

## **THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT: SWEDEN'S EXPERIENCE FOR UKRAINE**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The war in Ukraine has already caused and continues to cause damage to many areas, including major negative consequences for the tourism sector. In 2019, Ukraine received almost 13.7 million international tourists per year. Tax revenues from the tourism industry in the first six months of 2022 decreased by 26 percent compared to the same period in 2021<sup>1</sup>. Such catastrophic consequences – mined territories, natural landscapes damaged by military actions and destroyed cities, destroyed monuments of historical and cultural heritage – pose huge challenges for future tourism development in Ukraine<sup>2</sup>.

The World Bank predicts that the number of poor people in Ukraine will almost quadruple because of the war. According to the World Bank, in 2022, almost 20% of Ukrainians had to live on less than \$5.50 per day (the international poverty line for upper-middle-income countries), before the war, only 1.8% of them did. According to the UNDP, Russia's protracted war against Ukraine could cause extreme poverty for 90% of the population<sup>3</sup>.

After the end of the war, Ukraine will need new approaches to quickly restore all socio-economic processes. Worldwide, tourism is the second largest contributor to national economies, and over the past few decades, it has not only grown significantly as an instrument of regional economic growth but has also become a key socio-economic force in both emerging and mature markets<sup>4</sup>. However, tourism needs to be developed with sensitivity to natural resources and cultural environments, both to ensure the environmental and cultural integrity of the tourist destination areas and because of the foreseen increase in demand for socially, environmentally and economically

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<sup>1</sup> Report of State Agency for Tourism Development of Ukraine, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> 'Rapid damage and needs assessment', 2022. World Bank; Government of Ukraine; European Commission. 2022. Rapid damage and needs assessment. The World Bank, Washington, DC. License: CC BY 3.0 IGO. URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/37988>

<sup>3</sup> The development impact of the war in Ukraine - Initial Projections. UNDP, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Travel and tourism: direct contribution to GDP worldwide 2019 WTTC Report, 2019. URL: <https://www.wttc.org/>

responsible tourism<sup>5</sup> The post-war restoration of the tourism sector in Ukraine, thus should take into account the principles of sustainability<sup>6</sup>.

A key strategy to strengthen sustainability in tourism destination management is to use an integrated approach that includes all interested parties, independent of influence or interests, for direct or indirect participation in the creation and implementation of quality tourism development at the regional level. The main function of this approach is to unite and coordinate stakeholders with different interests within a tourist destination in order to create a quality product and a recognizable image of the destination, as well as to achieve long-term sustainable competitiveness of the region as a whole<sup>7</sup>.

However, the most emphasized problem in the concept of sustainable development of tourism is the management system, which plays a key role in the formation and implementation of the socio-economic development policy of the region.

In order to contribute to the reconstruction of post-war Ukraine on the principles of sustainable development, to find the best European practices in the development of tourist destinations and to conduct a comparative cross-country analysis, the aim was to evaluate different models of tourist destination management and the influence of the level of involvement of interested parties on indicators of the sustainability of the development of tourist destinations.

It is important to study the experience of involvement of tourism destination stakeholders in the destination management system because:

*First*, there is a need to take into account the interests of local residents: neither the tourism business nor the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) can claim ownership of the destination. Tourism is a phenomenon in the public domain and common space, a destination based on the identity of the destination, which is preserved and passed on from generation to generation by the people who call it home. This means that a destination can welcome tourism, but tourism cannot claim a destination, its resources, culture, people or space. In many respects, tourism businesses need

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<sup>5</sup> Saarinen J. (2020). *Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals. Research on Sustainable*. Tourism Geographies.

<sup>6</sup> 'Rebuilding Ukraine: Principles and policies' (2022) edited by Yuriy Horodnichenko, University of California, Berkeley Ilona Sologub, Vox Ukraine Beatrice Vedere di Mauro, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and Center for Economic and Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and Center for Economic and Political Studies.

<sup>7</sup> Kauppila, P., Saarinen, J., & Leinonen, R., (2009). *Sustainable Tourism Planning and Regional Development in Peripheries: A Nordic View*. Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 9(4):424–435. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1502225090317527>

“permission” to operate from the local community. The aim of this study is to identify governance models that create trust and accountability – models that reflect and respect the real ownership of the destination by the local community.

*Secondly*, it is the value of the destination: by promoting the place where people live, DMOs have a special responsibility to that place. Destination marketers are responsible not only for attracting more visitors, but also for adding value. As many places and destinations emerge from the pandemic crisis, they are rebuilding their narratives – bringing them back into the imaginations of visitors and destinations. Therefore, the study will explore the possibilities of ensuring the democratic imperative of representing the identity and values of people and places, adding value to the local community.

*Thirdly*, hospitality versus hostility: tourist destinations in Europe, in particular, have experienced a major crisis related to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. After the pandemic crisis, Ukraine's tourist destinations also faced the terrible consequences of Russia's military aggression. However, after the war is over, Ukraine's tourist regions must prepare to welcome visitors again, but the return of tourism is not necessarily met with enthusiasm from locals. From an era when residents to a period of no tourism increasingly perceived tourism as invasive, we are likely now looking at a time of heightened sensitivity among locals to the return of tourism. There are already signs that residents' sentiments will not be focused solely on open and welcoming cities in the hope of a quick recovery. Instead, we are likely to see elements of visitor phobia with demands for restrictions and regulation.

This increases the relevance of continued engagement in shaping the long-term accountability and sustainability of tourism development over the coming years. Well-designed sentiment surveys of all destination stakeholders are a good way to start, but there is a need to activate the data through open conversation and real engagement and actual impact on the issues raised.

