Tetiana Tymoshenko, Candidate of Sciences in Public Administration, Associate Professor, President of the Ukrainian Federation of Employers in Tourism
Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman
Kyiv, Ukraine

DOI: https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-717-8-22

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AS A DRIVER OF URBAN RESILIENCE, LOCAL ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION, AND HERITAGE PRESERVATION IN UKRAINE

The ongoing military aggression against Ukraine has fundamentally altered the socio-economic structure of local communities and urban centres across the nation. In conventional economic literature, tourism has traditionally been interpreted through the narrow lens of commercial service provision, leisure consumption, and passenger flow monetisation. However, under conditions of systemic crisis, wartime uncertainty, and post-war recovery, this traditional paradigm proves insufficient. Tourism must be re-evaluated as an essential cross-sectoral instrument for building urban resilience, strengthening social cohesion, diversifying rural and regional economies, and preserving national cultural identity.

By integrating European Union standards, sustainable development frameworks, and practical instruments – such as the European Tourism Agenda 2030 [1], the Transition Pathway for Tourism [2], the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) [3], and smart tourism frameworks – Ukrainian territorial hromadas (communities) can transform current challenges into long-term strategic assets. This paper presents a comprehensive conceptual and empirical framework that aligns EU sustainable tourism principles with Ukrainian realities, drawing upon recent social innovation practices (e.g., the "Kyiv Tourism Lab" and "School of Public Guide" projects) and regional cluster initiatives.

The alignment of Ukrainian municipal and regional development strategies with EU standards requires the adoption of established European policy mechanisms. The European Agenda for Tourism 2030 emphasises green and digital transitions, socio-economic resilience, inclusive growth, and local community well-being. Crucially, the European Tourism Indicator System provides an actionable, locally owned toolkit designed to measure and monitor sustainability

performance across four primary domains: destination management, economic value, social and cultural impact, and environmental impact. Destination management focuses on public policy alignment, sustainable strategy adoption, and stakeholder collaboration models. Economic value addresses the diversification of local income, reduction of seasonality, support for local micro- and small-sized enterprises (SMEs), and local supply chain integration. Social and cultural impact measures resident satisfaction, universal accessibility, gender equality, and the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Environmental impact monitors resource efficiency, waste management, circular economy principles, and sustainable mobility solutions.

Applying ETIS core indicators – such as direct tourism employment, the percentage of enterprises using verified sustainability schemes, local product sourcing, and resident sentiment monitoring – allows Ukrainian hromadas to establish empirical baselines. This empirical grounding prevents speculative planning and ensures that local governance models prioritize long-term social value over short-term revenue generation.

In major metropolitan hubs such as Kyiv, which currently accommodates over 400,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) within a broader conurbation of 3.5 million residents, sustainable tourism serves as a vital humanitarian bridge. The concept of "Urban Resilience" shifts the focus toward mental recovery, social integration, and inclusive infrastructure.

Recent municipal initiatives, such as the “Kyiv Tourism Lab” established by the Department of Tourism and Promotions of the Kyiv City State Administration in partnership with the Ukrainian Federation of Employers in Tourism, demonstrate how tourism can directly address wartime social fragmentation. Key operational directions encompass mental recovery and adaptive public space creation through specialised excursion itineraries engineered for psycho-emotional decompression, stress mitigation, and veteran mental health support, such as the "Prostir dlya Dushi" initiative. Furthermore, inclusive tours engineering 100% barrier-free routes cater to individuals with physical, sensory, or cognitive impairments in strict alignment with European accessibility standards. Unity events and integration programs acclimate IDPs to the multi-century history, traditional crafts, and cultural fabric of host communities, thereby promoting mutual tolerance and civic solidarity. This social transformation relies on the Triple Helix Model of cooperation between public administration, academia, and private industry, ensuring that human capital development – such as professional certification through

the "School of Public Guide" – yields measurable multiplicative economic benefits for local micro-enterprises, hospitality providers, and municipal budgets

While urban hubs leverage tourism for social integration, Ukrainian rural territories face distinct socio-economic vulnerabilities, including agricultural land disruption, youth out-migration, and limited employment opportunities. Following the European Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas (LTVRA) and the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) strategic priorities, agritourism and craft-led diversification offer viable pathways to economic revitalization [5, 6].

Agritourism allows farming households to diversify their revenue streams while preserving small-scale farming structures, traditional land management, and local gastronomy. Strategic cluster modelling – such as the creation of the *Local Association of Local Self-Government Bodies "Cluster 'In the Ways of the Trypillian Foremother'"* – demonstrates the practical effectiveness of uniting territorial hromadas across Cherkasy, Vinnytsia, and Kirovohrad regions. By linking local agricultural producers, craft artisans, accommodation hosts, and cultural sites along defined heritage corridors (e.g., the Cucuteni-Trypillia cross-border cultural-tourist route), rural communities establish resilient local value chains that retain economic value within the region.

