

Article

“On the Way to Becoming One of the Most Sustainable Tourism Destinations in the World”—The Austrian Way

Gyöngyi Steinbachné Hajmásy

Department of Tourism, Institute of Business Studies, Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pannonia, Veszprém 8200, Hungary;
Email: hajmasy.gyongyi@gtk.uni-pannon.hu.

ABSTRACT

Sustainability is a prominent focus in numerous destinations worldwide, and it is also a key priority in Austrian tourism planning and development. The objective of this paper is to investigate the challenges and possible solutions in the Austrian context based on the experiences of various stakeholders involved in the sustainable tourism development process. A qualitative approach was employed, 14 structured interviews were conducted with tourism experts. Among numerous innovative and pioneering solutions, the results indicate that climate issues, mobility challenges and labour shortage are among the most significant difficulties encountered, while certifications also deemed important to ensure compliance with sustainability requirements.

KEYWORDS: sustainable tourism; tourism planning; Austria

INTRODUCTION

Despite the numerous economic benefits of tourism, it has also been a significant contributor to environmental degradation, pollution and negatively influences the social and cultural aspects of communities [1–5]. Numerous studies have pointed out that tourism, particularly mass tourism, may cause a range of environmental impacts, including high energy use and water consumption, inappropriate waste management, habitat destruction and loss of biodiversity [6–8]. Additionally, researchers, like Hsu et al. [9], Mihalic [10] and Schönherr et al. [11,12], have highlighted the negative impacts of overtourism. The phenomenon of overtourism, characterized by excessive visitation and saturation of tourist destinations, still occurs in several destination, such as Venice, Barcelona, Majorca, Salzburg and Hallstatt [10,13,14]. Benner [13] emphasized that the high number of tourists and their inappropriate behavior, concentration and location leads to culturally, socially and environmentally unsustainable forms of mass tourism. This requires a new approach to tourism development. Consequently, sustainability has gained significant importance in relation to tourism planning and development [5,15,16] in an attempt to conserve and preserve the

Open Access

Received: 02 May 2024

Accepted: 27 August 2024

Published: 27 September 2024

Copyright © 2024 by the author(s). Licensee Hapres, London, United Kingdom. This is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

environmental, social, cultural and physical resources, while also ensuring long-term economic benefits, and enhancing quality of life of local communities and residents [5,11,17–19]. The concept of sustainability and sustainable tourism presents opportunities for mitigating the negative impacts of overtourism and the detrimental effects of mass tourism, as discussed by Choi & Sirakaya [20], Dodds [6], Hsu et al. [9], Schönherr et al. [11].

Some Austrian cities such as Hallstatt and Vienna are also struggling with the challenges of overtourism [21]. In 2023 Austria recorded approximately 151 million overnight stays, marking a notable increase of +10.4% compared to 2022 [22]. However Austria is rated the second most livable country globally, following Finland and Austria's capital Vienna achieved the first place on Mercer's Quality of Living City Ranking 2023 [23].

The Austrian tourism planning and development process also emphasizes sustainability as one of the key principles. The motto of the Austrian Tourism Strategy, known as Plan T—Master Plan for Tourism, is: “On the way to becoming the most sustainable tourism destination in the World”. Austria aims to position itself as a “green destination” on the international market, leveraging its unique characteristics, such as its beautiful natural landscape, cuisine based on excellent regional products and the renowned Austrian hospitality. Through collaboration between Austrian experts and various stakeholders in the tourism industry, steps are being taken to establish guidelines for sustainable tourism, ensuring the industry's long-term success in the country.

This study aims to uncover the sustainable dimensions of Austrian tourism by examining the perspectives and experiences of various experts and stakeholders engaged in the planning and development of sustainable tourism practices in Austria.

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What challenges does sustainable tourism in Austria face on the way to becoming one of the most sustainable tourism destinations in the World?

RQ2: What types of solutions are employed in Austria to achieve sustainability?

The initial section offers background information on sustainable tourism, the stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism, and the key dimensions of a sustainable destination. Subsequently, an overview of tourism in Austria is provided, followed by a detailed explanation of the methodology employed in the study. The results section delves into participants' views on the concept of sustainability and highlights the challenges and possible solutions of sustainable tourism in Austria. The discussion and conclusions sections analyze the key findings and propose implications for tourism experts to implement strategies towards achieving sustainable destinations.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Sustainability in Tourism

The promotion of sustainable tourism has emerged as a critical priority for both policymakers and industry stakeholders worldwide. As a complex and multidimensional construct, sustainable tourism is characterized by numerous definitions that reflect varying perspectives and priorities [2].