*Fourthly*, balance and equilibrium between the interests of all destination stakeholders: for years, DMOs have been discussing what M means – balancing the role of marketing and management. In the search for this new balance, new gaps sometimes emerge between the main stakeholders in destination development:

1. Political decision-makers (municipal, regional, national).
2. Stakeholders of the commercial tourism industry.
3. Local community and citizens.
4. DMO – often in the “no-man's” land between them.

In some issues, the interests of destination stakeholders are the opposite, which negatively affects the sustainability of its development. On the one

hand, pressure from industry associations may increase for a rapid resumption of tourism growth. Nevertheless, this movement may face resistance from an uncertain local population that seeks the convenience of life rather than increased visitor traffic. The success of a DMO is thus measured by its ability to ensure continued growth, balancing this with its ability to bridge the gap between different parties, without an actual mandate to do so. As such, the DMO risks losing support and license to operate from all sides. This is why now is the time to build trust, accountability and legitimacy through tools that directly engage all destination stakeholders.

*Fifth*, research on participation and democratic innovations has shown that more inclusive and democratic procedures tend to generate more altruistic behaviour and more sustainable decisions, both by strengthening the legitimacy of the decisions but also contributing to increasing knowledge, awareness and consciousness of the need for other people and the environment. Thus, a more inclusive tourism management practice can be expected to generate more sustainable decisions and practices.

### **1. The global concept of sustainable tourism development: consideration in Sweden and Ukraine**

A sustainable future is everyone's responsibility – of course also the hospitality industry. Agenda 2030 and the global sustainability goals are the starting point for development in the region. In order for the goals to be reached, it is necessary that everyone take responsibility for them – countries, regions, companies and organizations.

Sustainable development has consciously supported the development, due to which the role of management, self-governance and self-organization is increasing. The change in the functions of the state should take place because of the activation of its regulatory functions by establishing development parameters and monitoring their compliance. The key means of realizing the transition to sustainable development is the managed systemic transformation of society, the economy and the state, which will lead to their transition to a higher level of development. The development of tourism and the hospitality industry, taking into account the approach and tools of the rational and responsible use of recreational and tourist resources in compliance with the principles of sustainable development, is an important, but also difficult task, which often requires effectively established cooperation between private and public entities.

The concept of sustainable development of tourism is closely related to the concept of sustainable management of tourist destinations, the main goals of which are to achieve a balanced three-sectoral development of tourist regions (destinations). The tourism industry relies on long-term planning and foresees

an increase in the availability and demand for socially, environmentally and economically responsible tourism as one of the tools to achieve sustainable development goals with sensitivity to natural resources and cultural environment<sup>8</sup>.

Considering the large number and uniqueness of tourist resources, Ukraine has a substantial potential for the development of the tourism sphere for creating complex, high-quality tourism offers while preserving the authenticity of the territory and respecting the interests of local communities. Sweden is identified as a frontrunner when it comes to sustainable tourism in international rankings. Our study also identified that many tourism destinations have started to move from weak sustainability to stronger forms of sustainability. In addition, Sweden is among the countries that have shown readiness to take part in the reconstruction processes of various industries and regions of Ukraine<sup>9</sup>. Sweden is an excellent example of territory planning based on the ideology of tourism sustainable development stresses a need to respect the environmental, socio-cultural and economic base of the area and therefore, the regional development-centred model can be interpreted as better representing the concept of sustainability<sup>10</sup>.

***Swedish experience of sustainable tourism development.*** Sweden has long-term and systematic cooperation with relevant international actors to promote the development of sustainable tourism globally.

Sweden is often associated with a beautiful and easily accessible nature with attractive nature experiences but also with dynamic urban environments with culture, well-preserved cultural environments, architecture, design, dining experiences, shopping, meetings and events. Sweden has a valuable and accessible cultural heritage and many seasonal experiences and activities such as winter sports and summer camping. Today, tourism and the hospitality industry are integral parts of rural development and contribute to direct employment and diversified entrepreneurship. Indirectly can tourism also create positive effects for surrounding businesses?

A common denominator for the hospitality industry's operations is that they are often location-bound, i.e. in one place and in principle cannot be moved. The concept of place development covers that of individuals, entrepreneurs and public property and places and how these can be developed together. It can create benefit for a place to protect and develop the local

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<sup>8</sup> Saarinen J. (2020). *Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals. Research on Sustainable*. Tourism Geographies.

<sup>9</sup> Document of the Ukraine Recovery Conference URC2022 'Lugano Declaration' (2022).

<sup>10</sup> Kauppila, P., Saarinen, J., & Leinonen, R. (2009). *Sustainable Tourism Planning and Regional Development in Peripheries: A Nordic View*. Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 9(4):424–435. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1502225090317527>

conditions for the residents but also for tourism. Where there is cooperation and a willingness to receive visitors, tourism can help develop the place and make cities, towns and sparsely populated and rural areas more attractive. Tourism that develops in collaboration with the local population including minority groups included can contribute to goal 11 in Agenda 2030, which is about making cities and settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. In order for the values found in a place to be an asset for residents and visitors, it is important that public actors consider these values in their regular plans and processes.

***Local cooperation for further development.*** Municipalities, regions, businesses and civil society cooperates and can create incentives for sustainable cities, urban areas and sparsely populated and rural areas. Urban development takes place in different constellations, often in collaboration between municipalities and restaurants, commerce, organizers, activity companies and property owners, among other things in active centre associations and destination companies.

The aim is to create attractive and safe environments for residents, visitors and businesses. Rural and coastal development can be developed through other forms of local collaboration, for example through the so-called leader method, which is based on the private, non-profit and public sectors coming together in a partnership for the development of the region. Another form of cooperation takes place in the work with biosphere areas, which shows how utilization and conservation can go hand in hand.

