

Versatility in Hospitality Industry Around the Globe A Case Study on Sustainable Tourism-Armenia

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Abstract: *This paper summarizes the arguments and counterarguments within the scientific discussion on the issues of possible effects of tourism on sustainable development. Sustainable tourism must contribute to meeting the visitor needs, maintaining the environment and raising the wellbeing of host communities, developing the economy and local culture. The main purpose of the research is to analyze the meaning of sustainable tourism, aims and directions. The article presents the essence of sustainable tourism, aims identified by UNWTO and UNEP, pillars identified by UNWTO, the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) launched by the European Commission. The article evaluates some indicators of sustainable tourism in Armenia using the following seven dimensions: tourism assets, tourism activity, tourism-related linkages, tourism-related leakages, environmental and social sustainability, overall infrastructure, attractiveness. The investigation of the topic shows that the whole world walks towards sustainability. The global challenges are of high importance and every country must think about the negative effects of global warming, pollution, degradation, poverty, etc. The empirical analysis shows that there are many problems in sustainable development of tourism in Armenia. The research empirically confirms and theoretically proves that Armenia has a great potential for tourism development and steps must be undertaken to increase the environmental, cultural sustainability, develop infrastructures, raise competitiveness, etc. The main conclusion is that for sustainable development of tourism it is necessary to raise public consciousness and knowledge of other aspects of ecology and sustainable tourism, use renewable energy sources, ensure sustainable landfill and waste management, use electric or hybrid vehicles, etc. Sustainable tourism development in Armenia should contribute to socio-economic, cultural and environmental development of the country. The results of the research can be useful for the state organs, private sector, and also for researchers in the tourism sphere.*

Keywords: Principality, Romanian, Autonomous, Cultural

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism may be described as visiting a place as a tourist and trying to make only a positive impact on the economy, culture and environment of the destination assessing the current state of sustainability, in order to reveal the main issues and find solutions for.

Tourism as a global phenomenon develops very fast and year by year involves more and more people. The number of international tourist arrivals increased from 25 million (1950) up to 1,322 million in 2017. For 2050 the forecast is 1,874 million tourists in the world (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2016). The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was USD 8,272.3bn (10.4% of GDP) in 2017 in the world, the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment was 9.9% of full employment including jobs (313,221,000) indirectly supported by the industry, Travel & Tourism investment in 2017 was USD 882.4bn, or 4.5% of total investment (Travel & Tourism Economic Impact World, 2018). Here are some examples of our impact on environment (Sustaining tourism):

>10,000 people arrive in the Mayan Riviera every day – a destination where there is still no proper recycling,

>The average Canadian household used 326 litres of water per day....a village of 700 in a developing country uses an average of 500 litres of water per month and a luxury hotel room guest uses 1800 litres of water per person per night,



- >The average person in the UK uses approximately 150 litres of water per day – 3 times that of a local village in Asia,
 - >A species of animal or plant life disappears at a rate of one every three minutes,
 - >70% of marine mammals are threatened,
 - >The Western world (with 17% of the worlds' population) currently consumes 52% of total global energy,
 - >1 acre of trees absorbs 2. 6 tonnes of CO2 per year,
 - >Eating beef is the most water consumptive practice by travellers,
 - >Seawater is expected to rise 70 cm in the next 10 years
 - >By 2050 climate change could have directly led to the extinction of 30% of species, the death of 90% of coral reefs and the loss of half the Amazon rainforest
 - >Since 1970 a third of the natural world has been destroyed by human activity. Almost 2/3 are degraded by human activity,
 - >Half the world's population lives in urban areas and this figure is expected to increase. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 76% of the population live in urban areas
 - >The number of cars on the road surpassed 1 billion in 2010. Today it is 1.2 billion and will be 2 billion by 2035,
 - >A European uses 14x more energy than someone living in India,
 - >For every 1 degree rise in temperature above 34 degrees Celsius, yields of rice, maize and wheat in tropical areas could drop by 10%,
 - > Every year we dump 40 million tons of carbon pollution into our atmosphere.
 - >Although 70% of the earth's surface is water, only 3% is potable.
- So, here comes the need of sustainable tourism which will lead to sustainable use of all resources.