Studies by Stoddard et al. [24] and Yuedi et al. [25] identified sustainable tourism as a long-term process. Inskeep [26], McIntyre [27], Muller [28], Mihalic [10], Schönherr et al. [12] and Han et al. [19] have asserted that sustainable tourism presents opportunities to meet the needs of tourists while enhancing the quality of life for the host community. According to Bruyn et al. [5] sustainable development should not only address current needs but also strive to safeguard the needs of future generations.

Lozano-Oyola et al. [2] consider sustainable tourism as ‘an approach that can be used to make all types of tourism more environmentally, socially and economically beneficial’. Other researchers, including Inskeep [26], Muller [28], Mihalic [10] and Yuedi et al. [25] also highlighted the importance of economic, social and environmental dimensions. Stoddard et al. [24] and Bruyn et al. [5] identified the cultural dimension as a fundamental aspect of sustainable tourism. Agyeiwaah et al. [29] adopt a more comprehensive approach to the dimensions of sustainable tourism, distinguishing among economic, social, environmental, cultural, political and management/institutional dimensions, as well as technology.

The fundamental principles of sustainable tourism are encompassed within a three-pillared framework, referred to as the environmental (natural), socio-cultural and economic pillars of sustainability [10,18,24,30,31]. There is an increasing global consensus on the integration of sustainable tourism practices to enhance environmental, social or socio-cultural, and economic benefits across all forms of tourism [2]. Moreover, tourism policies aimed at promoting sustainability strive to strike a delicate balance between the positive and negative impacts of tourism [11,30]. Studies by Hoppstadius & Möller [32] argue for the need to minimize negative environmental effects.

Other authors, such as Inskeep [26], Roxas et al. [33], Rasoolimanesh et al. [17] and Schönherr et al. [11,12] have emphasized that sustainable tourism requires effective governance, encompassing suitable institutions, policies, planning and monitoring. To effectively implement sustainable tourism practices, transparent actions, ongoing monitoring of accomplishments and processes, and effective communication are deemed essential [33]. Stakeholders, including present and future visitors, as well as the present and future host community, must actively participate in advocating for sustainable tourism [15,33]. Additionally, Dodds [6], Stoddard et al. [24] and López-Sánchez & Pulido-Fernández [34]

consider sustainability as a practical tool for preserving and enhancing the competitiveness of a destination.

Drawing upon the definitions outlined above, a comprehensive definition of sustainable tourism has been developed. The construct emphasizes the importance of the environmental, socio-cultural and economic pillars and focus on different efforts to invest which all ensure sustainability in a destination.

Sustainable tourism is a holistic approach to ensure the protection of natural resources, reduce the negative environmental impacts of tourism, implement effective resource management, and preserve the cultural heritage in order to satisfy the needs of both present and future visitors and local communities. Sustainable tourism requires adequate policies and planning, monitoring strategies and infrastructure development to achieve long-term sustainability and competitiveness of a destination engaging/involved all the stakeholders in the process supported by effective communication.

Stakeholders in Sustainable Tourism

A wide range of stakeholders has an important role and significance within tourism and engaging all the stakeholders in the sustainable tourism development process is crucial for its success [4,15,33–35]. According to Freeman [36] stakeholders are defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organization’s objectives” (p. 46), and an organization’s interactions with different stakeholders characterize it [37]. In the context of sustainable tourism, Roxas et al. [33] identified five different stakeholder groups, as illustrated in Figure 1.

International organizations, such as UNWTO (World Tourism Organization) or WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council) play a crucial role in developing innovative approaches to planning and implementing sustainable tourism strategies [3,17]. Moreover, they actively engage in monitoring and evaluating processes [17].

The national tourism organizations represent the national government which has a significant role in regulating and developing tourism as one of the most important elements of the economic performance. They promote tourism both domestically and internationally. As pointed out by Roxas et al. [33] this institution is responsible for the growth of tourism industry in a particular destination.

The local government units play a crucial role in managing the impacts of tourism, they focus on tourism promotion and actively participate in infrastructure and service development. They are the primary stakeholders in local tourism and play a crucial role in preserving valuable assets [33].

Businesses, especially tourism businesses sell their products and services to tourists to generate income, create job opportunities to the local residents [18,33]. Tourism enterprises can collaborate to enhance the

destination's brand image and provide a comprehensive experience for tourists [18].

Community represents the residents of a destination who are directly affected by tourism, whether positively or negatively [20]. Hsu et al. [9], Mihalic [10] and Rasoolimanesh et al. [17] consider residents as the major stakeholders in the sustainable tourism planning and development process. Their positive attitudes and active involvement in achieving sustainable tourism is essential [19].

