

Sustainable and ecotourism

[Sport & Tourism](#), [Ecotourism](#)



Current economic issues and theory Sustainable and Ecotourism Tourism
Tourism is one of the foremost economic activities around the world. Its growth has been one of the major economic and social phenomena of the twentieth century. Tourism has expanded dramatically over the last years and has become a global industry. We can define tourism as the “ movement of people, spatially and temporally, out of their own communities for leisure and business purposes”. According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) tourist is a “ visitor staying for more than 24 hours in a country visited for business or leisure purposes”.

The term tourism is an umbrella for all relationships and phenomena associated with people who are travelling, whatever the reason. It has no clear boundaries and could be viewed as an industry itself. In my work I would like to show the relationship between the tourism and environment. For the tourism service providers the most important is to grow the industry itself and attract more visitors to destinations. Their main purpose is to gain more and more profit. I think that these type of thinking can be harmful for environment.

Tourism and tourist can effect negatively the environment therefore we can talk about a form of tourism which is unsustainable. In this essay I will concern this issue too but my main topic is the sustainability. Fortunately in last years people recognised the importance of the environment and nowadays they are taking this issue seriously. The tourism has negative but also positive impact on the environment therefore we can talk about a sustainable tourism. In the following I deal with this issue more detailed and I try to find the answer how popular it is among tourists or tour operators.

Unsustainable tourism As I mentioned tourism is now among the world's most relevant industries generating jobs for millions of people and profit all over the world. At the same time tourism can have dire effects on the people and places it embraces. Mainly the mass tourism has negative effects. What can be the worst effects of unmanaged, unsustainable tourism? – previously undeveloped coastal villages can become sprawling, charmless towns or their seas poisoned by sewage their beaches stained with litter – historic towns and their streets choked with traffic – some of the world's richest environments bruised by the tourist onslaught – distinctive wildlife driven to near-extinction – changes in the landscape coming from the construction of infrastructure, buildings and facilities – air pollution and waste – the intensive use of water and land by tourism and leisure facilities – the disturbance of fauna and local people (for example, by noise)

We can write many pros and cons of tourism. I think the worst effect of unsustainable tourism is when only the financial profit comes into the strong focus. Because tourism makes a few people extremely rich, while impoverishing the majority, who lose their land, their resources and their sense of self. Tourism is not just about money, it should give benefits for tourists and local communities too. The main goals of tourism should include: the satisfaction of tourists, profit for tourism industry, wealth to local people.

Changes in the landscape coming from the construction of infrastructure, buildings and facilities is one of the disadvantages of sustainable tourism but this can also benefit to local communities. I think the cooperation between the tourism industry providers (relevant ministries, government,

management) and local organizations and communities can mitigate the negative effects. Sustainable Tourism Definition Sustainable Tourism involves social responsibility, a strong commitment to nature and the integration of local people in any tourist operation or development. Sustainable tourism has several definitions.

According to the definition of the Federation of Nature and National Parks, sustainable tourism is: “ All forms of tourism development, management and activity that maintain the environmental, social and economic integrity and well-being of natural, built and cultural resources in perpetuity. ” (FNNP, 1993) Sustainable tourism is defined by the World Tourism Organisation(WTO), the Tourism Council (WTTC) and the Earth Council as: Sustainable Tourism Development meets the needs of present tourists, host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future.

It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. Sustainable tourism products are products which are operated in harmony with the local environment, community and cultures so that these become the beneficiaries not the victims of tourism development.

Sum up these definitions I can say that sustainable tourism is the form of tourism that does not reduce the availability of resources and does not prevent future travelers from enjoying the same experience. Responsible Tourism, Soft Tourism, Minimum Impact Tourism and Alternative Tourism are terms with a similar meaning as Sustainable Tourism. Sustainable Tourism

Development The significance and volume of tourism shows that it is not enough to develop new forms of “ alternative” tourism in order to minimise the negative effects and maximise the positive impacts of tourism development.