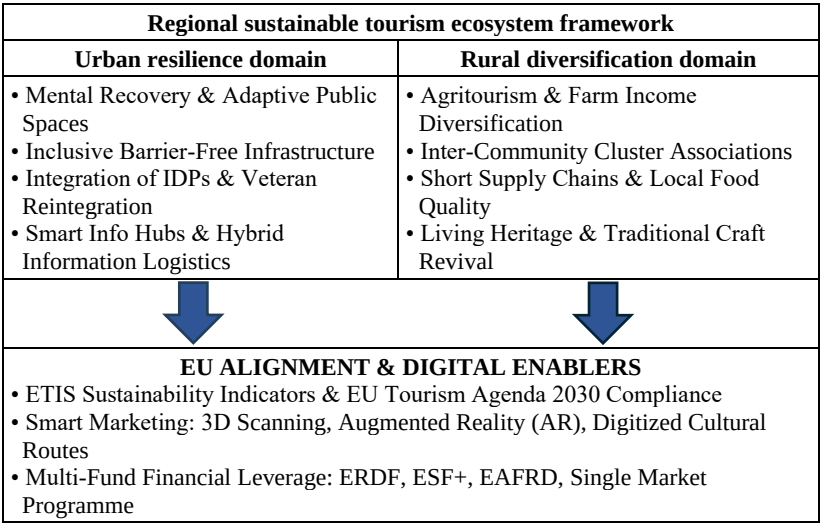


Figure 1. Regional sustainable tourism ecosystem framework

The protection and promotion of Ukraine's historical and cultural heritage require modern, technology-driven tools. Following the leading practices highlighted in the *European Capital of Smart Tourism* initiative, digitalisation acts as an equaliser that enhances physical and cognitive accessibility while safeguarding intangible heritage [4].

Key digital strategies for Ukrainian destination management organisations (DMOs) include digital preservation through 3D scanning, photogrammetry, and spatial archiving to preserve historical monuments at risk of destruction, enabling virtual reconstructions and immersive extended reality (XR) museum experiences. Smart navigation and accessibility are achieved by implementing interactive digital maps, QR-code trail systems, and multilingual AI-driven chatbots to deliver real-time safety, transport, and cultural information. Hybrid information logistics establish physical "Smart Info Hubs" combined with mobile municipal applications, such as Kyiv Digital, to ensure seamless information delivery even during power grid disruptions or infrastructure stress. Furthermore, the revival of traditional crafts transforms local folklore and artisan skills into competitive asset-based tourism products through digital storytelling, e-commerce integration, and interactive craft workshops [7].

To operationalize these sustainable practices, Ukrainian public authorities and local action groups (LAGs) must efficiently navigate EU financing instruments. Although a standalone EU tourism budget line does not exist, tourism projects are eligible across various funding streams. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund finance municipal sustainable mobility, urban regeneration, and cultural infrastructure. The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the LEADER/CLLD framework support farm income diversification, rural micro-enterprises, and community-led local development strategies. The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) funds vocational training, green and digital skill development, and social entrepreneurship programs. Additionally, the Single Market Programme (COSME) supports SME competitiveness, eco-certification uptake such as EMAS or the EU Ecolabel, and international cluster partnerships. Overcoming administrative complexity requires local authorities to adopt simplified sub-granting mechanisms, lump-sum financing models, and capacity-building workshops tailored to nano- and micro-enterprises.

Conclusion. Rebuilding and transforming Ukraine’s tourism sector is fundamentally linked to broader socio-economic recovery, regional

competitiveness, and European integration. By embedding the European Tourism Indicator System, advancing smart digital marketing, modeling rural heritage clusters, and prioritizing inclusive urban resilience, Ukraine can build a sustainable, resilient, and globally competitive destination management model.

References:

1. Council of the European Union (2022). Council conclusions on "European Agenda for Tourism 2030". Official Journal of the European Union, Doc. 15441/22. Available at: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15441-2022-INIT/en/pdf.
2. European Commission (2022). Transition Pathway for Tourism. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/404a8062-87c2-11ec-8c40-01aa75ed71a1
3. European Commission (2013). European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) Toolkit for Sustainable Destinations. DG Enterprise and Industry, Brussels. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/indicators/index_en.htm
4. European Commission (2025). Leading Examples of Smart Tourism Practices in Europe from the 2025 European Capital of Smart Tourism Competition. DG MOVE, Brussels. Available at: https://smart-tourism-capital.ec.europa.eu/
5. European Committee of the Regions / UN Tourism (2024). Tourism and Rural Development. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e81a52ce-e1c5-11ee-8b2b-01aa75ed71a1
6. European Parliament (2023). Rural Tourism: Briefing. European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), PE 751.464. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2023)751464
7. Tymoshenko, T. (2026). Resilience Tourism: How Kyiv Builds a Smart Capital of Social Cohesion Under Conditions of War. *International Courier*. Available at: https://intercourier.news/2026/08/04/turyzm-stijkosti-yak-kyyiv-buduye-smart-stolyczyu-soczialnogo-zgurtuvannya-v-umovah-vijny/