Tourists visit a certain destination with specified purpose, for example leisure, visiting friends and relatives or arrange business affairs. They stay at least 24 hours in a destination and use different services. In addition to generating income for a certain destination, the presence of tourists affects many stakeholders, especially local residents and their quality of life [19,38].

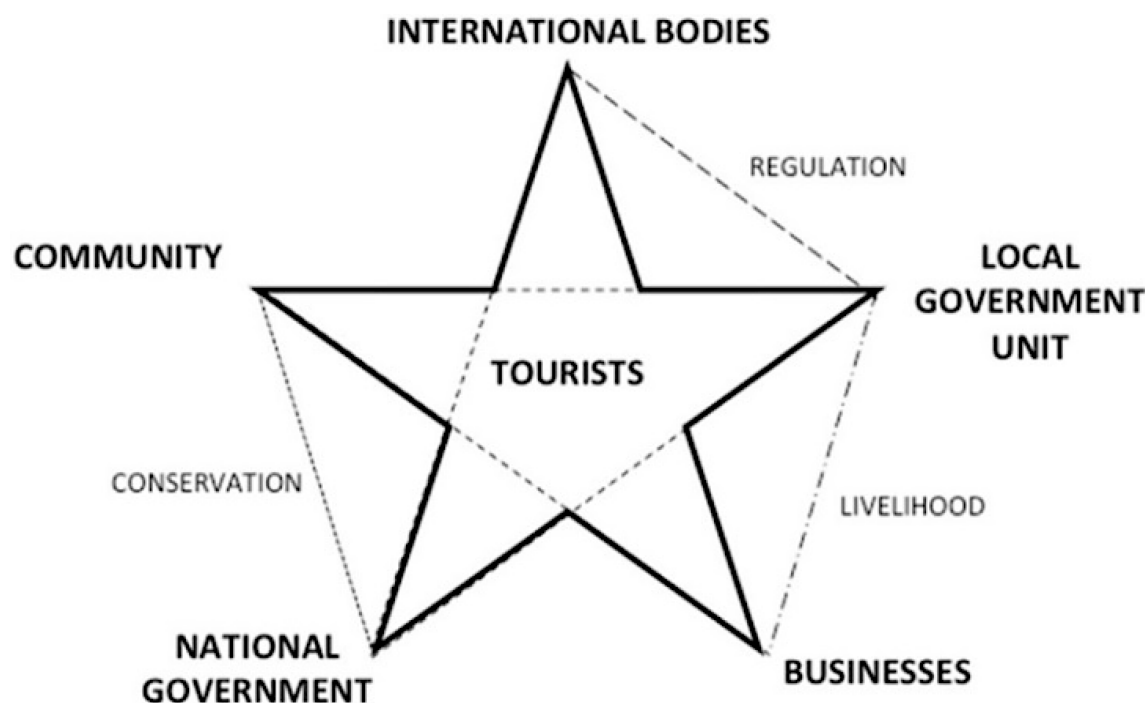


Figure 1. Star model of tourism stakeholders. Note: This figure has been adapted from “Mapping stakeholders’ roles in governing sustainable tourism destinations” by Roxas FMY, Rivera JPR, Gutierrez ELM, 2020, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 45, p. 387–398 (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.09.005>) [33]. Copyright 2020 by Elsevier.

Damm et al. [39] applied a different approach to identifying stakeholders by focusing on a specific destination. Their research mapped and identified stakeholder groups in the context of climate services (CS) within the Austrian tourism sector. The study identified five main groups: (1) tourism businesses, (2) public administration, (3) tourists, (4) related economic sectors and (5) interest groups (see Figure 2). This approach highlights the relevant stakeholder groups, emphasizing the destination's specific characteristics and challenges, such as climate variability and change.

