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METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO MANAGING RESOURCE PROVISION IN THE TOURISM THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: THE CASE OF UKRAINE AND THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN REGION

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Abstract. The tourism sector represents a strategically important component of the socio-economic development of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, contributing to employment, regional cohesion, heritage preservation, and international cultural exchange. However, contemporary challenges – including geopolitical instability, global economic fluctuations, and post-pandemic restructuring – have intensified competition for financial, human, infrastructural, and cultural resources in the tourism industry. These pressures are especially evident in Ukraine, where the consequences of war have significantly disrupted tourism infrastructure, investment flows, and destination management. Against this background, public-private partnerships (PPPs) have gained increasing recognition as a mechanism capable of mobilising additional resources, strengthening institutional capacity, and promoting long-term resilience in the tourism sector. The purpose of this study is to develop a methodological framework for assessing and managing resource provision in the tourism sector through PPPs, with a comparative focus on Ukraine and selected CEE countries (Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia). The research applies a mixed-method approach, combining statistical data analysis (Eurostat, OECD, WTTC, DESI) with expert evaluation to construct an Integrated Resource Effectiveness Index (IRET). The index incorporates five key resource dimensions: financial, infrastructural, human, innovation and digital, and natural-cultural. The comparative assessment demonstrates a clear regional differentiation: Poland and Czechia exhibit strong institutional systems for PPP implementation and high levels of tourism resource efficiency, while Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, and Slovakia show moderate but stable performance supported by digital transformation and targeted public investment. Ukraine, by contrast, remains at a transitional stage, with emerging but uneven PPP development, constrained financing, and limited integration of digital destination management tools. The findings emphasise that strengthening PPP frameworks can play a pivotal role in rebuilding tourism infrastructure, diversifying investment sources, and enabling sustainable resource utilisation in Ukraine. The study contributes to the academic literature by offering a comprehensive resource-based evaluation model that captures both quantitative performance indicators and institutional governance factors. Practically, the research provides evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, including the development of regional PPP support centres, blended-finance instruments, and digital platforms for monitoring tourism resource management. These strategic measures can support Ukraine's medium-term transition toward a more resilient and competitive tourism system within the broader CEE context.

Keywords: public-private partnership, tourism resource management, sustainable tourism development, Central and Eastern Europe, destination governance, investment mechanisms, digital transformation, Ukraine.

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1. Introduction

The contemporary development of the tourism sector is marked by intensified competition for resources and the growing need for innovative approaches to resource management (Dwyer & Edwards, 2020; Kozak & Kozak, 2021). Under conditions of global instability and security challenges, the use of public-private partnerships has become particularly significant, as such cooperation enables the mobilisation of investment, modernisation of infrastructure, job creation, and improvement of regional competitiveness (Casady et al., 2019; Thompson & Arowosafe, 2021; Bondinuba et al., 2025). For Ukraine and other Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, the optimisation of tourism resource management is closely linked to the alignment with European standards of project financing and monitoring through PPP models (Hassan, 2024; Wolfe, 2024). Evidence from Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Croatia, and Romania demonstrates that PPP-supported tourism development contributes to improving service quality, infrastructure renewal, and destination attractiveness (Roberts, 1999; Araujo & Bramwell, 1999; Selin, 1999). Despite existing research in tourism economics and public administration, the development of an integrated model for tourism resource management based on PPPs remains insufficiently elaborated in the Ukrainian context (Shevchenko, 2022; Zubchenko & Kaplan, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to substantiate theoretical and methodological approaches to managing tourism resource provision through PPPs and to formulate recommendations for their adaptation in Ukraine, drawing on CEE experience.

The research objectives include: analysing the structure of resource provision in tourism; identifying institutional aspects of PPPs; systematising approaches to evaluating management effectiveness; and proposing a model for applying PPP mechanisms in tourism development. The methodological basis includes systemic, structural-functional, and institutional approaches, supported by comparative and economic-statistical analysis.

The novelty of the study lies in conceptualising tourism resource management as a synergistic interaction between public and private actors, enabling more effective use of financial, institutional, human, and innovative resources. The practical significance is reflected in the potential for improving state tourism policy, regional infrastructure strategies, and investment attraction mechanisms.