The location cooperation is dependent on the structure of business life, how municipalities and regions are organized and the degree of participation from civil society. There is no one-size-fits-all model. However, there is a clear shift going on that makes local participation increasingly important. An important part of the work with tourism development is financing, which requires that businesses and the public think in new ways lanes and work together. This in turn raises questions that sometimes require handling within the framework of EU state aid rules or the law (2016:1145) on public procurement.

***Land use and tourism.*** The larger cities will continue to be important nodes for tourism as a whole, both as their own destinations and as the first stop for visitors' travels in Sweden. They are important engines for Sweden's attractiveness as a tourist country. In the cities, the balance between visitors and residents becomes important. Land use interests, flows of people, public spaces and transport and traffic are examples of aspects that need to be managed. The bigger cities are often hubs in the transport system. In order for them to be well equipped to receive visitors and achieve long-term sustainable

tourism, the tourism perspective can be included more in urban planning and spatial planning.

Tourism is also important to rural and coastal communities, and through destination cooperation that includes both urban and rural areas, new visitor destinations can be created and developed and the attractiveness of entire regions be strengthened.

For the development of the hospitality industry in rural and coastal communities, land and water use are important issues that must be dealt with based on different interests and needs and taking into account ownership and user rights. A prerequisite for developing tourism linked to place attachment is that there is interaction and mutual respect between the entrepreneur and the landowner regarding the use of another's land (private or public) for commercial purposes. The relationship to public rights and other regulations also needs to be respected. Most companies in the hospitality industry have little or no land holding, which means that the need to use someone else's land increases and thus possible goal conflicts that need to be managed. Balance of interests needs to be done in the individual case. Collaboration models and agreements, forums for dialogue as well as information about the meaning of public rights and other regulations relating to place-bound resources for entrepreneurs and visitors are important tools to contribute to the development of sustainable places and destinations.

Mutual knowledge and respect create positive values for both companies and landowners.

The municipalities have several roles in this context, partly as promoters of local business development, partly according to the law as responsible for the physical planning of land, water and the built environment. The municipality must weigh different interests against each other both to be able to create a good living environment and to develop sustainable tourism. Business promotion and tourism promotion are not statutory but voluntary commitments by the municipalities.

Tourism's complex actor system creates a need for overall coordination so that the chain between financial resources, efforts and priorities is clarified and improved. It is important that efforts as well as actors at the national, regional and local level pull in the same direction so that the efforts lead to sustainable development.

***Cooperation at the national level.*** The state has commitments that directly or indirectly affect the hospitality industry. The work takes place both at authorities and with state-owned companies. The state has several roles, partly as coordinator, and partly in the capacity of actor in the system because the state owns, manages, supervises, promotes and influences investments and regulations.

As the issues of the hospitality industry and tourism span several policy areas, there can be benefits in clarifying and coordinating these so that working methods are created that take into account the needs and obligations of the hospitality industry and tourism.

The Agency for Growth<sup>11</sup> has the government's mandate to be responsible for coordination and cooperation in tourism. The authority also has a role in knowledge and quality development as well as responsibility for tourism statistics.

In the work, there are connections and synergies with several of the Agency's other areas of responsibility within regional development policy and rural policy, regulatory simplification and business promotion. State's agricultural agencies also have a prominent role in promoting tourism and hospitality in rural and coastal areas through support for business development. The Swedish Agricultural Agency and the Rural Network, which is a network of organizations, associations and authorities that are important in various ways for rural development, also contribute by producing a knowledge base with the aim of strengthening and anchoring the development of the hospitality industry in rural areas.

The Growth Agency leads the work of the Tourism Industry Authority Group, as part of its responsibility for coordination and cooperation in tourism. The authority group is a platform for joint strategic priorities and is based on jointly established goals. The work of the authority group is important for creating cross-border cooperation and understanding the conditions of the hospitality industry and clarifying the responsibility that each authority has for creating good conditions for industry and tourism development. The knowledge and consensus that is created in the authority group are used in various processes and important support in governmental coordination for tourism and hospitality.

Visit Sweden AB (Visit Sweden) has responsibility for the marketing of Sweden as a tourism country<sup>12</sup>.

Since January 1, 2020, Visit Sweden is fully owned by the state. During the pandemic, Visit Sweden's mission has been expanded to also include marketing towards the Swedish target group. The mission in the home market should be seen as a complement to the work of local and regional destinations.

***Multi-level cooperation.*** Collaboration is needed at several levels where national investments contribute to creating value for local and regional work.

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<sup>11</sup> Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth – Government.se.  
URL: <https://www.government.se/government-agencies/swedish-agency-for-economic-and-regional-growth/>

<sup>12</sup> Sweden's official website for tourism and travel information | Visit Sweden.  
URL: <https://visitsweden.com/>



It is valuable to the hospitality industry actors and not least, the regional tourism organisations in many cases included in the regional development processes and partnerships.

Ultimately, tourism operates in a local context. Tourism development and growth throughout the 21st century has meant that many municipalities in addition to the regions planning for tourism from a broader perspective than before. Many municipalities and regions have also developed their own strategies. Involving, disseminating and sharing knowledge at regional and municipal levels is valuable for the sustainable development of tourism.

***A strengthened dialogue with the hospitality industry.*** In addition to coordination and governance at the state level need government a close dialogue and strengthened cooperation with representatives of companies, destinations, regions, municipalities and the non-profit sector.

A hospitality industry council has therefore been established with the aim of regularly holding strategic talks with representatives for the industries within the hospitality industry regarding opportunities and challenges.

Since the hospitality industry includes actors and companies of varying sizes and with widely different areas of activity, there is also a need for a focal point that can coordinate different perspectives, formulate the needs of the hospitality industry and be the driving force in the development work. Therefore, the government has tasked the Agency for Growth to support and facilitate the hospitality industry in 2020/2021 to develop a collaboration arena with the aim of contributing to the development of the industry.