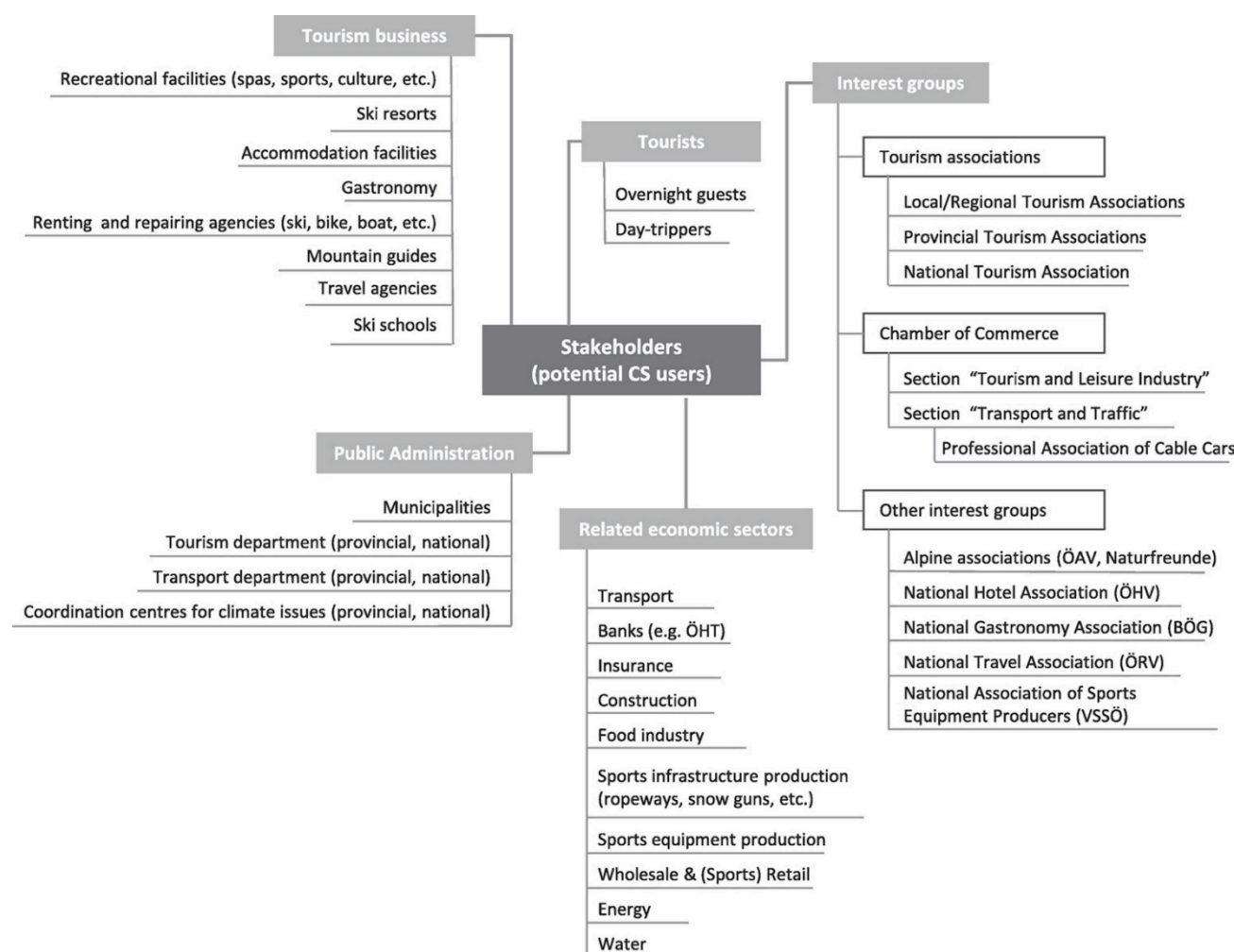


Figure 2. Stakeholder mapping—potential CS users in the tourism sector. Note: This figure has been adapted from “The market for climate services in the tourism sector—An analysis of Austrian stakeholders’ perceptions” by Damm A, Köberl J, Stegmaier P, Alonso EJ, Harjanne A, 2020, *Climate Services*, 17, 100094 (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cliser.2019.02.001>) [39]. Copyright 2020 by Elsevier.

In the light of the abovementioned factors, it can be established that sustainable tourism is a multi-stakeholder construct. The identification of the key stakeholders and understanding their needs is essential and the exploitation of synergies between stakeholder groups is also considered crucial in achieving sustainable tourism [3,8,40].

As Choi & Sirakaya [1], Byrd [15], Hardy & Pearson [40], Hsu et al. [9] and Nguyen et al. [18] mentioned the success of the implementation of different sustainable tourism initiatives depends on the active and extensive cooperation between the stakeholders. In pursuing sustainable tourism enhanced and strengthened partnerships and collaboration between/among the public and private sector is required [2]. The involvement of the different stakeholder groups in sustainable tourism planning and decision-making process is an important issue in order to ensure their participation and a sense of ownership in the development of sustainable tourism strategies [17]. Besides, the monitoring and evaluation process also requires the contribution of the stakeholders and the results

and further sustainable development strategies should be accepted by the participants [17].

