINABLE (NATURE-BASED) TOURISM

Both Green Care and nature-based tourism in Finland are mainly based on natural environments. Clean and quiet natural environments are the main features that attract tourists to visit the northern region of Europe (e.g. Järviuoma 1999, 2006; Törn 2007). Nowadays, the definition of nature-based tourism is very close to sustainable tourism. Both definitions include the environmental, social and economic aspects of tourism (Mowforth & Munt 1998; Swarbrooke 1999) to achieve a 'balanced' or 'wise' use of natural resources and the well-being of local residents in planning and development actions (Ecotourism Society 1993).

The United Nation's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has taken a stance on sustainable tourism. According to the UNWTO's definition, sustainable tourism is:

"Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities".

It is evident from the abovementioned quote that UNWTO expands the definition of tourism, and expects its development to also consider long-term sustainability.

In general, ecological or environmental sustainability means minimising the effects on the natural environment (e.g. Törn 2007, 2008a, 2010), including physical and/or biological effects (e.g. Davies 1978; Sun & Liddle 1991, 1993). Physical impacts may include changes in soil and pollution (e.g. Chappell et al. 1991; Chapin & Shaver 1981; Törn 2008a), and the biological impacts include

e.g. changes in vegetation and the risk of spreading alien species (e.g. North 1991; Törn 2010). Changes in soil and vegetation are easily caused by tourism or Green Care activities such as hiking, horse riding and camping. All of them may cause trampling of vegetation, as well as erosion. Horse riding and other animal-based Green Care activities may also cause the risk of spreading alien species via horse manure. The risk of alien species is especially high at farms and should therefore be carefully taken into account.

On the other hand, and from the perspective of social sustainability, nature-based activities may concurrently assure the local services, employment and the quality of life of local residents and provide quality experiences for hosts/tourists (Williams & Fennell 2002). Furthermore, maintaining the traditional cultures and traditional forms of land use such as agriculture, and e.g. the conservation of historical buildings are important goals for socially and culturally sustainable tourism (e.g. Törn 2007). Likewise, the Green Care activities on farms could serve these social and cultural sustainability goals.

Sustainability also features in the tourism policy of Finland. Finland's Tourism Strategy for 2020 (TEM 2014) states that tourism solutions supporting sustainable choices are very important for future consumers. This means that sustainability should be taken into account in programme services and activities. Developing immaterial experiences is considered an important potential income for tourism enterprises.

It is critical to note that the attractiveness of nature as a stimulus to tourism may in fact decrease due to the detrimental effects of tourism on the environment (Kuss & Grafe 1985). Business responsibility is nowadays an important and obvious part of product quality development. In the future, it may go without saying that sustainability /responsibility in the Green Care services also means better quality. However, neither sustainability nor quality can ever be perfectly achieved. There is no end in trying to achieve higher sustainability or better quality.

It would be worth learning from sustainable nature-based tourism in the development of Green Care, in addition to the Green Care ethical principles and the development of quality thought in Finnish Green Care (Lääperi 2014). Some quality schemes exist for sustainable tourism in Finland. An example is the Green Tourism of Finland® (GTF). GTF is a network of Finnish nature tourism enterprises that share a service label and a quality scheme designed for Finnish tourism enterprises

providing farm accommodation, well-being, nature experiences or food services. The enterprises have committed themselves to the principles of sustainable development. The main aims of the GTF are high quality, safety, cultural conservation and social and environmental awareness. In this system, the enterprise is committed to following an environmental quality programme and standards, and a safety plan. A participating enterprise is also expected to prioritise the use of local products and services, and the employment of local people when applicable. Criteria also exist concerning sustainable and professional communication, e.g. in terms of transparency, networking, customer satisfaction and the use of experiential environmental education. A GTF-certified enterprise is also expected to provide services that promote the physical and mental well-being of the customer and that have been produced in an environmentally friendly manner (GTF 2014).