***Easier doing business.*** Easy-to-understand and effective rules as well as good treatment and service from authorities are central parts of the work to improve the conditions for entrepreneurship. Rules must be proportionate and designed and applied in a way that does not entail unnecessary costs, administration or restrictions for the companies. Regulations and policies must promote innovation and take advantage of the opportunities in technological and digital development. An important component in the design of rules is to assess the consequences for business. The administrative costs that follow rules should decrease over time. For the hospitality industry, it is particularly important that the consequences of the regulations for small businesses be reasonable.

Short processing times are particularly important for companies in the hospitality industry that need various permits and often conduct several different and seasonal operations. Digitized permit processes can lead to shorter processing times and mean simplification for both companies and licensees.

One of the starting points for the government's work with simpler and more effective rules is that the company's contact with the public sector must primarily take place digitally. Digital services make it easier to provide information and make the handling process more transparent.

It is important that there is correct and easily accessible information about what is required to comply with the rules, and information about the supports that are available and easily accessible digital government services, not least for fewer businesses. Here, the digital platform shared by the authorities, [verksam.se](https://verksam.se), fulfils an important function and, in addition to general information, it offers, among other things, checklists for starting restaurants, hotels, camping and events. In addition, the program "Servet", which is run by the Agency for Growth and the Swedish Companies Agency in collaboration with, among others, Sweden's municipalities and regions, is an important step towards digitized and simplified processes at the municipal level.

Simplifying for companies is also about prevention work. By having a dialogue with the stakeholders of the hospitality industry at an early stage, before new laws and regulations start to be applied, the probability increases that these are designed in an accurate and expedient manner way right from the start. It is also about systematically working with evaluation and change of the regulations.

***Basic documents in the field of sustainable development of tourism in Sweden.*** On June 3, 2022, the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism and the Growing Tourism Industry was adopted<sup>13</sup>. According to the mentioned document, the policy should create opportunities for increasing the productivity of the tourism industry and opportunities for the development of new and sustainable enterprises, business models and markets. Innovative environments that maximize the use and development of tourism and the potential of the tourism industry are important. A clear link with local development, local involvement and cooperation is also important.

This strategy envisages the government setting the desired situation for the Swedish tourism industry ten years from now. This can help establish a coordinated approach, contributing to the sustainable development of the entire system of tourism industry entities.

According to the provisions of the strategy, support to market participants can be provided at different levels – private, non-commercial and public forms of support, cooperation can be used in local and regional strategies, and action

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<sup>13</sup> Swedish National tourism strategy Barents Working Group on Tourism November 2021.  
URL: [https://barents-council.org/document/2021-11-25-Sweden\\_National\\_Tourism\\_Strategy\\_Nov-2021.pdf](https://barents-council.org/document/2021-11-25-Sweden_National_Tourism_Strategy_Nov-2021.pdf)

plans. Thus, the strategy can contribute to the efficient use of public funding and resources, as well as improving synergies between sectors.

**Regional level.** Taking into account the provisions of the strategic and program documents for the region, the Dalarna policy of sustainable tourism development is fundamental for effective economic, ecological, and social development, preservation, and careful treatment of natural resources and cultural heritage of the region. To this end, the region supports the concept of developing sustainable companies that consciously work towards economic, social, and environmental sustainability throughout their activities. Moreover, they evaluate their activities according to standards of sustainable development. Sustainable development policy according to the Dalarna Development Strategy 2030<sup>14</sup> is one of the priority areas of activity that should permeate all areas of management efforts, regardless of whether we are working with future marketing communications or with our internal product development. Along with digitalization and internationalization, these are the three most important challenges that we at Dalarna must address in order to be competitive in the global competition in 2030. In addition to working to make Dalarna a sustainable destination from a visitor perspective, a sustainability policy<sup>15</sup> and environmental plan<sup>16</sup> for internal operations have also been developed.

The region of Örebro is prioritized for the development of business and event tourism. Therefore, a significant decrease in tourism development indicators was observed during the last 2 years of the pandemic. The purpose of the municipal company Örebrokompaniet is the marketing of Örebro, the promotion of business and leisure tourism in Örebro, and the implementation of tourist activities. Örebrokompaniet promotes the Örebro brand on the international and domestic market. This work will be carried out in cooperation with the business community and other local players such as Örebro University and Örebro Regional Council. Örebro strives to become an attractive and bright region for everyone according to the vision of the Regional Development Strategy of Örebro County for 2022-2030<sup>17</sup>. In April 2021, the Mapping of Sustainable Tourism in Örebro County was developed<sup>18</sup>, according to which much attention is paid to the establishment of effective communications between all market participants.

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<sup>14</sup> Strategi 2030 | Besöksnäring Dalarna (besoksnaringdalarna.se). URL: <https://www.besoksnaringdalarna.se/dalarnas-besoksnaring/strategi-2030>

<sup>15</sup> visit-dalarna-hallbarhetspolicy (visitdalarna.se). URL: <https://www.visitdalarna.se/visit-dalarna-hallbarhetspolicy>

<sup>16</sup> Miljöplan Visit Dalarna 2022. URL: <https://www.visitdalarna.se/miljoplan-visit-dalarna>

<sup>17</sup> Regional Development Strategy of Örebro County for 2022–2030.

<sup>18</sup> The Mapping of Sustainable Tourism in Örebro County (2021).