Sustainability in Tourism Destination

Sustainable development and sustainable tourism management requires to meet various principles and conditions, such as:

- engage the different stakeholders,
- ensure the protection of natural resources,
- reduce the negative environmental impacts of tourism,
- apply effective resource management,
- preserve the cultural heritage,
- satisfy the needs of tourists and local communities both present and future,
- adequate policies and planning, applying monitoring strategies,
- achieve long-term sustainability and competitiveness [5,11,17,33,41,42].

Aligned with sustainability and sustainable development, destination management organisations (DMOs) adopt the triple bottom line concept to enhance their sustainable tourism policies and strategies [24]. The triple bottom line framework includes the economic, the social and the environmental dimensions [24,43].

The economic dimension highlights the contribution of tourism to the local economy, emphasizing the enhancement of income for local businesses and the improvement of the quality of life for the local population [44,45].

The social dimension refers to the local community, including enhancements in quality of life, the interest of local residents in preservation of resources and the expansion of leisure opportunities available to the community [44].

The environmental dimension emphasizes the efficient utilization of resources and the reduction of pollution [38]. It also refers to the preservation of natural resources, renewable resources and biodiversity [29], as well as the carrying capacity of tourism destinations [10,46].

Mathew & Sreejesh [38], Garau-Vadell et al. [44] and Nguyen et al. [18] proposed an approach emphasizing the importance of maintaining a balance between economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability for sustainable tourism destination. The cultural dimension entails preserving the authenticity of local residents' culture, architecture and traditions, as well as interactions between residents and visitors [29].

The implementation of sustainable policies contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [8,17]. The SDGs represent the most important indicators of the United Nations 2030 agenda, addressing all aspects of sustainability [17]. Effective and sustainable tourism has been identified as a key area that can directly or indirectly contribute to the SDGs, particularly goals 8 (Inclusive and

sustainable economic growth), 12 (Sustainable consumption and production), and 14 (Sustainable use of oceans and marine resources) [17,19,30,47,48]. Successful implementation and achievement of the sustainable development goals require effective collaborations and relationships among stakeholders, especially in the post-COVID era [8,17,33].

Thus, the sustainable development of destinations is a crucial factor in tourism. Although several authors have studied sustainability in destinations, “there is no universally accepted definition of sustainable tourism destinations because each destination has unique characteristic” [49].

Lee [49] discussed this topic intensively and he determined the conceptual definition for sustainable tourism destinations with respect to its scope (Figure 3). On the one hand the limited definition encompasses the management of all resources devoted to and involved in tourism. This limited definition concentrates on the needs of tourists and communities engaged in tourism. On the other hand, the holistic definition focuses on the overall sustainable development of the destination.