GTF criteria might well also be applied to the of Green Care field on account of the similar values and service ideas prevalent in the nature tourism and Green Enterprise businesses. Looking beyond the sustainability criteria, increased networking or co-operation between the Green Care and nature-based tourism actors could result in several generic benefits. Mutual inspiration could open up new opportunities for service innovation. Well-being tourism and one of its current trends, mindfulness, is perhaps only one example of the concepts that are intriguing for both fields. Green Care/Empowerment services could be provided by tourism enterprises themselves as an additional service option. The infrastructure and environment of a tourism enterprise could alternatively serve as a platform for Green Care service sub-contracted from a specialised Green Care/Empowerment actor.

CONCLUSIONS

Introducing a new concept, such as Green Care in Finland, calls for definition and demarcation of the topic. When the Green Care notion is broadened, the separation between Green Care and other nature-bound activities becomes vague.

Actors within the field in Finland have reached a relatively broad consensus that two main lines of Green Care exist: one entailing care, therapy and rehabilitation, and the other entailing empowerment and recreation. The line of Green Empowerment comes intuitively close to the nature-based tourism field.

Both Green Care and nature-based tourism involve sustainability and/or responsibility claims. So far sustainability has been utilised as a rather free argument in many fields. Taking the aspects of sustainability/responsibility into thoughtful consideration is important when further developing the Green Care concept and services.

The Green Care field commonly claims that “not all that appears green, e.g. any activity in the natural environment, automatically qualifies as Green Care”. The distinction comes from the specific Green Care principles, referring to professionalism, goal orientation and responsibility. The specific distinction claim suggests, and indeed requires, the need for a more institutionalised quality assurance system - and work for such a system is currently in progress.

The criteria for Green Care and Sustainable Tourism do not conflict with each other and can be concurrently met. Existing nature-based tourism businesses may often qualify for the emerging quality criteria of Green Care and benefit from them. Likewise, some of the quality systems already in place for nature-based tourism can inform the ongoing sustainability and quality work in the Green Care field. Collaboration between these fields also opens up possibilities for product innovation and revitalisation of rural economics, where new business ideas and openings are in great demand.

REFERENCES

- Dessein, J., & Bock, B. B. (Eds). 2010. *The Economics of Green Care in Agriculture*. COST Action 866, Green Care in Agriculture. Loughborough University Press, Loughborough.
- Dessein, J., Bock, B., de Krom, M. 2013. Investigating the limits of multifunctional agriculture as the dominant frame for Green Care in agriculture in Flanders and the Netherlands. *Journal of Rural Studies* 32(2013), 50-59.
- Ecolabel Finland – Motiva Services Oy. 2014. *The Nordic Labelling of Hotels Version 3.5*, 14 June 2007 – 30 June 2015).
- Ecotourism Society. 1993. *Ecotourism: a guide for planners and managers*. In: Bennington, N. (ed.) The Ecotourism Society, Vermont, USA.
- Farming for Health Community of Practice (www.farmingforhealth.org)
- Green Care Finland ry. 2014. *Green Care toiminnan eettiset ohjeet*. Hyväksytty Green Care Finland ry:n vuosikokouksessa Tampereella 13.4.2012. www.dokumentti.fi. Saatavissa:

- <http://www.gcfinland.fi/file/original/eettisetohjeet.pdf?fileId=18029>
- Green Care in Agriculture COST initiative (http://www.cost.eu/domains_actions/fa/Actions/866)
- GTF. 2014. Green-Tourism-of-Finland® (GTF)-Palvelumerkki-Kriteerit-2014. <http://www.greentourism.fi/greentravel/koti.html>.
- Haubenhof, D., Elings, M., Hassinki, J., Hine, R.E. 2010. The Development of Green Care in Western European Countries. *Explore* 6 (2), 106-111.
- Järviluoma, J. 1999. Luonnon merkitys matkailun vetovoimatekijänä. *Metsätieteen aikakauskirja* 1: 99-101.
- Järviluoma, J. 2006. Turistin luonto. Tutkimus luonnon merkityksestä matkailun vetovoimatekijänä neljässä Lapin matkailukeskuksessa. *Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis* 96, 214.
- Kuss, R. F. & Grafe, A. R. 1985. Effects of recreation trampling on natural area vegetation. *Journal of Leisure Research* (17), 165-183.
- Kuusenkuiske 2014. <http://kuusenkuiske.blogspot.fi/>
- MTT, THL, Lapin AMK. 2014. Green Care – työkirja. Maa- ja elintarviketalouden tutkimuskeskus, Terveystieteiden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos ja Lapin ammattikokeakoulu. Saatavilla: www.mtt.fi/greencare.
- Mowford, M. & Munt, I. 1998. *Tourism and sustainability: new tourism in the Third World*. Routledge, London, UK, 363.
- Sharma, S. 2007. *Planning and Development of Tourism and Hospitality*. Rajat publications, India.
- Soini, K. (Eds.). 2014. Luonnosta hoivaa ja voimaa: Miten arvioida Green Care -toiminnan vaikuttavuutta. *MTT Kasvu* 21. <http://www.mtt.fi/mttkasvu/pdf/mttkasvu21.pdf>
- Stock, P.V, Brickell, C. 2013. <http://www.gcfinland.fi/file/original/eettisetohjeet.pdf?fileId=18029>. Health and Place
- Swarbrooke, J. 1999. *Sustainable tourism management*. CAB International, Wallingford, UK, 371.
- TEM. 2014. Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020. Four good reasons to promote tourist industry development. (https://www.tem.fi/files/28018/Finlands_Tourism_Strategy_to_2020.pdf)
- Theobald, W. 2005. *Global Tourism*. Third Edition. Elsevier Inc. USA.
- Törn A. 2007. Sustainability of nature-based tourism. *Acta Universitatis Ouluensis, Series A*: 298. <http://herkules oulu.fi/isbn9789514286674/isbn9789514286674.pdf>.
- Törn, A., Tolvanen, A., Norokorpi, Y., Tervo, R., Siikamäki, P. 2008a. Comparing the impacts of hiking, skiing and horse riding on trail and vegetation in northern boreal and subalpine areas. *Journal of Environmental Management* (90):1427-1434.
- UNWTO. 2014. Sustainable tourism. (<http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5>).
- Törn, A., Siikamäki, P., Tolvanen, A., Kauppila, P., Rämetsä, J. 2008b. Local People, Nature Conservation, and Tourism in Northeastern Finland. *Ecology and Society* (13): 8. <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol13/iss1/art8/>
- Törn, A., Siikamäki, P., Tolvanen, A. 2010. Can horse riding induce the introduction and establishment of alien plant species through endozoochory and gap creation? *Plant Ecology* (208): 235-244.
- Vehmasto, E. (Eds.). 2014. Green Care -toimintatavan suuntaviivat Suomessa. *MTT Kasvu* 20. (<http://www.mtt.fi/mttkasvu/pdf/mttkasvu20.pdf>).
- Williams, P. W. & Fennell, D. A. 2002. Creating a sustainable equilibrium between mountain communities and tourism development. *Tourism Recreation Research* (27): 5-8.

BEST PRACTICES IN COMBINING TOURISM AND GREEN CARE

CAROLA D'AGOSTINO²² SONIA CERULLO²³

ABSTRACT

RICICLO' - reusing with style and taste²⁴, is a community-based project planned and implemented by a public-private partnership. The project is based on workshops, which involve local restaurants. The main idea is to create menus with local products grown at "Zero Miles" and based on ecological cooking, "Zero Waste" cooking, and to include these in eco-gastronomic tours promoting rural and mountain tourism in these areas.