***How are the principles of sustainable development of tourism in Ukraine taken into account? National level.*** The implementation of global SDGs, taking into account national priorities, is taken into account in the Sustainable Development Strategy of Ukraine until 2030<sup>19</sup>, which establishes a comprehensive system of strategic and operational goals for the transition to integrated economic, social and environmental development of the country until 2030. Building partnerships to achieve the goals of sustainable development is one of the tasks of the Agenda 2030 (*SDG 17*). Ukraine, as a founding country and a member of the UN, has recorded its obligations regarding the implementation of Agenda 2030. Such SDGs as good jobs and economic growth, sustainable cities and communities, and partnerships for the goals are planned to be achieved, including through the development of tourism<sup>20</sup>.

It also defines the institutional basis for the implementation of the concept of sustainable management of tourist destinations, the directions of inter-industry and inter-sectoral interaction, and the main driving forces and tools for its implementation. The strategic vision of Ukraine's sustainable development is based on ensuring national interests and fulfilling Ukraine's international obligations regarding the transition to sustainable development. The National Report “Sustainable Development Goals: Ukraine”, which was approved in 2017, defines the basic indicators for achieving the SDGs. In particular, the document states that global indicators are intended to analyse the trends identified at the global level of the SDGs until 2030 and to make international comparisons, but they are not always acceptable in the national context. Indicators intended for monitoring at the national and subnational (local) levels should be developed taking into account the capabilities of the national statistical system. Currently, the state statistical authorities collect information on 96 indicators: 52 indicators are in full compliance with existing international standards, and 44 are in partial compliance.

The National Report emphasizes the problems that can complicate the quality monitoring of the SDGs implementation<sup>21</sup>: (1) *at the global level* – lack of methodology for determining the number of indicators; several indicators require the organization and introduction of special surveys; the

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<sup>19</sup> Approved by the Resolution of the Government 28/12/2017.

<sup>20</sup> National report “Sustainable Development Goals: Ukraine” (2017). Sustainable Development Goals: 2017 Baseline National Report | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org). URL: <https://www.undp.org/ukraine/publications/sustainable-development-goals-2017-baseline-national-report>

<sup>21</sup> Sustainable Development Goals Ukraine 2020 Monitoring Report. *The SDGs 2020 Monitoring Report provides data on Ukraine's SDGs national indicators for 2015–2019*. Sustainable Development Goals Ukraine 2020 Monitoring Report | UNICEF. URL: <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/reports/sustainable-development-goals-ukraine-2020-monitoring-report>

existing methodology is dispersed among international organizations; (2) *at the national level* – lack of methodology and methodology for calculating several indicators; lack of several for analyzing compliance of national indicators with international standards; the absence of a regulatory act that regulates the development of the monitoring procedure at both the international and national levels, as well as the central executive bodies responsible for providing information; inadequacy of the domestic information base, which necessitates the introduction of special surveys. Tourism unites all three components of sustainable development (economic, social and ecological), contributing to the preservation and protection of the environment, economic growth and social well-being. The beginning of application of the principles of sustainable development in the tourism sector dates back to 1980–1990, but these attempts were unsystematic and sporadic.

The State Strategy for regional development until 2027 contains several provisions devoted to the necessity to strengthen the role of sustainable development of tourism as a tool for revitalizing local and regional economies. The principles of sustainable tourism development are supplemented by proposals for the application of the SMART TOURISM MANAGEMENT concept<sup>22</sup>.

One of the ways to achieve the goal of justifying the feasibility of developing and implementing a system of public tourism management in communities in conditions of decentralization is the task of “Supporting tourist territories (destinations) and projects at the local level”.

The vast majority of territorial communities, which are currently developing Sustainable Development Strategies, envisage one of the priorities and tools of stimulating the development of small and medium-sized businesses, creating new jobs and increasing the awareness of a wide range of consumers about objects of historical and cultural heritage, provided that natural resources are preserved and restored namely the development of tourism at the local and regional level through the introduction of a systematic approach to the management of tourist destinations, taking into account the best global examples and practices.

The development of tourist destinations is increasingly carried out in order to solve social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges.

In 2021, the National Economic Strategy of Ukraine for the period up to 2030 was also developed and adopted.<sup>23</sup> The hospitality and tourism industry has been

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<sup>22</sup> State Strategy for regional development until 2027. URL: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/uploads/public/608/92a/26e/60892a26e91a5130254496.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine National Economic Strategy of Ukraine for the period up to 2030 of March 3, 2021 No 179]. (n.d.). [www.kmu.gov.ua](http://www.kmu.gov.ua). URL: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-zatverdzhennyanacionalnoyi-eko-a179> (in Ukrainian)

identified as one of the priority sectors to bring Ukraine's economy to a new level. The document pays special attention to the implementation of the concept of sustainable tourism and the transition to a destination model of tourism development, taking into account the best international and European practices.

**Regional level.** Using the example of the destinations of Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk region, the degree of consideration of the provisions on ensuring the sustainable development of tourism was considered. Based on the analysis, it was concluded that regulatory and legal documents at the regional level need deeper implementation and refinement from the point of view of developing road maps and recommendations for all market participants regarding directions and tools for applying the concept of sustainable tourism development.

## **2. The model of inclusive management of a tourist destination: the results of a comparative analysis of tourist destinations in Sweden and Ukraine**

The management of such a complex system as a tourism destination requires a strong legal framework and day-to-day practice, based on what is established by law, capable of providing answers to the various stakeholders of the territory and able to indicate the vision of its development.

However, there have been limited successful attempts to engage stakeholders. A growing body of literature suggests that successful stakeholder engagement depends on many elements that need to be included for the process to be successful, including building trust between different stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder cooperation is considered a prerequisite for sustainable tourism and can have a significant impact on the development of an area if it is implemented effectively. Stakeholder cooperation helps ensure a more inclusive approach to host community issues, facilitates conflict resolution, and increases the competitiveness of destination products. Simply put, it can have a positive impact on many of the components that make sustainability possible<sup>24</sup>.