II. SUMMARY

Tourism in Armenia: Tourism is a growing sector in Armenia. Beside the regular inflow of diaspora, there is an increasing number of foreigners who visit the country. European ones are mostly Germans who enjoy sports and historical tourism. Italians tend to prefer religious tours: they visit the numerous monasteries, sometimes in combination with enogastronomic tours, which have a great potential in the Caucasus. Albeit considered a strategic asset for the country, tourism in Armenia still lacks an integrated approach, a mapping and in-depth study carried out by relevant institutions. To begin with, there is no responsible Ministry for Tourism: tasks are distributed among various sub-ministerial bodies and a commission. Before the stepping in of a new government following the elections scheduled on April 2, the outgoing executive is collecting inputs about local tourist realities. In this context, those involved in sustainable tourism seek to unite strength, to ensure this sub-sector of tourism - which has the highest relative growth on a global level - its due recognition. With this purpose the Acopian Center is launching the second annual conference on sustainable tourism, which is due to take place on April 15th. As explained by the director of the Center Alen Amirkhanyan, the first conference aimed at familiarizing with the principles of ecotourism and sustainable tourism and to give due visibility to the activities in the country that are already inspired by these concepts: it thus gathered experiences developed in the fields of outdoor sports, agri tourism and eco-farming, sustainable religious and cultural tourism. The same topics found their room in the Certificate Program in Tourism and Hospitality Management of the American University in Armenia, where ecotourism was included for the first time.[1]



Sustainability and tourist reception: Sustainable tourism in Armenia is not constrained by the scarcity of possible destinations, but rather by the fragmentation and lack of cohesion between the existing realities, by limited financial resources, and by the poor popularity among the general public. For instance, when the Monastery of Tatev was equipped with the longest funicular railway in the world the local community was invited to turn their homes into B&B, in order not to build hotels to meet the growing demand by visitors. Tatev is recognized as a UNESCO Outstanding Universal Value, and the preservation of the monastery and the environment in which it is located are Armenia's binding commitments. The local people were initially very sceptical about the proposal, unveiling a certain distance between the perceptions of local communities and of ecotourists who wish to live among locals and to contribute to poverty alleviation. A dedicated project helped to smooth the initial difficulties. Other realities are in the loop of environmentally sustainable tourism and of eco-volunteering. A few Armenian eco-farms are members of WWOOF, the organization which gathers volunteers who want to devote their holiday to working experience in sustainable farms. Some B&B and small farms offer organic food, in a still unclear legal framework of national standards and certifications. In the food and wine sectors, local initiatives gained the admission to Slow Food. This is the case of Mortal, an age-old Armenian cheese produced by six families in line with traditional methods, using Armenian terracotta pots to mature this goat cheese. Other organic products such as apricots, nuts and other local specialities have found their place in the Ark of Taste of Slow Food. Double hat for the *lavash*, the traditional bread spread in the Caucasus: in its Armenian variety is recognized as a Slow Food product and it is protected by UNESCO.

Why visit Armenia?: In 2018, The Economist named Armenia its "Country of the Year." The same year, the late Anthony Bourdain did an episode of Parts Unknown featuring Armenia as a burgeoning destination with a distinctive culture, mouthwatering cuisine, and riveting history. In a single day, a traveler can visit the first Christian church in the world, ride the longest ropeway in the world, and drink wine from a region whose production stretches back nearly 6000 years. This is all in addition to incredible views of Mount Ararat, where Noah's Ark came to rest, Lake Sevan, one of the largest freshwater alpine lakes in Eurasia, and Yerevan, a bustling capital offering extraordinary impressions around every corner. With all these incredible offerings, it is easy to understand why Armenian tourism is rapidly attracting international tourists

Tourism Unique Center: TUC was an idea born out of the NGO Center, a prominent conglomeration of civil society outlets located across Armenia. The goal was to increase exposure to the region, while ensuring that local communities benefited from their own knowledge and land. TUC started small and slowly grew its exposure within the country until year three, when the all-inclusive campsite was able to host over 1000 visitors from all over the world in just a single summer.