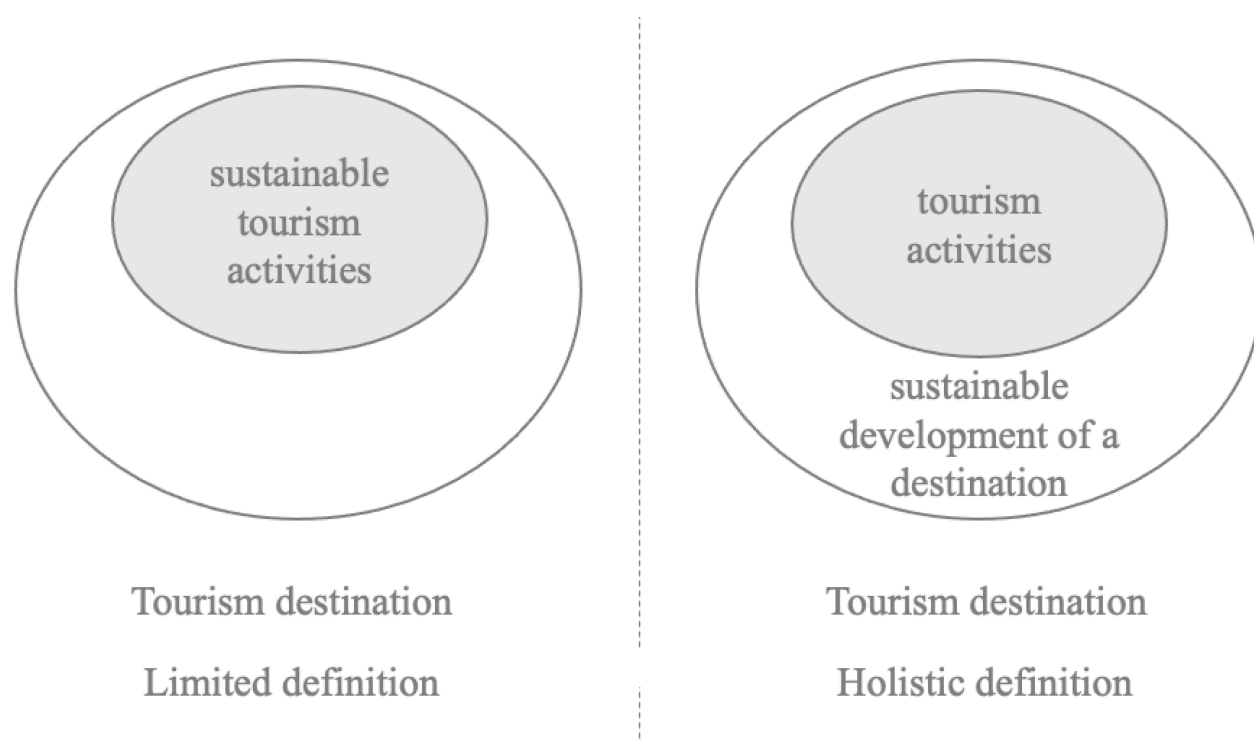


Figure 3. Definitions of sustainable tourism destinations. Note: This figure has been adapted from “Sustainable tourism destinations: the importance of cleaner production” by Lee KF, 2001, Journal of Cleaner Production, 9, p. 313-323 ([https://doi.org/10.1016/S0959-6526\(00\)00071-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0959-6526(00)00071-8)) [49]. Copyright 2001 by Elsevier.

Sarantakou [50] also emphasizes the complexity and unique characteristics of different destinations, which are crucial for effective tourism planning. The research identifies four main groups of destinations, such as urban, coastal, island and mountain destinations. It

highlights the specific issues and challenges faced by each category. In the 21st century, factors such as climate change, rising temperatures, seasonality, mobility, and overtourism have a significant impact on these destinations. Consequently, tourism planning requires greater attention to sustainability to address these challenges effectively [51].

At the same time, implementing sustainable tourism destinations requires strengthened cooperation and collaboration among the relevant stakeholders and bringing them together to agree on the form of sustainable development and its principles [8,33,47,49].

As described in the previous section numerous research conducted a study to capture the identification and engagement of key stakeholders in achieving sustainability [33]. Other researchers, including Choi & Sirakaya [1], Tanguay et al. [52], Lozano-Oyola et al. [53], Burbano et al. [8], Blancas et al. [54] and Yuedi et al. [25] made an investment to construct an indicator system to develop, manage and monitor tourism sustainably at international, national, regional, and local levels.

As a significant portion of research has focused on indicators and the role and collaboration among stakeholders, this study aims to investigate the cause-and-effect relationships.

THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY—TOURISM IN AUSTRIA

Austria, situated in the heart of Europe, is renowned for its stunning Alpine landscapes, rich cultural heritage and vibrant cities, with a population of approximately 9 million people [22]. Boasting a diverse array of attractions that draw millions of tourists each year, the country is considered extremely successful in the tourism sector. Besides the country's capital Vienna, Salzburg and Innsbruck are the most attractive destinations for visitors. Vienna is a cultural hub renowned for its rich cultural heritage, Salzburg is known as a birthplace of Mozart and Innsbruck is a picturesque city nestled in the Austrian Alps [55].

In terms of international arrivals Austria occupies the prestigious 11th place in the global market welcoming around 45 million arrivals and realising almost 150 million overnight stays annually (Figure 4 illustrates the dynamics and potential in the Austrian tourism. The figure shows a dynamic increase in the number of tourists visiting Austria both before and after COVID). Tourism accounts for approximately 16% of the country's GDP. This success can be attributed to Austria's beautiful natural environment, including its mountains and lakes, as well as its cuisine based on local products and renowned hospitality. The actors of the Austrian tourism industry continuously and proactively take the necessary steps to ensure the success of tourism in the future [55].