The whole sector must be developed and managed in a way that it does not damage the natural and socio-cultural environment. In my point of view it can be fully executed if the government, the managers and leaders of tourism industry recognise the harmful and negative effects of tourism and they introduce more regulations related to sustainability, they motivate tour operators to promote this type of tourism among their clients and they release more related ads and topics in media. This is the responsibility of the world-wide tourism industry.

The concept of sustainable development was introduced by the World Commission on Environment and Development in the Brundtland Report in 1987, defining sustainable development as “ development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Since its publication, the role of tourism has been analysed and the concept of sustainable tourism appeared. The main message of the Brundtland Report seems to be more and more accepted by the tourism industry all over the world.

Ecological sustainability means that tourism development does not cause irreversible changes in a given destination’s ecosystem. There is an obvious need all over the world to protect natural resources from the negative impacts of tourism activities. In order to avoid or minimise unfavourable

impacts, decision-makers must be aware of all the factors that play a role in the development process. Indicators of Sustainability “ Indicators measure information with which decision-makers may reduce the chances of unknowingly taking poor decisions” (WTO, 1996).

In other words, in the measurement of the progress that an individual destination is making towards sustainable tourism development, sustainability indicators are commonly accepted as one set of useful tools. “ Indicators are both a tool for management today and an investment in the future, since they reduce the risk of inadvertent damage to the resource base on which the [tourist] industry depends” (WTO, 1996). There are some factors which are pushing the tourism industry towards a sustainable development approach: – Increasing regulatory measures The awareness by governments and operators that the growth of tourism can have a negative impact on the environment I think the government and the competent ministries should take the first steps. They should cooperate with tourism service providers and with the management and create new regulations and laws. It is very important to take into account sustainability and preservation of nature. – Tourism professionals and operators recognise that environmental quality is essential for a competitive product – Growing awareness of cost savings from sensible resource consumption – Growing awareness of communities about their potential to influence tourism policy Similiar forms of tourism Responsible Tourism Tourism which operates in such a way as to minimize negative impacts on the environment. For example a forest trip using “ Leave No Trace” ethics would be considered

responsible tourism while dune buggy tours would not. Nature-Based Tourism A term for any activity or travel experience with a focus on nature.

These types of trips may or may not be environmentally sustainable or responsible. A cruise ships to view penguins in Antarctica fall into this category. I think that this type of tourism is slightly more popular than sustainable tourism. It needs fewer responsibility. Travels or trips in nature have always been very sought and beloved among families or other target groups. For example in my village and in the neighboring settlements exist tourist groups who regularly participate in different type of nature-based tours.

They often go hiking, climbing, they participate on wine tours, visit thermal bathes or observe animals. They like nature and activities connected to nature but it is not guarantee that they conserve the nature and they improve the place they visit. Green Tourism Often used inter-changeably with eco-tourism and sustainable tourism but more precisely described as “any activity or facility operating in an environmentally friendly fashion”. A lodge with composting toilets and solar powered lighting is probably “green”.

There are varying degrees of “greenness”; an awareness of where resources are coming from and where wastes are going is at the heart of the idea.

Ecotourism The Ecotourism Society defines it as “responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of the local people”. A rafting trip is ecotourism in that case when it raises awareness and help to protect the watershed. A walk in the rainforest is not

ecotourism unless that particular walk somehow benefits that environment and the people who live there.

Eco-tourism means when you go to a trip and you will help to „conserve and improve” the place you visit. In the last few years ecotourism has become a buzz word to sell a variety of products. Almost any term prefixed with ‘eco’ will increase interest and sales. Thus, in the last few years there has been a proliferation of advertisements in the travel field with such references as ecotour, ecotravel, eco-vacation, eco (ad) ventures, eco-cruises, eco-safaris and of course, eco-tourism (Wight, 1994).