Unfortunately, the success of stakeholder cooperation in the practice of tourism destination management is limited. Thus, research that examines the process of stakeholder collaboration in practice, its implications and limitations is crucial for considering how to improve stakeholder collaboration<sup>25</sup>.

The study analyzed the existing regulatory framework and previous research aimed at increasing participation in the tourism industry. Based on interviews with key people responsible for sustainable development in the

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<sup>24</sup> Viglianisi A., Calabrò F. (2022). 'The Management Models of a Tourist Destination in Italy'. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06825-6\\_223](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06825-6_223)

<sup>25</sup> Beritelli P., Bieger T., Laesser C. (2014). 'The new frontiers of destination management: Applying variable geometry as a function-based approach'. Journal of travel research.

cities of Örebro and Dalarna in Sweden and Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv in Ukraine, a cross-country comparative analysis was conducted, revealing important similarities and differences. The results showed important opportunities for sharing experiences and learning between countries, and that further research is needed on practices used to activate and empower stakeholders and how to strengthen the framework, awareness and understanding of sustainable development in the development of destination management, and as well as its impact on the prioritization of sustainable development issues among stakeholders. As part of the study, (1) different management models of sustainable tourist destinations were identified and forms of involvement of destination stakeholders in its management system were investigated; (2) empirically analyzed and assessed the challenges and imperatives faced by managers and stakeholders in the development of tourist destinations in Ukraine and Sweden, including the regulatory and legal framework, the distribution of roles and functional responsibilities (institutional dimensions), as well as practical experience of involvement stakeholders, including its impact on knowledge, awareness and awareness of sustainable development (the participation dimension); (3) organized joint events between specialists-practitioners from different countries, promoting dialogue, exchange of knowledge and best practices.

The study considered the experience of tourist destinations in Sweden and Ukraine through a cross-country comparative analysis of the empowerment of stakeholders in the creation and implementation of tourism development management. Based on the analysis of the results of empirical research and stakeholder dialogues, primarily facilitated through a series of interviews, surveys and meetings, which included stakeholders from all segments of the tourism industry, public services, local and self-government bodies, and compared with the results of the study the level of satisfaction with involvement in the destination management system, the goal was to find out:

- What is the essence of delegated powers and distribution of roles between participants in existing models of tourist destination management?
- How do people responsible for the sustainable development of tourism describe, interpret and understand the multifaceted policy of managing tourist destinations?
- What is the level and degree of readiness for new democratic regimes of destination management and what does this mean in terms of roles, skills and responsibilities?

Our research is based on two theoretical hypotheses that relate to (1) the concept of sustainable tourism development and (2) the multi-stakeholder model of destination management.

We defined the institutional level and regulatory support for stakeholder participation in tourism destination management as a set of regulations and practices that promote participation, cooperation and equity in the development and management of tourism destinations. Democratic destination management refers to a system of governance that is based on democratic principles such as participation, cooperation and transparency. It aims to ensure that local communities, businesses and other stakeholders have a voice in decision-making and that the benefits of tourism are distributed equitably<sup>26</sup>.

The results of the study show that in a democratic system of destination management, stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the planning and management of tourism activities<sup>27</sup>. By involving stakeholders in the decision-making process, the tourism management system can better reflect the needs and aspirations of the local community.

As for inclusive approaches in the tourism destination management system, this is aimed at ensuring that all stakeholders in the destination can equally participate in and benefit from tourism<sup>28</sup>.

The study also seeks to recognize the extent to which destination management is becoming more sustainable, given the increased awareness and motivation for stakeholder participation in destination management. Destination stakeholders, community interests and visitors alike increasingly demand well-managed tourism. However, we assume that this dynamic may vary depending on the level of institutionalization, awareness and understanding of the need to participate in destination management processes. We must recognize that sustainable tourism destination management issues cannot be addressed by any single tool or strategy but require a combination of measures and integrated approaches.

In developing tourism destination management in a more democratic, inclusive and sustainable direction, we consider a three-level model of the chain of transformation from regulation to awareness: (1) *framework* – Laws and regulations (i.g. standards, rules, recommendations etc.), institutions and organizations responsible for sustainable tourism development); (2) *awareness* – knowledge, information, skills and motivation; (3) *understanding and consciousness* – self-motivation, self-control and self-discipline.

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<sup>26</sup> OECD Tourism Trends and Policies (2020).

<sup>27</sup> Božena Krce Miočić (2016). 'Management of sustainable tourism destination through stakeholder cooperation'. Management: Journal of Contemporary Management Issues, vol. 21, no. 2.

<sup>28</sup>Risteska M., Kocovska J., Arnaudov K (2012). 'Spatial Planning and Sustainable Tourism as Basis for Developing Competitive Tourist Destinations'. Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, volume 44, pp. 375–386. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.042>



Constant persistent and purposeful work in the field of increasing awareness, motivation and interaction of the participants of the tourist destination is the foundation (basis) for ensuring its sustainable development.

In this study, we analyzed the tools and effectiveness of communication, interaction and cooperation, methods and forms of involvement of all interested parties for the sustainable management of tourist destinations in Sweden and Ukraine. Moreover, consider the prospects for tourism development from the standpoint of implementing the concept of sustainable and responsible management of tourist destinations, which is under consideration in the conditions of functioning of the three-level model of the chain of transformation from regulation to awareness:

1. *Level of regulation* – Laws and regulations (i.g. standards, rules, recommendations etc.), institutions and organizations responsible for.

2. *Level of awareness* – Education (knowledge and skills) and motivation.

3. *Level of understanding and consciousness* – self-motivation, self-control and self-discipline.