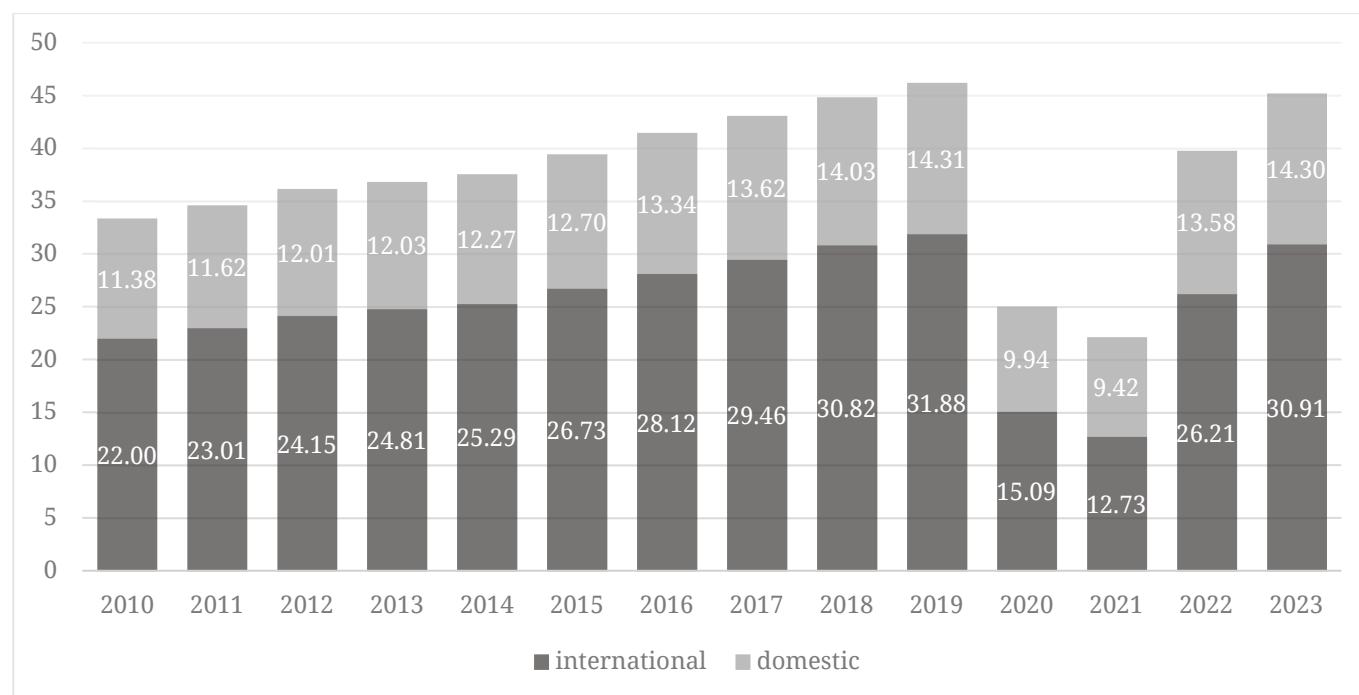


Figure 4. Number of international and domestic tourist arrivals in Austria from 2010 to 2023 (in millions). Adapted from Statista [22].

Besides in the Alpine Area winter tourism has a dominant role in the tourism sector. In the European Alps Austria is one of the most popular skiing destinations in the world and a significant portion of income is derived from winter tourism [56,57]. However, winter tourism is highly sensitive to climate change [56,58]. Rising temperatures, especially in winter, lead to a delayed start and earlier end of the snow season, ultimately shortening the ski season and potentially reducing winter tourism [57–60]. “In contrast to winter tourism, climate change has potentially positive effects on summer tourism. However, summer tourism cannot compensate for potential losses from winter, as daily per capita expenditures in summer tourism are significantly lower than in winter tourism” [60].

Other studies [61–63] analyze the relationship between mobility and climate change which is another critical aspect of tourism in mountainous regions like Austria. The majority of visitors still rely on cars, while a significant portion also opting for air travel. This unsustainable mode of transportation significantly contributes to the environmental degradation of the region. Simultaneously, the transportation sector’s emission of greenhouse gases exacerbates climate change, posing a significant threat to the sustainability of snow tourism in the area.

To address these challenges, Austria is increasingly directing investment towards sustainable solutions. The Austrian tourism industry is well-known for its commitment to sustainability and quality as well. The country has a well-developed infrastructure to cater to tourists’ needs

while preserving its natural and cultural heritage. From eco-friendly accommodation options to extensive hiking and cycling trails, Austria offers sustainable tourism experiences that resonate with environmentally conscious travellers. Furthermore, the Austrian Tourism Strategy, known as “Plan T—Master Plan for Tourism”, underscores the country’s dedication to becoming one of the most sustainable tourism destinations in the world [50].