In my opinion some companies use the word ‘eco’ because of particular interest or benefit. Maybe that ‘eco-products’ and ‘eco-services’ make them better reputation or greater media interest. Therefore I think there are some companies which are not totally aware of the meaning ‘eco’ and they use it for their advantage. Marta Honey’s book “Ecotourism and Sustainable Development” determine 7 defining points of ecotourism: 1) Involves travel to natural destinations – remote areas, environmental protection.

In my point of view it can be dangerous because in remote areas there are living just small group of people who can form a quite closed community. For them it can be strange to accept and receive tourist, especially huge number of tourist. In other hand, growing tourism have other consequences – to build the necessary infrastructure which could change the local ‘untouched’ environment. In that case I think the tour operators and organizers should keep the tourism under control, regulate the number of tourists, involve local people to the whole process.

For example using private accommodation instead of big hotels can be a good idea or small restaurants which offer local foods can be attractive for tourists and profitable for local people. 2) Minimizes impact – ecotourism – use recycled materials, plentifully available local building materials, renewable sources of energy, recycling and safe disposal of waste and garbage, environmentally and culturally sensitive architectural design. In my opinion it is relevant to draw people's attention to these methods or they should be regulated in order to ensure limited damage to the ecosystem.) Builds environmental awareness – education for both tourists and residents; free educational trips, reading materials – The Ecotourism Societies guidelines; well-trained, multilingual naturalist guides with skills in natural and cultural history, environmental interpretation, ethical principles and effective communication. I think it is important for tourists to gain some knowledge about the host country. Every nation has other regulations, habits, values and culture. Environmental regulations and attitude to sustainability differ from country to country and therefore it is recommended to be informed of certain things.) Provides direct financial benefits for conservation – park entrance fees, tour company, hotel, airline and airport taxes and voluntary contributions. 5) Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people – local community must be involved with and receive income and other tangible benefits (potable water, roads, health clinics, etc.) from the conservation area and its tourist facilities. I think the popular destination, for example National Parks and other conservation areas will only survive if there are “ happy people” around their perimeters.) Respects local culture – learning beforehand about the local customs, respecting dress codes and

other social norms. As I earlier mentioned gain some knowledge about the host country will benefit us. 7) Supports human rights and democratic movements – Ecotourist need to be sensitive to the host country's political environment and social climate and need to consider the merits of international boycotts called for by those supporting democratic reforms, majority rule, and human rights. Marketing for sustainable tourism

According to my view an intensive marketing activity can greatly influence the success of a given topic. For instance if the marketers release lot of articles and ads about the sustainability and the importance of it as a result more and more people are going to deal with the topic. If the marketers raise the public attention than they can make the next step more easily.

Implementation of the marketing concept in tourism can be achieved through the use of a variety of marketing tools and techniques (Popadopolous, 1989; Calantone and Mazanec, 1991). Segmentation

Successful market segmentation and targeting involve the appropriate matching of tourist needs with the experience being offered, and, in the case of sustainable tourism, the need for this match is particularly important (Tregear et al. , 1997). Tourism organizations need to give greater consideration to segmenting their market with a view to concentrating on those categories of visitor that are not only economically attractive, but are also likely to be susceptible to messages aimed at encouraging them to adopt sustainable behaviors (Dinan, 2000).

I think that during the segmentation process the tourism organizations can choose the right target group who will address later with intensive

marketing campaign. On the other hand it is also important to deal with people who are not yet the exact target audience. There are key members, for example the tour operators or travel agents who can influence the tourists and encourage them to pay greater attention to sustainable tours. Marketing mix All elements of the marketing mix need to be in harmony in order to increase the success Product

If we would like to achieve more sustainable tourism we should develop products which are more sustainable in nature- conservation holidays, vacation packages using public transport rather than private cars, small-scale rural community-based tourism initiatives- and moving away from offering products which are intrinsically not sustainable- hunting trips, destinations with poor environmental standards. Intermediaries between tourists and tourism service providers are tour operators who create complete holiday packages and bring together a variety of services.