Community Involvement in Armenian Sustainable Tourism: TUC is located in the village of Dsegh, which is also the birthplace of Armenia's national poet Hovhannes Tumanyan. The community has historically rallied around the sense of pride this brings, and TUC provides the opportunity to reach a larger and more international base. All of TUC's operations are run by locals who provide upkeep, excursions, and masterclasses on Armenian cultural practices. The community is involved in decision making as TUC continues to flourish in the tourism sector.



TUC has created the infrastructure necessary to host domestic groups seeking to reconnect with traditional rural Armenian life. Corporate retreats and school field trips use the space and resources to come together. Weddings and festivals are often hosted by the organization as well. TUC, while aiming to promote identity and tourism, has created a bastion of community development that serves to benefit all stakeholders.

Eco Tourism in Armenia: Educated travelers and those who are more conscious of the relations in the surrounding world and the impacts of each trip on nature and locals, will truly enjoy sustainable tourism in Armenia and to them, traveling will bring true value.

Armenia is a great destination for people who want to travel responsibly. Its biological diversity and wildlife make the country a great destination for eco-tourism.

Located at the border of Europe and Asia, between the Black and Caspian Seas, Armenia is a home to diverse plants and animal species.

You can experience rural tourism, participate in various food masterclasses and in the production of local cheese and yogurt, wave famous Armenian carpets and enjoy fishing in the stunning landscapes at the Getik Valley. Village Urtsadzor, with its clean spring water and fresh mountain air, offers unique hiking paths. The village of Noragyukh is another popular destination for eco-tourism, with its unique flora and fauna.

The lovers of wildlife especially enjoy observing the bezoar goats in Shatin village and bird watching activities in the beautiful Lori region.

One of the best places to experience ecotourism in Armenia is Khosrov State reserve, offering picturesque walking routes, surrounded with waterfalls, ruins of the remote monasteries and beautiful natural monuments.

Dilijan National Park is another must visit destination, with its beautiful forest landscapes, rich biodiversity, medicinal mineral water springs, unique cultural monuments and several hiking trails that will take you through green forests, passing the isolated monasteries to the picturesque Parz Lake.

Start changing the world for the better with your eco-friendly vacation in Armenia.



III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Today many countries understand the necessity of sustainable development. Sustainable tourism issues are of high importance. It was firstly presented as nature and soft tourism. However, up until the late 19th century, nature journeys were not very popular. "Nature tourism" came into existence with the first discovery tours to the European Alps and the establishment of Alpine Associations.

Up until the mid-20th century, world trips remained possible only for the upper class. It was not until the technological development of the transport system and mass communication that more and more people started travelling. The term "Soft Tourism" was introduced in German-speaking countries in 1980, when futurologist Robert Jungk presented "Soft Travelling" as opposed to "Rough Travelling" of mass tourism in the magazine GEO. Soft Tourism was aimed at reducing or undoing consequences of tourism development by taking restrictive measures within spatial planning and regional policies and avoiding those consequences in the future. During the 90s, the concept of Soft Tourism was increasingly replaced by discussions about "Sustainable Tourism".

The term "Ecotourism" was introduced in 1965, when ecological issues were first integrated in tourism. It was mainly considered to be a form of tourism confined to visiting protected areas. This definition was later expanded to include in-



nature areas and the interests of the local population. Due to its focus on ecological issues only (apart from the fact that planes are the means of travel often used for ecotourism offers, despite their big footprint), Ecotourism is not compatible with the holistic objectives of Sustainable Development (Baumgartner, C., 2008). The UN World Commission on Environment and Development adopted the idea of sustainability in the "Brundtland report" in 1987 and defined sustainable development as follows: "Sustainable development is a process to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

This concept has evolved since 1987, through Agenda 21, the plan of action which emerged from the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992), and the plan of implementation from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002).