2. Resource Provision and Institutional Foundations of Public-Private Partnerships in the Tourism Sector

Resource provision is a fundamental component of tourism management that determines the sector's development potential, competitiveness, and sustainability (Dwyer & Edwards, 2020; Kozak & Kozak, 2021). In contemporary conditions, the resource base includes not only natural, material, financial, and human assets, but also digital, informational, and institutional capacities that shape the quality and distinctiveness of tourism services (Medvedieva, 2021; Alazzam et al., 2023). This resource system is dynamic and requires continuous adaptation to technological change, market restructuring, and evolving consumer behaviour (Papageorgiou et al., 2020). Tourism resources are typically grouped into several clusters: natural-recreational, material and technical infrastructure, financial resources (including investment mechanisms and PPPs), human capital, digital information systems, and institutional-organisational governance frameworks (Franco & Estevão, 2010; Baggio & Cooper, 2010; Shevchenko, 2022). Effective resource management implies their integration through strategic planning, monitoring, partnership-oriented governance, and digital solutions to optimise resource flows (Malik & Kaur, 2020).

Recent trends in Central and Eastern Europe demonstrate the strengthening role of public-private partnerships in tourism development, particularly in infrastructure renewal, destination planning, and service innovation (Casady et al., 2019; Thompson & Arowosafe, 2021). More than one-third of major tourism infrastructure projects in the EU now operate within PPP frameworks, enabling the state to retain regulatory oversight while leveraging private investment and managerial efficiency (OECD, 2023; Wolfe, 2024; Buhalis, 2022).

In Ukraine, the relevance of PPPs has increased markedly due to a decline of over 40% in tourism capital investment since 2021 and extensive war-related damage to cultural and tourism facilities (DART, 2024). While tourism currently contributes around 2.1% to GDP – significantly lower than in Poland (4.5%) or Czechia (≈10%) – the sector retains substantial unrealised potential (World Bank, 2022; EBRD, 2023). The expansion of PPP implementation is therefore central to sectoral recovery and convergence with European standards (Araujo & Bramwell, 1999).

Despite institutional progress, practical PPP realisation remains constrained by limited managerial capacity, procedural fragmentation, and insufficient incentives for private investors (World Bank, 2023; Casady et al., 2019). Strengthening project planning expertise, improving regulatory predictability, and introducing risk-sharing tools – such as tax benefits, state-backed guarantees, and co-financing programmes – are required to increase investor participation (PPP Knowledge Lab, 2023).

Table 1 illustrates the dynamics of tourism tax revenues in Ukraine, showing the impact of the war and subsequent gradual recovery.

Table 1
Tourism Sector Financial Indicators in Ukraine, 2021–2025

Year	Tax Revenue (UAH mln)	% Change vs 2021	Notes
2021	630	—	Pre-war baseline
2023	490	-22%	Post-war decline
2024	680	+8%	Partial recovery
2025 Q1	799	+27%	DART, 2025

Source: compiled by the authors

However, the scale of damage to tourism infrastructure is considerable, requiring significant reconstruction investment (Table 2).

Thus, the sector faces a dual challenge: addressing urgent restoration needs while designing long-term investment models to enhance competitiveness. PPPs are central to this task, providing mechanisms for risk-sharing, diversified financing, and coordinated development of both infrastructure and digital transformation (OECD, 2023; Thompson & Arowosafe, 2021).

3. Assessment of the Effectiveness of Resource Management in the Tourism Sector: Case of Ukraine and Central and Eastern European Countries

The effectiveness of resource management in the tourism sector was assessed using a combined expert-statistical approach across five key resource categories: financial, infrastructural, human, innovation-digital, and natural-cultural. Financial resources refer to the scale and structure of public and private investment, including foreign direct investment. Infrastructural resources are reflected in the density and capacity of tourism facilities and transport accessibility. Human resources are evaluated by employment levels, professional qualifications, and labour productivity in the sector. Innovation and digital capacity is represented by the degree of service digitalisation, the prevalence of online bookings, and tourism-related start-ups. Natural-cultural resources encompass UNESCO heritage assets, ecological sustainability indicators, and the role of eco-tourism in GDP.

The evaluation process consists of several sequential steps. Initially, quantitative indicators are normalised according to the formula:

$$z_{ij} = \frac{x_{ij} - x_{min}}{x_{max} - x_{min}} \quad (1)$$

where x_{ij} represents the actual value of indicator j for country i, and x_{min} and x_{max} denote the minimum and maximum values across the set of countries considered.

Expert assessments are standardised using a five-point scale, subsequently transformed into a normalised range of 0-1:

$$E_{ij} = \frac{S_{coreij} - 1}{4} \quad (2)$$

The combined resource indicator is then computed by weighted aggregation:

$$C_{ij} = \alpha \cdot z_{ij} + (1 - \alpha) \cdot E_{ij} \quad (3)$$

where C_{ij} is the combined resource score for country i and indicator j, α represents the weight assigned to quantitative data (typically 0.6-0.7), and (1-α) – α corresponds to the weight of expert evaluation (0.3-0.4).