INTRODUCTION

The project "RICICLO' - reusing with style and taste" - is a community-based project planned and realized by a public private partnership and funded by "Fondazione con il Sud", an Italian foundation that funds projects with a strong social impact. The partnership is composed of the CIF (Centro Italiano Femminile) province of Avellino, a voluntary association for women as the leader partner; the Municipality of Vallesaccarda, a little town in the South of Italy²⁵; the Association Agorà and; Percorsi Società Cooperativa.

The project introduced workshops for local restaurants. The idea was to create menus with local products grown at "Zero Miles" and based on ecological cooking with minimum waste – thus named "Zero Waste".

The purpose of the project is to push local restaurants to purchase and use local crops. Local products are of top quality and include organic farming. The project also develops ecological recipes based on local food heritage. The objective is to spread this culture all over the territory making the residents the first actors involved in welcoming rural and mountain tourists in these areas. The project also aims to develop the local touristic offer to strengthen food tourism in a little rural area. The first step is to involve one little town, Vallesaccarda, but this pilot could then be a model for other nearby towns.

Research on trends in consumer preferences confirmed the potential of tourism oriented to smaller areas with excellent food offer. They could be called "Slow destinations" according to the Slow food philosophy. These attractive areas are often characterized by a healthy environment and a strong presence of a traditional style of life. According to national estimates (Isnart-Unioncamere), in 2012 peculiar wine and food offer at a destination has driven tourism choices of about 5% of inbound and domestic tourists in Italy. Moreover, about 10 % of Italian wine and food tourists attribute their travel choices to their awareness of health issues. In fact, thanks to its nutritional properties, the Mediterranean diet represents one of the best nutritional regimes for human health. Thus, Italian food can also attract people for its healthy properties. Information about nutritional attributes of Italian food, in addition to its culinary and cultural value, should be promoted among consumers, producers and tourist operators to take advantage of the rich cultural and economic potential of the Mediterranean Diet.

There is a growing interest in the domestic and the foreign market for new touristic destinations

²² Via Archi 14 /a, 83100 Avellino, ITALY e.mail caroldago@libero.it - Percorsi società cooperativa a responsabilità limitata.

²³ Via Torello, 200, 83050 Vallesaccarda, ITALY e.mail soniacerullo@gmail.com- Agorà'- Associazione di Promozione Sociale

²⁴ The project is and funded by "Fondazione con il Sud", an Italian foundation that funds projects with a strong social impact. The partnership includes CIF (Centro Italiano Femminile) -a Voluntary Association for Women as the Lead Partner in the province of Avellino; the Municipality of Vallesaccarda - a little town in the South of Italy; Association Agorà and; Percorsi Società Cooperativa. The lead partner participates in a national network (with 500 local associations based in every Italian region: about 500 members in the Campania region and about 10,000 members in Italy) and two international networks: the "World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations" and the "European Women Lobby".

²⁵ Campania, about 100 km from Naples

like small and unique towns in mountain areas of Italy (source: Italian National Tourist Board). These destinations are seen, especially by tourists from Northern Europe, as places where you can feel the Italian “life style”. Short breaks and weekends are spent, not only in major European cities, but also in lesser known areas.

The current time of economic crisis has led to a need for small producers (that supply small rural tourism) to position themselves as focusing on quality, recovering traditions and strengthening eco-sustainability.

Involvement of local restaurants has opened the way for an “upgrade project”: eco- gastronomic itineraries. Sightseeing is used to strengthen the processes of socialization and sharing allowing new forms of self-sustenance. Trips usually last for one day or longer and a percentage of the fee paid by the participants and their families is donated to CIF. These autonomous activities are episodic and very unstructured. The future goal of is to offer “eco-gastronomic routes” in other areas as well.