Three dimensions or pillars of sustainable development are now recognized and underlined. These are:

- Economic sustainability, which means generating prosperity at different levels of society and addressing the cost effectiveness of all economic activity.
- Social sustainability, which means respecting human rights and equal opportunities for all in society.
- Environmental sustainability, which means conserving and managing resources, especially those that are not renewable or are precious in terms of life support.

UNWTO has defined sustainable tourism as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities". Sustainable tourism should:

- Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity.
- 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.
- Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation (Making Tourism More Sustainable, 2005).

The need for sustainability arose from the recognition that the earth's limited resources could not support the rapid population and industrial growth as economic development moves to reduce poverty and increase standards of living among all countries. Most tourists wish to visit areas that are attractive, functional, clean and not polluted. Tourism can provide the incentive and means to maintain and, where needed, improve the environmental quality of areas. A high level of environmental quality is also very important for the local residents to enjoy. Tourism can help make residents more aware of the quality of their environment and support its maintenance and, where necessary, improvement (Neto, F., 2002). By the early 1990s, the attention paid to both the perceived negative impacts of tourism and to alternative approaches to its development had become re-focused through the specific lens of sustainable tourism and, since then, it has maintained a dominant position in both the academic study of tourism and in tourism policy and planning processes (Ashley, et al., 2001).

The definitions of sustainable tourism emphasize the following important features: quality, continuity and balance (Tao, 2005). Sustainable tourism is considered to be that form of tourism that favors long term management of resources in such a manner that the economic and social needs be met, maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biodiversity and vital needs feedback systems (Sandra, Jean-Marie, 2004). Driml (1996) refers to 'sustainable activity' when talking about the disruption of coasts (shoreline erosion and pollution, impact to coral reefs and fish spawning gro emergent phenomenon of linking industry sectors' names with the concepts of sustainable development, following its popularization. However, it could be argued that the evolution of the concept of 'sustainable tourism' was evident in the literature before the term sustainable development was officially used. An example of this is Rosenow and Pulsipher (1979), who called for 'new tourism' which could preserve towns, not exceed carrying capacities, enhance environmental and heritage values and educate tourists. Other examples include Butler's Destination Life Cycle Model (But-ler, 1980), which has been argued as reflecting the concept of sustainable development indirectly (Hunter, 1995) and the concept of carrying capacity (Stankey, 1973; Tivy, 1973). The differences in attitudes towards sustainable tourism are also evident in the way in which it is defined. Some advocates of sustainable tourism tend to define it as a parochial, sectoral term, emphasizing growth in order for viability to be maintained. It has been argued that although



the concept may have areas of mutual concern with sustainable development, it has its own specific tourism-centric agenda (Butler, 1993; Hunter, 1995; Wall, 1997). Consequently, these authors prefer to use the term sustainable development in the context of tourism, rather than sustainable tourism, in order to prevent the parochial assumption implied in the term sustainable tourism. In contrast to parochial definitions, many authors have tended to define sustainable tourism in broader terms, transferring the principles of sustainable development into the context of tourism needs (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Ding & Pigram, 1995; Hunter 1997; Muller, 1994; Sadler, 1993). Hunter (1997) has suggested a spectrum of four sustainable tourism approaches, based loosely on interpretations of sustainable development. This adaptive approach has been advocated by several other authors whose definitions range from being weak (emphasising satisfaction of tourists) through to strong (whereby tourism may only be allowed to operate at a small scale) (Carlsen, 1997; Coccossis, 1996). The main environmental impacts of tourism are: threats to ecosystems and biodiversity (loss of wildlife and rare species, habitat loss and degradation), deforestation (loss of forests for fuel wood and timber by the tourist industry also impact on soil and water quality, bio-diversity integrity, reducing the collection of forest products by local communities), water overuse (as a result of tourism/recreational activities), urban problems (congestion and overcrowding, increased vehicle traffic and resultant environmental impacts, including air and noise pollution, and health impacts), exacerbate climate change from fossil fuel energy consumption for travel, hotel and recreational requirements, unsustainable and inequitable resource use, energy and water over consumption, excessive production of wastes, litter and garbage (UNEP, 2002). The main negative economic impacts of tourism are: inflation; dominance by outsiders in land and property markets; inward-migration eroding economic opportunities for domestic industry including the poor, economic instability, crowding, excessive development, seasonal character of jobs, etc. Tourism may also have negative socio-cultural impacts: community conflict, cultural change, loss of authenticity, standardization, crime generation, etc.