Finally, an integral index of resource management effectiveness (IRET) is calculated as:

$$IRET_i = \sum_{k=1}^{n} w_k \cdot C_{ik} \quad (4)$$

where w_k denotes the weight of each resource category (the sum of all w_k=1).

This methodology allows the combination of objective statistical data with expert insights, providing a reliable basis for cross-country comparisons and policy recommendations. The primary advantage of this methodology is its ability to integrate both objective quantitative data and practical experience from managers and scholars. This is particularly useful in countries with limited statistical reporting, such as Ukraine, where official data may be incomplete due

Table 2
Estimated Reconstruction Needs for Tourism Infrastructure in Ukraine

Category	Estimated Cost (USD bn)	Source
Cultural Heritage	4.2	UNESCO, 2024
Hotels and Accommodation	2.5	AP News, 2024
Transport Infrastructure	2.3	World Bank, 2022
Total	9.0	-

Source: compiled by the authors

to wartime disruptions (DART, 2025; UNESCO, 2024). Moreover, the combined approach facilitates the generation of an integrated country ranking, enabling the identification of strengths and weaknesses in resource management across different categories. The framework is flexible and can be adapted for monitoring the effectiveness of public-private partnerships over time, as recommended by OECD (2023) and World Bank (2023) (see Table 3).

The evaluation of resource management effectiveness in the tourism sector for Central and Eastern European countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, and Ukraine) was conducted using a comprehensive framework that combines expert assessments with statistical data. Five key clusters of indicators were considered: financial resources, infrastructural resources, human resources, innovation and digital resources, and natural-cultural resources. The analysis relied on data from Eurostat, WTTC, OECD, DESI (2024), and expert assessment of regional trends (see Table 4).

The results presented in Table 4 indicate a clear differentiation among Central and Eastern European countries in terms of the effectiveness of tourism resource management. Poland and Czechia demonstrate the highest levels of effectiveness, supported by well-established institutional frameworks, stable investment inflows, and advanced public-private partnership practices. Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, and Slovakia form a medium-efficiency group, characterised by comparatively strong human and digital resource capacities but more constrained financial and infrastructural foundations. Ukraine shows a moderate level of effectiveness due to the ongoing impact of war, limited access to investment capital, and underdeveloped digital and institutional support mechanisms. Overall, the findings highlight the critical role of coordinated policy frameworks, targeted investment strategies, and strengthened PPP mechanisms in enhancing resource resilience and tourism sector competitiveness across the region.

As shown in Table 5, the comparative assessment of tourism resource management effectiveness across Central and Eastern European countries demonstrates distinct performance groupings, reflecting differences in institutional capacity, investment climate, and strategic governance approaches.

The classification in Table 5 demonstrates clear differences in the ability of the analysed countries to mobilise and manage tourism resources. Poland and Czechia show the highest effectiveness, supported by established PPP frameworks, stable investment flows, and coordinated destination governance. The medium group (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, and Slovakia) displays generally balanced systems but continues to face challenges such as uneven regional development and varying progress

Table 3
Evaluation Framework for Resource Management Effectiveness

Resource Cluster	Indicators	Data Source	Weight w_k
Financial Resources	Public & private investments, FDI	DART, World Bank PPI Database	0.25
Infrastructure	Tourism enterprises per 100k pop., accommodation capacity, transport quality	Ribashotels Group, ETC Corporate	0.20
Human Resources	Employment share, workforce qualifications, productivity	Bayekeyev et al., 2022	0.20
Innovation & Digital	Digitalisation level, online bookings, tourism startups	OECD, Medvedieva, 2021	0.20
Natural-Cultural	UNESCO sites, ecological index, eco-tourism revenues	UNESCO, 2024; AP News, 2024	0.15

Source: compiled by the authors

Table 4
Expert Evaluation of Resource Management Effectiveness in the Tourism Sector of Central and Eastern European Countries

Country	Financial Resources	Infrastructure	Human Resources	Innovation & Digital Resources	Natural-Cultural Resources	IRET	Effectiveness Level
Poland	0.85	0.88	0.82	0.80	0.77	0.82	High
Czechia	0.83	0.86	0.84	0.79	0.81	0.83	High
Hungary	0.72	0.75	0.71	0.68	0.73	0.72	Medium
Slovakia	0.70	0.72	0.69	0.66	0.70	0.69	Medium
Lithuania	0.67	0.70	0.74	0.75	0.68	0.71	Medium
Latvia	0.65	0.68	0.70	0.73	0.66	0.68	Medium
Estonia	0.64	0.66	0.72	0.82	0.65	0.70	Medium
Ukraine	0.50	0.55	0.58	0.52	0.60	0.55	Moderate