These packages are marketed to customers either directly or through travel agents. Each package generally consists of accommodation (often with food service), transport both to and from the destination, ground transport within the destination and events or activities. Today, many consumers expect from the tour operators to supply them products which provide not just quality and value-for-money, but also safeguard environmental and social sustainability. Example The Green Travel Market is a global facility to integrate sustainable products into the packages of European and Northern American tour operators.

Green Travel Market gives up-to-date and reliable information on existing sustainable tourism products: destinations, protected areas, accommodation networks, individual accommodation, visitor attractions and activities, excursions or tours, incoming tour operators and transport services. Green Travel Marker is in contact with more than 1.500 touroperators and with its wide range of services help to local products and services to reach European and US tour operators and media. Price The price paid by the tourist should cover the full cost of their holiday.

The cost must also be high enough to: – Ensure a satisfactory experience for the tourist I think satisfactory experience means quality and value for the money paid by the tourist. In the case of sustainability there are added other values, for example connection to nature, preservation of the origin environment, improve the visited area or just raise awareness. I have heard several times that the tourists were not totally satisfied with their holiday. Maybe the accomodation had not that quality what the travel agency promised or tourists did not receive a service or the visited place were not an ecotourist destination however they paid for it.

I guess in these cases the travel agencies are quilty or faulty because they always have to be aware of the services they offer. They always should have up-to-date information and organise trips for the agents in order to get familiar with the offered destination. – Provide a satisfactory level of profit for the tourism industry – Generate an appropriate level of benefits for the host community – Cover costs involved in putting right any damage caused by the

tourist to the environment – Pay for the resources consumed by the tourist
Place

Place refers to the location at which any service component the subject of the marketing campaign will be delivered. Place also refer to the channels of information that are used to spread the message. Promotion I think promotion has the most important role of all elements of marketing mix. By using promotional techniques we can create more sustainable forms of tourism. We can reach large number of people by suing promotional methods. Sustainable promotion should focus on promoting and advertising a tourist site, highlighting the unique characteristics of the area in order not to cause disappointment and frustration among tourists.

It is important to promote brochures and advertisements which reflect reality. In my opinion it is necessary to show pictures of a given destination in order to get more realistic picture. An other good idea can be to create a blog where tourists can share their experineces and give some advice for future travelers. Tourism organizations and destinations can also use literature and advertisements to raise tourist awareness relating to sustainability. They can undertake ‘ green marketing’ or promote soft tourism and infomr tourists of the impacts of their presence.

Tools Communicating sustainability It is essential to inform tourists in a positive way about sustainability efforts and draw attention that environmental quality means quality tourism experience. If we talk about environmental quality we can mention the following: small-scale, quality service, personal relations, traditions, intact and protected nature, rest,

modern lifestyle and healthy and local food. Eco-labelled products provide good quality service and quality products should respect the environment.

Example Communication efforts of VISIT

The European VISIT initiative developed its own communication strategy for environmental quality in tourism. In 2002, the VISIT image campaign was launched under the motto: “Caring for the Environment ... is caring for the Visitor”. This slogan connects environmental quality with the quality of the product and experiences in addition it raises the overall awareness about this topic. They used print and online media (brochures, catalogues, website, publications) in order to spread the message. The VISIT Holiday Guide was launched in 2003 under the motto “Your visit makes the difference”.

It provides detailed and structured description of more than 1, 000 hotels, bed & breakfasts, holiday houses, youth hostels, camping sites and restaurants. Education and awareness programmes Environmental education is a learning process that increases people’s knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges, develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges, fosters attitudes, motivations and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible action (UNESCO, Tbilisi Declaration, 1978).