SUCCESSFUL TOURISM STRATEGIC PLANS FOR DESTINATIONS

DR. VARMA, DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND SERVICES,
UNWTO

The development of a strategic tourism plan draws on the goals and priorities set by relevant stakeholders on planning, development, and management of tourism at national and/or destination level. A tourism strategy is an integrated framework that provides a roadmap /action plan for the achievement of policy objectives through the implementation of programs, projects, targeted actions and the allocation of human and financial resources. It guides the entire policy implementation process and provides a platform for interaction between various stakeholders. It articulates the roles and responsibilities of various partners which are essential to achieve the envisioned goals.

A successful strategic plan for tourism identifies priority areas and actions, and remains flexible to change. It allocates human and financial resources and prescribes a time-bound action plan for the implementation of activities. At the same, it ensures the implementation of joint activities in an inclusive and collaborative manner. All in all, it sets tourism in the overall context of destination and national development.

A typical tourism strategy structure would include the following major elements:

- *Situation Analysis.* An introduction to the existing policy vision and objectives; a realistic analysis of the current tourism scenario and; identification of key issues and challenges.
- *Way Forward.* Strategic directions and recommendations and; detailed actions to be taken in each sub-sector.
- *Action Plan.* Prioritization of actions in the short, medium and long term; identification of lead agencies; an estimated timeframe for implementation of activities; estimated budget and; success criteria.

The key components of a successful tourism strategy are:

- Strengthening industry leadership and coordination mechanisms;
- Identification of priority source markets;
- Marketing/destination branding and positioning;
- Education, vocational training and skills development;
- Quality standards;
- Physical planning and land use plans;
- Tourism regulation and investment facilitation;
- Statistics and research.

It cannot be overemphasized that strategic plans for tourism are gaining greater significance as destinations compete to attract tourists and provide them with the highest quality of experience, and at the same time, manage the social and environmental impacts of tourism on host communities, while also optimizing economic growth.

It is pertinent to mention that destination appeal and experiences offered are shaped by a wide variety of factors, including (among other things) attractions, services, facilities, accessibility, human resources, image, character and price. A strong coalition of participating stakeholders is required to ensure successful coordination of these elements towards a collective, sustainable destination vision.

The earlier development models of VERB (visitors, environment, residents and businesses) and VICE (visitor, industry, community and environment) have now been taken over by other models such as partnerships and an ecosystem approach. The partnership concept involves the visitors or the users, private sector actors (tourist services and facilities), governments (regulate the industry), global sales and distribution networks (better outreach), and citizens and communities as end ben-

eficiaries of any tourism development processes. As to the ecosystem approach, it uses ecological metaphors derived from nature and sees the sector (as organisms) as pro-active.

Partnerships have to be result-driven. All the partners have to engage, plan, invest, implement and monitor strategically. They have to reach the optimal comprehensive alignment and there has to be successful operational coordination. The partnership should capture all available capacities including planning, development, investment and marketing.

To sum up, a successful strategic plan for tourism of a destination should:

- Reflect a collective destination vision;
- Inform and attract visitors to the destination;
- Set the framework for delivering a quality experience in all destination elements;
- Forge strong, healthy and beneficial partnerships;

- Make optimum use of available human and financial resources; and
- Safeguard the progress and sustainability of the destination/host community in all respects – economic, social and environmental.

Some examples of successful thematic destination strategic plans include:

- *Product specific*: sun/sand/sea (Ibiza), culture (Rome), nature (the Grand Canyon), iconic (Taj Mahal, India and Angkor Wat, Cambodia), shopping (Hong Kong)
- *Product enhancement*: Maldives
- *Product diversification*: Egypt – from culture to holiday and leisure
- *Economic diversification*: Las Vegas
- *New destinations*: Croatia and Slovenia
- *High-value, low volume*: Bhutan, Uganda (Gorilla tracking)
- *Repeat visitation*: London, New York
- *Long stay*: Bali (Indonesia), Phuket (Thailand)

WWW.HELSINKI.FI/RURALIA



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI
RURALIA INSTITUTE