Source: constructed by the authors

Table 5

Summary Classification of Tourism Resource Management Effectiveness in Central and Eastern Europe

Effectiveness Level	Countries
High (0.80–1.00)	Poland, Czechia
Medium (0.65–0.79)	Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia
Moderate (0.50–0.64)	Ukraine

Source: constructed by the authors

in digital transformation. Ukraine, positioned at the moderate level, reflects a transitional model of resource governance. While PPP practices are gradually strengthening – particularly in western regions – further progress depends on enhancing financial instruments, administrative capacity, stakeholder cooperation, and digital monitoring tools. Strengthening these components is essential for advancing towards the performance levels observed in neighbouring Central European states.

To further illustrate differences in resource structures rather than individual indicators, a heat map was developed (Figure 1), highlighting relative strengths and gaps across the five resource clusters for each country. This visualisation clarifies strategic advantages and areas requiring targeted policy intervention.

The heat map highlights distinct structural patterns across the analysed countries. Ukraine records the lowest values in financial and infrastructural clusters, largely due to war-related disruptions and restricted investment access, while its natural and cultural resources remain relatively resilient. Overall, these differentiated profiles emphasise the need for tailored development approaches: countries with advanced digital ecosystems may prioritise smart destination management, whereas states with resource-rich but financially constrained contexts, such as Ukraine, should focus on PPP-driven infrastructure reconstruction and investment mobilisation.

To further examine the structural similarity and differentiation of tourism resource systems across the analysed countries, a cluster map based on Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was constructed (Figure 2). The PCA projection reduces the multidimensional resource indicators into two principal components, allowing for the visualisation of relative proximity between national tourism resource models.

The spatial analysis reveals three distinct clusters. Poland and Czechia form a closely aligned group, characterised by strong institutional capacity, diversified investment mechanisms, and mature public–private partnership frameworks. Their balanced resource structures, combining robust financial, infrastructural, and human capital bases, underpin sustained tourism competitiveness. A second cluster comprising Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia reflects a digital transformation-oriented model. These states

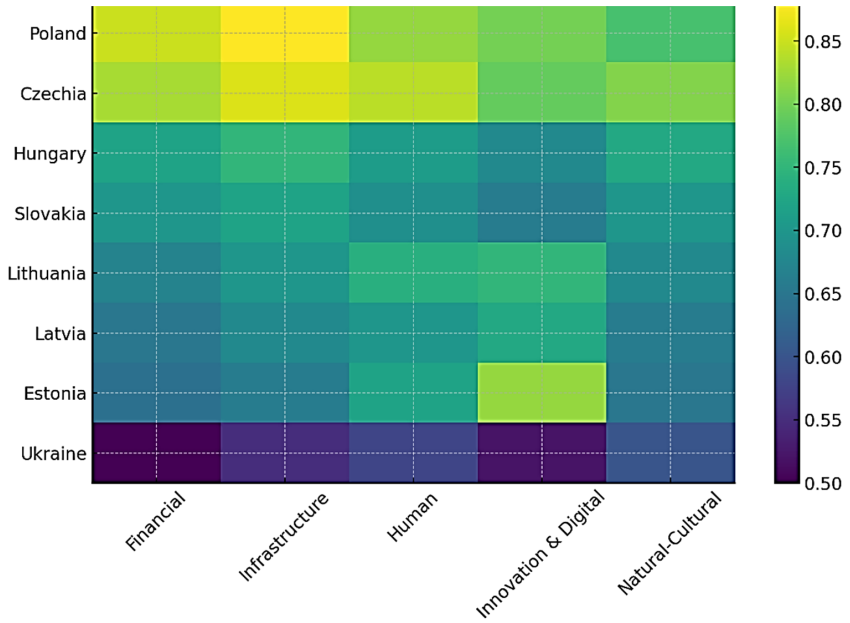

Figure 1. Heat Map of Resource Provision Profiles in Tourism Sector across CEE Countries

Source: constructed by the authors using Eurostat, OECD, WTTC, and DESI data, 2024