Education and awareness programm should address to both the professional sector and the general public. These programmes should contain information about the direct and indirect impacts of tourism, the causes with his effects, the global and local issues, the immediate and long-term issues and good practices in the area. Key members of spreading information are tour

operators. They can provide variety of information about sustainable tourism issues, encourage their clients to conserve, avoid negative impacts on environment and cultural heritage, to respect national legislation of the visited area as well as traditions of local communities. Education and awareness-raising is also required at all levels of government. The relevant ministries have to deal with tourism and environmental issues. It is quite important to raise awareness within the academic sector responsible for training and research on issues regarding sustainable tourism. In my opinion the education and awareness programs means the most important tools of promotion and form the basis of the sustainable marketing. It is essential to start raise awareness in the kindergarten or in elementary school.

If we show good example for children and we emphasize the importance of sustainability and preservation they will take this issue seriously from they childhood. I think that is the problem in many countries because people often feel that environmental problems are just magnified and we have other problems in society or in our life which are more important or urgent. But it is not true because if we don't take seriously these problems and don't deal with that issue now maybe that we can do nothing in the future. It is the responsibility of all people to conserve the environment and draw other people attention to the importance of the issue.

Ecotourism in Hungary In the last few years Hungary has taken a really proactive approach to ecotourism. The country has more than 300 nationally protected areas and over 1 000 locally protected sites. Hungary's attitude towards conservation and preservation is one that facilitates ecotourism

efforts by local businesses and ecotourism demand from tourists. Hungary is a great place where tourists and local people can find number of way to relax and have fun. In the following I will show some good opportunity for ecotourism in Hungary. Budapest

Budapest is the Hungary's capital and an increasingly popular spot for tourists. With its rich and complex history, stunning architecture, lovely people, and fantastic culture, Budapest is one of the great cities of Eastern Europe. Budapest's Urban Adventures offer some great, locally-run day tours with a touch of ecotourism for everyone. Their specially designed Budapest tours allow visitors to discover the city in a personal and unique way.

Unique local experiences are integral to responsible travel, and one of the classic local experiences in Budapest is to visit cities thermal baths.

Visitors can learn about the country's spa traditions and explore some of the city's best landmarks on this adventure. These thermal baths are icons of Budapest, and are frequented by both locals and tourists who are looking to soak away their problems and pains. Budapest Urban Adventures' Sights & Spas tour puts a unique spin on the thermal bath experience by providing visitors with an insight into spa traditions and histories, as well as other traditional and architectural elements of the city. Sights and Spa tour – Highlights: Ride the continent's oldest subway

Learn about Hungarian spa traditions Visit a church carved into a hill
Discover Budapest's Jewish quarter See Europe's largest synagogue Admire the buildings from a city tram Walk through City Park Experience the cosmopolitan vibe of Budapest An other interesting offer of this company is

the , Budapest Explorer tour' by which visitors can explore the capital by tram, foot and metro. Budapest Explorer tour – Highlights: Explore the iconic city landmarks on this Budapest tour Ride the continent's oldest subway Admire the waterfront from a city tram Walk through City Park

Experience the atmosphere of a Budapest market Stroll along Andrassy Avenue Explore Franz Liszt's old neighbourhood Discover local Budapest travel highlights and World Heritage sites Farm-House Hostel Many tourists come to Hungary and stay only in Budapest but it is worthwhile getting out of the city and visiting other part of this wonderful country. In the south part of Hungary there is a tiny village Kiskassa where visitors find the extremely hospitable and totally endearing Ecohun Hostel. Ecohun is a traditional Hungarian farm-house that is locally owned and operated.

The hostel has the same facilities as a typical hostel, in addition it offers guests a unique insight into the local agriculture industry and traditions. The hostel typically caters to short-term accommodation but for those who are seriously interested in sustainable agriculture and alternative technologies, longer-term accommodation is available. I think this form of ecotourism is a very interesting one because nowadays lots of people would like to escape from busy cities, hide in a calm environment and enjoy the opportunities of the nature.