UNWTO and UNEP identified 12 aims for sustainable tourism:

1. Economic viability: to ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term.
2. Local prosperity: to maximize the contribution of tourism to the prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally.
3. Employment quality: to strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.
4. Social equity: to seek a widespread distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor.
5. Visitor fulfillment: to provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.
6. Local control: to engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area, in consultation with other stakeholders.
7. Community wellbeing: to maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation.
8. Cultural richness: to respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities.
9. Physical integrity: to maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment
10. Biological diversity: to support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize damage to them.
11. Resource efficiency: to minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services [2]
12. Environmental purity: to minimize the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors (Making Tourism More Sustainable, 2005).

IV. CONCLUSION

So, tourism sustainability was assessed based on a number of quantitative indicators. illustrates interactions between seven dimensions. The link between assets and activity shows that the country is able to increase the tourism value by exploiting its tourism assets. The connection between activity and linkages assesses the capacity of the tourism sector to contribute to the activity of other economic sectors. The interaction between linkages and leakages shows if tourism could be more beneficial to the local economy and detects ways to transform leakages into linkages. The connection between activity and sustainability shows if tourism activities are sustainable both in environmental and social aspects. The link between activity-infrastructure shows if the infrastructure is sufficiently developed to respond to tourism demand and to support tourism development. The connection attractiveness-activity shows if the country is sufficiently attractive to enhance tourism activity, being a key factor in choosing a destination by tourists. So, a higher attractiveness index would have a positive impact on tourism activity. Based on the available data and evaluations of Armenia, we may resume, that the country has enough tourism assets, but there is a need to make them more attractive to form a touristic product and to attract tourists. Tourism has a great contribution to the economy; its multiplier effect shows that 1 foreign dollar creates 3.6 new dollars in the economy. We still have a problem concerning environmental and social sustainability. Armenia is the 102nd among 136 countries with the Environmental sustainability index. The infrastructure is also not developed sufficiently. We have problems with transport infrastructure, tourist service infrastructure, and ICT readiness. We have also problems with attractiveness. Our airport tickets are high, although our safety and security conditions are normal, price competitiveness is an essential indicator to choose the destination by tourists. So, the main key issues which need careful actions are connected with infrastructures, price attractiveness and environmental and social sustainability. There is a need to elaborate sustainable tourism development strategies in Armenia which will ensure a positive impact on economic and social conditions, environment and cultural heritage. For sustainable development it is necessary to change people's mentality, lifestyle, behavior, and rooted value system. One of the priorities is the formation of public consciousness, as well as knowledge of other aspects of ecology and sustainable tourism. Tourist organizations should use green licenses or ecolabels, use renewable energy sources, ensure sustainable landfill and waste management, use of electric or hybrid vehicles, etc. Sustainable tourism development in Armenia should contribute to socio-economic, cultural and environmental development of the country. It should contribute to the creation of jobs, poverty reduction, infrastructure development, equal economic development of the regions, rational use of natural resources, natural and environmental protection, preservation of cultural values, solution of people's social issues, human capital development, community development, the development of other sectors of the economy, etc

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