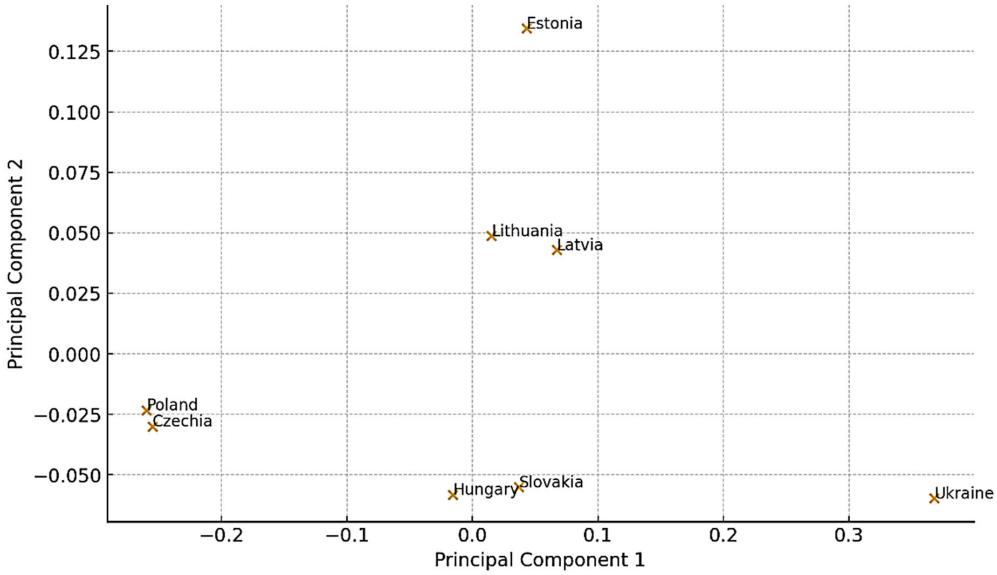

Figure 2. PCA-Based Cluster Map of Tourism Resource Models in Central and Eastern Europe

Source: constructed by the authors using Eurostat, OECD, WTTC, and DESI data, 2024

demonstrate advanced implementation of smart tourism systems and integrated digital platforms, though their resource structures are shaped by lower infrastructural density and more limited investment capacity, consistent with smaller domestic markets and innovation-led development strategies. Conversely, Ukraine appears as a separate trajectory rather than embedded within the established clusters. Its natural and cultural resource base remains substantial, but financial and infrastructural constraints – intensified by wartime disruptions – impede the consolidation of a stable tourism resource model. This positioning underscores the strategic importance of PPPs as a mechanism for addressing structural imbalances and supporting convergence with more resilient tourism systems in the CEE region.

5. Conclusions

This study examined the methodological foundations and practical mechanisms for managing resource provision in the tourism sector through public–private partnerships, with a comparative focus on Ukraine and Central and Eastern European countries. The research demonstrated that tourism resource management in the region is characterised by considerable heterogeneity, shaped by differences in institutional maturity, investment availability, digital transformation, and the strategic prioritisation of sustainable destination development. Poland and Czechia exhibit the highest levels of resource management effectiveness, supported by well-developed PPP frameworks, diversified financing instruments, and strong destination governance. In contrast, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, and Slovakia represent countries with moderately effective systems, where resource utilisation is gradually improving through targeted investment and digital innovation. Ukraine remains at a transitional stage, where the potential of PPPs is recognised but not yet fully realised due to structural constraints and the ongoing impacts of war.

The research contributes to the academic discourse on tourism development by offering an integrated evaluation model (IRET) that combines quantitative indicators of resource availability with qualitative assessments of governance and institutional performance. This model expands resource-based and sustainability-oriented approaches to tourism by demonstrating how PPPs function not merely as financial instruments but as multidimensional governance mechanisms facilitating collaboration, innovation, and long-term resilience. The study therefore provides a conceptual bridge between resource provision, destination management, and partnership governance in the tourism sector.

The empirical results support several policy recommendations for strengthening tourism resource management in Ukraine: the establishment of regional PPP support and advisory centres to improve project preparation capacity; the introduction of blended financing instruments and state-backed guarantees to attract private investment; the development of digital destination management platforms to enhance monitoring, coordination, and transparency; the integration of community-based and business cluster models to support local economic development. These measures can facilitate post-war

recovery, promote sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage, and improve Ukraine's integration into the tourism networks of Central and Eastern Europe.

Further research should explore: the long-term resilience of PPP-driven tourism infrastructure under conditions of crisis and reconstruction; the role of digital and data-driven governance tools in enhancing destination competitiveness; behavioural dynamics and trust-building mechanisms between public authorities, private investors, and local communities. Longitudinal, region-specific, and mixed-method studies will be particularly valuable for monitoring the progression of Ukraine's tourism sector from recovery to sustainable growth.

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