

Planning and Management of Sustainable Tourism Spaces

Assignment 2

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Introduction

Tourism is praised for what it brings to a specific country, some examples are jobs, foreign currency and international attention. But it has some disadvantages as well. An accumulation of tourism can be harmful to nature, overwhelm towns and even alter the way local people live. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer us a lens to consider how this question might be better balanced by rethinking countries' benefits in relation to risks. Slovenia, a small country in Central Europe, is very interesting. It isn't as famous as France or Italy, but in the past decade it has deliberately pushed an image of itself as a "green" destination. The government and tourism boards have actually tried to back up this brand with action. The question arises is that why SDGs are most important.

Of course, in theory all 17 SDGs could be connected to tourism, but in practice some are more relevant than others when looking at Slovenia.

Take SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Tourism makes up around 12% of Slovenia's GDP. This is not a small number, and many families rely on it for work. But many jobs are very periodic, for example in ski resorts or maybe summer farm stays. So, the real issue here is not just creating jobs but also making sure they are quite stable and also fairly paid. It is also easily accessible to young people or youth who might otherwise not live in rural areas (UNWTO, 2020).

Another important one is SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). The capital city, Ljubljana, is called one of the greenest in most of Europe. Cars are banned in the historic centre, recycling rates are high, and bike infrastructure is impressive. For tourism, this means visitors can enjoy the city without making life worse for locals. It's not perfect, but it's a good model.

SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) is also central. Slovenia created something called the "Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism" (GSST). It's a national certification programme where hotels, towns, and even natural parks can earn a green label if they meet certain criteria. This helps push sustainability beyond a slogan and into practice (Poljak and Klancnik, 2018).

Then there is SDG 13 (Climate Action). Tourism is also affected by climate issues. In the Alps, the popular ski seasons are getting shorter and shorter, which is a big problem for winter sports happening there. Slovenia has also responded that by promoting year-round activities that happen all throughout the year, such as hiking, cycling, and also wellness tourism.

Lastly, SDG 15 (Life on Land). Slovenia is known as one of the most forested countries in majority of the Europe and it also has very large protected areas in the forests some examples are like Triglav National Park. Tourists have seen to love these landscapes, but these places are fragile. So, you often observe strict visitor limits and also eco-transport are also needed to avoid long-term damages. Other question is what Slovenia Is Doing in Practice

One of the strongest initiatives is the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism. Unlike many certification programmes that cover only hotels, this one includes whole towns and rural areas. More than 200 providers are part of it. That makes sustainability not just for niche eco-lodges but part of the mainstream industry.

Another example is Ljubljana's transformation. Instead of being filled by cars and tour buses, the city centre is mostly observed to be pedestrian. Outdoor cafés are good examples other examples include cycling paths, and public transport. They make it pleasant for both residents as well as visitors (Mihalič, 2016). It shows how tourism can increase and grow without us ruining urban life.

In the countryside, Slovenia promotes farm tourism. Visitors can often come there and then stay on family farms, they can also eat home-grown food, and also join in activities for example winemaking or even cheese production. This then spreads tourism benefits beyond the capital of Slovenia and then helps prevent the problem liker rural depopulation.

Nature management is also strict. Triglav National Park has rules that limit private cars, encouraging people to use shuttles or even electric buses. Trails are maintained carefully, and numbers are controlled in the busiest spots.

Slovenia has also built a reputation for culinary tourism. In 2021 it was named the European Region of Gastronomy. This was not only about Michelin-star restaurants but also about promoting seasonal menus, organic farming, and links between chefs and local producers. It's a way of connecting responsible consumption (SDG 12) with visitor experience. Some challenges and contradictions that arise are follows

Still, Slovenia faces the real problems and the real challenges. Lake Bled and Postojna Cave attract huge number of crowds, but sometimes it is too many for the area to handle. This increases the risk of "overtourism," which then backfires and goes against the country's green image. And at the same time, some of the rural areas do not get enough tourists, so they still face somewhere economic declines. This uneven distribution is tricky to solve.

Another issue is authenticity. Once a country brands itself as "green" and "sustainable," there is pressure to perform that image for tourists. Culture can end up being simplified or packaged just to fit expectations. The SDGs do not address this problem directly, but it is part of the reality of tourism.

In conclusion, Slovenia is a good example of how the SDGs can guide tourism, especially when a whole country commits to the idea. The most relevant goals are SDG 8, 11, 12, 13, and 15. Together they cover jobs, sustainable cities, responsible consumption, climate action, and protection of natural landscapes. Through measures like the Green Scheme, farm tourism, and urban planning in Ljubljana, Slovenia has gone further than many other countries in linking tourism with sustainability. On the

other hand, problems like overcrowding at famous sites or the risk of “greenwashing” remain. What this shows again is that making tourism sustainable is not something you do once and finish. It is more like a process that needs constant attention and adjustment.

References (Harvard Style, kept to ~30% in-text use)

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