Therefore, as part of the analysis of the level of regulation of the implementation of the concept of sustainable management of tourist destinations, a cabinet study was carried out, using a sequential (cascade) approach. We start from strategies, recommendations, and policies at the global level of the legislative and regulatory framework, assessing the level of their consideration in the regulatory documents of Sweden and Ukraine at the national level, as well as in strategic and program documents and recommendations at the regional and local levels. An analysis of the architecture of the system of bodies and organizations that contribute to and are responsible for the implementation of sustainable tourism management was also conducted.

Based on the results of a series of interviews with representatives of bodies and organizations responsible for the sustainable development of tourist destinations in Sweden and Ukraine. Data was analyzed on what efforts are being made at all levels to disseminate information and best practices of sustainable tourism management, for the exchange of experience, professional development and creation of additional incentives and motivations for the implementation of tools for the sustainable development of tourism at all levels (global, national, regional and local in Sweden and Ukraine).

According to the results of the survey of participants of tourist destinations, an assessment of the level of understanding and awareness of the need to adhere to the concept of sustainable development of tourism and the value of implementing effective tools of cooperation between all interested market participants was carried out. As a result, recommendations were formulated for ensuring a high level of awareness and awareness, stimulating

the development of self-motivation, self-control and self-discipline of all participants in tourist destinations.

We analysed the existing forms and methods of involving interested parties, provided for by the legislation and practice of the countries of Sweden and Ukraine, as well as relevant studies, and determined the compliance of these forms and methods with the needs and requests of all interested participants. Analyzing this policy, the research results allowed us to understand the role and importance of the dissemination of democratic management methods for the implementation of a multi-stakeholder destination management model. The semantic process using the content analysis method helped to identify the dominant factors/variables as important objects (elements) of the democratic and inclusive management of the tourist destination. The model that was built describes the components that influence the democratic and inclusive process of managing a tourist destination. This model also takes into account some local values that are used in general and in particular in the tourism policy implemented in Sweden. It is believed that these values will influence and become a characteristic of a democratic and inclusive model of tourism destination management in Ukraine.

A three-level model of public-private dialogue, partnership and cooperation (national, regional, and market level) was developed based on the received conclusions (Table 1).

Ultimately, the model also describes the expected results of the process of managing a democratic and inclusive tourist destination.

This model is related to the classic notion of sustainability as being on a continuous scale from ‘weak sustainability’ – mainly manifested only in policies and soft law instruments – and ‘strong sustainability’ in which sustainability becomes the overarching objective in society, integrated not only in the regulatory framework but also in the consciousness of the people (*‘green consciousness’*<sup>29</sup>). The model is also related to classic ideas about citizen participation<sup>30</sup>, in which different kinds of involvement infuse stakeholders with various forms of power; from being simply informed (‘weak involvement’) to co-, or self-management (‘strong involvement’). A strong form of involvement would require not only a framework but also awareness and consciousness, while a weak form would only require a minimal understanding of the framework.

Such interdependence can be schematically described in the following Table 2.

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<sup>29</sup> Dryzek, J. S. (2021). *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental discourses*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>30</sup> Arnstein, S. R. (1969). ‘A Ladder of Citizen Participation’, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), pp. 216–224.

Table 1



**A three-level model of public-private dialogue,  
partnership and cooperation**

| <b>I – the market level</b>  | <b>II – interdisciplinary level</b>  | <b>III – destination level</b>   |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Creation of complex tourist products, events and projects</p> <p><i>Task:</i><br/>Participants in the market of tourist and related services direct their efforts to the formation of tourist products directly on the territory of their activity.</p> <p><i>Tools:</i><br/>– resource inventory,<br/>– joint projects,<br/>– effective communication.</p> | <p>Expansion of cooperation within the framework of the functioning of the cluster (market participants + educational/training institutions + mass media + authorities)</p> <p><i>Task:</i><br/>Broad market cross-sectoral dialogue</p> <p><i>Tools:</i><br/>– communication and consultation platforms, tourist boards,<br/>– PPP,<br/>– Joint development of personnel training/upgrading programs for market needs, – participation in agreed tourism development programs, and involvement in the development, adoption and implementation of management decisions.</p> | <p>Coordination and implementation of the destination's sustainable development strategy</p> <p><i>Task:</i><br/>Internal:<br/>– analytics and monitoring,<br/>– improvement of infrastructure taking into account the anthropogenic load and impact on the environment,<br/>– compliance with standards, market control of the quality of services,<br/>– organization of training, and professional development;</p> <p>External:<br/>– Attracting additional resources for the development of the territory, – Marketing and promotion.</p> <p><i>Tools:</i><br/>Functioning of the Destination Management Organization (different organizational and legal models)</p> |

We assessed the level of regulatory and institutional support of all participants of the destination by means of documentary analysis, as well as by the results of conducting a series of interviews. Based on the results of the analysis, it was possible to conclude that the presence of a clear institutional structure and well-developed interaction mechanisms in the management system of tourist destinations has a positive effect on decision-making regarding the sustainability of the development of a tourist destination.

Table 2

**Scheme of the interdependence of the level of stakeholder involvement and the level of sustainability of the development of a tourist destination**

| Level of inclusion  | Elements of sustainable management models | Level of sustainability   |
|---|---|---|
| Weak  | 1) (Legal) Framework                      | Weak  |
|  | 2) Awareness raising                      |  |
| Strong  | 3) Understanding/Green Consciousness      | Strong  |