I have some experiences in that area. I have worked for three summers in a small hotel in Slovakia. This hotel accomodates tourists who came to the city because of the thermal bath. The hotel has the ideal potentials for ecotourism beacuse it has a big garden and almost every food ingredients,

vegetables and fruits come from that garden, there are lot of animals which are very popular among the hosts, they can stroke and feet them and the hotel is sorrounded by a large yard with beautiful flowers and trees.

They regularly organise traditional programs, for example riding days, arts and crafts camps or public picksticking. I really enjoyed working here. One thing which I can suggest to this hotel – to promote themselves more in ecotourism way beacuse they emphasized mainly the accomodation and the related services and such values as nature, original agricultural traditions, calm atmosphere were less highlighted. Local Birdwatching Tours Hungary is home to an exceptionally diverse cascade of birds, making it an attractive ecotourism destination for birding. The spring and summer onths are the best period for this type of ecotourism in Hungary, because most of birds are present. Ecotours describe themselves as the natural leaders in Eastern Europe. Ecotours offer a variety of tours to ecotourism destinations around the world, but the majority of their tours are in Hungary. Their tours are typically very specialised. They provide profesionally guided birding trips, birdwatching, butterfly, wildlife, nature and culture tours. Taking a tour with Ecotours is a sure way to experience local fauna from one of the leaders in ecotourism in Hungary.

According to my opinion the county's potentials are good but maybe not well-exploited. People are not well informed about ecotours and ecotravels. In many cases those people are attending on these kind of tours who have similiar hobbies. For example people who like birds and animals they are mostly participating on professionally guided bird watching tours or on

wildlife tours or people who love sports are attending on cycling or hiking tours. This is not problem because they can enjoy their hobbies.

On other hand I think these programs can be promoted among people who are looking for a relaxing weekend. Not just an expensive wellness hotel can provide carefree relaxation but a trip in the nature can be memorable and restful. Hungary should more effectively and intesively advertise or promote its potentials. For example when I was working in a travel agency in Gyor during my internship I did not meet with a brochure or catalogue which was focused on ecotourism. Our agency did not offer any type of program related to ecotourism.

I know just some organised cycling tours in Gyor which can be mentioned as ecotourism. Sum up I think ecotourism must be developed and promoted in the following years beacuse despite of the favorable potentials, ecotourism is not quite popular in Hungary. As I mentioned good marketing and communication tools can greatly help. Conclusion It is obvious that the tourism is the fastest and largest growing industry in the world beacuse millions of people are travelling every year. Travel and tourism is an important part of the world economy.

Fortunately people realized the importance of the environment therefore sustainable and ecotourism started to develope rapidly. Eco travel or travel for the purpose of experiencing wildlife, natural attractions and indigenous cultures has become the fastest growing segment of global tourism.

Ecotoursim in Hungary is still growing and will likely continue to experience an increase in ecotourism operators as well as ecotourists. The country has a

lot of potential and the right attitude therefore Hungary can become an attractive ecotourism destination in the near future.

In my opinion building environmental awareness is the most important part in the marketing process of sustainable tourism. It is very important to start education and awareness programs in elementary schools or kindergartens, organize free educational trips, supply reading materials about this issue. Education and awareness programs should address tourists, general public and government too. It is essential to draw attention to the importance of this topic because we have to care about the future generation. Resources <http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2002/jul/07/travelnews>.

[observerescapesession1 http://www.globalbasecamps.com/sustainable-tourism-ecotourism](http://www.globalbasecamps.com/sustainable-tourism-ecotourism) <http://www.mynatour.org/destination/ecotourism-hungary-local-experiences> http://www.untamedpath.com/Ecotourism/what_is_ecotourism.html <http://www.untamedpath.com/Ecotourism/defining.html> http://www.linkbc.ca/torc/downs1/vol26no1_article06.pdf http://www.biodiversity.ru/coastlearn/tourism-eng/tools_si.html <http://www.englisharticles.info/2010/06/19/unsustainable-tourism/>