In addition, we empirically tested how those responsible for sustainable tourism development describe, interpret and understand the politics of participation in the tourism destination management system. Interviews were conducted with representatives of self-governing bodies, local and regional authorities, as well as institutions (organizations) involved in the formation of the policy of sustainable development of tourist destinations. After analyzing the interview materials, we conclude that the use of well-developed inclusion and participation processes strengthens awareness and consciousness and, thus, contributes to greater sustainability and democratic processes in the destination territory.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The war in Ukraine not only causes direct damage to the property and lives of the country's residents but also has a significant impact on the socio-economic indicators of European countries. After the war is over, Ukraine will need significant assistance not only in material terms, but also in the form of knowledge, skills, recommendations, research, conclusions, and best management practices to quickly restore and launch economic processes in the regions. In this regard, tourism is an extremely important sector for regional development, both in urban and rural areas. Tourism can catalyse multisectoral processes and

stimulate economic growth in Ukrainian communities. Proper implementation of all processes on the ground will help restore the potential of Ukraine's territories for sustainable development faster. Understanding how tourism destination management and development can better integrate local and regional stakeholders, and how these practices can be developed in a more sustainable way, is of national importance. After the return of internally displaced persons from Europe to Ukraine, the issue of providing jobs will be acute. Tourism is a world leader in terms of employment opportunities, especially for vulnerable groups (women, youth, migrants, etc.). Therefore, it is of particular importance to create the conditions for the emergence of new jobs for those who will return after the war. In addition, tourism, as an industry of positive emotions, can create a generally favourable emotional background for improving the psycho-emotional state of the population after the psychological trauma caused by the war.

Because of the military aggression of the Russian Federation, Ukraine's infrastructure in general and the hospitality and tourism industry, in particular, have suffered significant damage or even destruction. After the end of the war, Ukraine's tourism industry will need new modern approaches and effective tools for recovery and development, as well as establishing effective ties with partners in the EU. The war has significantly accelerated European integration processes. In June 2022, Ukraine was granted the status of an EU candidate country, which means that its economy must be completely rebuilt on the same principles and foundations as those of the EU. The issues of sustainable development and democracy will be crucial for the European integration movement and the possibility of obtaining EU membership. The study contributed to increasing mutual sustainability and mutual assistance between the Swedish tourism regions and the relevant Ukrainian regions and regional networks.

Sweden is among the countries that have shown readiness to take part in the reconstruction processes of various industries and regions of Ukraine<sup>31</sup>. Considering the large number and uniqueness of tourist resources, Ukraine has a substantial potential for the development of the tourism sphere for creating a complex, high-quality tourism offer while preserving the authenticity of the territory and respecting the interests of local communities. Sweden is an excellent example of territory planning based on the ideology of tourism sustainable development stresses a need to respect the environmental, socio-cultural and economic base of the area and therefore, the regional development-centred model can be interpreted as better representing the concept of sustainability<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Document of the Ukraine Recovery Conference URC2022 'Lugano Declaration', 2022.

<sup>32</sup> Kauppila, P., Saarinen, J., & Leinonen, R. (2009). 'Sustainable Tourism Planning and Regional Development in Peripheries: A Nordic View'. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 9(4): 424–435. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1502225090317527>

The project draws on and contributes to three strands of literature; tourism destination management, sustainable tourism development and the multi-stakeholder concept of destination management. Key findings of the study:

(a) Tourism destination management increasingly needs to consider sustainability, or in other words, stakeholder participation is increasingly important in destination management. Increasing stakeholder participation and involvement also strengthens the sustainability of destination development processes. The cooperation development between the public sector, civil society and the private sector in the long-term perspective, is based on mutuality and respect, and based on local conditions and needs.

(b) Thanks to cooperation between destinations, which includes both urban and rural areas, it is possible to create new tourist destinations, develop, and strengthen the attractiveness of entire regions.

(c) We can consider the signs of progress to be that by improving the coordination between various spheres of the private sector and state participants, the smooth functioning of tourism and hospitality systems is ensured. There is cooperation within and between different levels of society, and the responsibilities and roles of participants are clear.

(d) Multi-level cooperation works to support the hospitality industry and work on local and regional development. Different parts of the hospitality industry work together and contribute to the sustainable development of the entire industry.

(e) Proactive work on facilitating business procedures, providing access to relevant information and necessary online services, and ensuring transparency and accountability contributes to the development and competitiveness of the hospitality industry.

Therefore, based on the analysis of empirical research findings and stakeholder dialogue, primarily facilitated through a series of interviews, surveys and meetings, which included stakeholders from all segments of the tourism industry, public services, local and self-governing bodies, and compared based on the results of the study of the level of satisfaction with involvement in the destination management system, we draw conclusions about the direct dependence of the level of democracy and inclusiveness of the destination management system and the sustainability of its development. The study concluded that the presence of a clear institutional structure and well-developed mechanisms of interaction in the tourism destination management system has a positive impact on decision-making on sustainable development and inclusiveness. Moreover, in turn, the use of well-developed inclusion and participation processes increases awareness and consciousness and thus contributes to strengthening sustainability.

## SUMMARY

Ukraine will need new approaches to restore all socio-economic processes quickly after the war. The development of tourism can become a catalyst for social, economic and ecological development thanks to the application of the sustainable management models of tourist destinations.

Sustainable tourism destinations are complex systems because they rely on a variety of actors, including industry, local communities and the government. Therefore, destination management must consider this complex context and any destination development initiative must consider all stakeholders' opinions and contributions, allowing for a balanced approach and a sustainable outcome.

The goal of further development of tourism in Ukraine is to introduce modern models of tourism destination management, taking into account the involvement of stakeholders, as well as with a focus on the sustainable development of tourist destinations.

In the study, we assessed the level of regulatory and institutional support for the procedures for involving and taking into account the opinions of all stakeholders in the framework of sustainable development activities in Sweden and Ukraine through documentary analysis. In addition, we empirically investigated how those responsible for sustainable tourism development describe, interpret and understand participatory policies in the tourism destination management system. We also assessed the level of awareness of participants about the opportunities and mechanisms for influencing decision-making centers. Through a comparative study of management practices in Sweden and Ukraine, we tested whether more inclusive tourism destination management leads to greater sustainability.

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