In line with the emphasis by Nguyen et al. [18] and Roxas et al. [33] on cooperation and partnership in sustainable tourism development, collaboration plays a significant role in the Austrian context. Hundreds of stakeholders were actively involved into the development of the Austrian Tourism Strategy, contributing to a collaborative and inclusive process. Beyond stakeholder engagement, prioritising guest experience and enhancing the well-being and quality of life for local residents are essential considerations. These factors collectively contribute to Austria’s holistic approach to sustainable tourism development.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

A qualitative approach was employed to gather primary data for the research. This study focuses on exploring the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders engaged in sustainable tourism planning and process at national, regional and local level, as well as tourism businesses involved in sustainable tourism development. Understanding how local stakeholders perceive sustainability issues is crucial for advancing sustainable tourism [8].

Viewpoints and insights of stakeholders and sustainability experts are explored through structured interviews. The interviews were conducted between December 2023 and February 2024.

The initial step in recruiting interviewees was through direct contact with a consulting firm led by an expert in Austrian tourism and sustainable tourism. Further experts were identified using snowball sampling [64]. Participants included sustainability experts from government bodies, destination management organizations, tourism businesses, associations and attractions (see Table 1). These participants, with their extensive experience in the tourism sector and sustainable tourism, provided valuable insights into the challenges and potential solutions within their destinations.

Table 1. The characteristics of the research participants.

No.	The type of the participant's organization	The position of the participant	The location of the organization
1	consulting firm	international tourism expert, CEO	Vienna
2	governmental body	responsible for green meetings and tourism	Vienna
3	tourism policy maker (official marketing organization)—national level	sustainability expert	Vienna
4	tourism policy maker (official marketing organization)—regional level	head of the Competence Center for Sustainability	Tyrol region
5	tourism policy maker (official tourism organization)—local level	sustainability coordinator	Tyrol region / Innsbruck
6	tourism policy maker (official marketing organization)—regional level	marketing & market management CEE	SalzburgerLand region
7	tourist region—unique high plateau comprising five idyllic villages	sustainable manager	Tyrol region
8	tourist destination—comprises two resorts	brand & company communication	SalzburgerLand region
9	organization representing the interests of the hotel industry in Austria	president of the hotel association	Vienna
10	tourism business—eco-friendly hotel	sales & marketing manager	Vienna
11	tourism business—sustainable family hotel	owner	Tyrol region
12	tourism business—hotel in the Alpine ski region	owner	Carinthia region / Hohe Tauern National Park / Mallnitz
13	attraction—national park in Austria	general manager	National Park in Salzburger Land, Carinthia and Tyrol region
14	association for sustainable mobility	project support	Alpine region across Austria, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and Switzerland

Interviews were conducted online via platforms such as Skype, Zoom and MS Teams based on previously scheduled appointments, and typically lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. A total of 14 interviews were conducted with sustainability experts actively involved in the Austrian tourism planning and development. The interviews were conducted in English based on an interview guideline.

Interview protocols were adhered to, comprising basic information about the interview, an introduction, interview questions, and closing instructions [64].

The interview questions are divided into three main categories based on their objectives and their relation to the research questions, following the prior research of Burbano et al. [8].

The first category of questions focuses on sustainability and sustainable tourism. These questions aim to assess the level of awareness among the interviewed experts regarding the principles of sustainability and its application to tourism. The second category focuses on challenges and potential solutions, exploring the obstacles that sustainable tourism in Austria faces in its quest to become one of the world's most sustainable tourism destinations. Lastly, the third category addresses stakeholders, aiming to identify the key stakeholders in Austrian sustainable tourism and to clarify their respective roles. The questions of the interviews are listed in Appendix.

RESULTS

The term “sustainability” is the underpinning concept within the Austrian Tourism Strategy, known as “Plan T—Master Plan for Tourism”. Consequently, the research initially explored how respondents interpret this concept in connection to tourism. The respondents (64% of the surveyed practitioners) considered sustainability as a “long-term perspective” and 93% of the experts emphasized the significance of the “three columns”: social, economic and environmental dimensions. Striking the balance between the three pillars serves as basis for the long-term sustainability of destinations, and an effective management-system is required to achieve it. The environmental dimensions encompasses environmental protection, the “optimal use of environmental resources” and “the preservation of natural heritage and biodiversity”. The beautiful natural landscapes and the untouched nature are the main tourist attractions in Austria and which is the key reason why the environmental dimension has crucial importance. According to the respondents the core element of the economic pillar is ensuring financial stability. The social dimension involves local communities, “the creation of stable employment and income opportunities” and “the respect and preservation of traditions”. The social dimension also “deals with all stakeholders in the tourism system”, including tourists and their satisfaction. The “high level of tourist satisfaction should be generated by promoting and raising awareness of meaningful experiences and sustainable tourism practices”.

Sustainability also means the minimisation the negative effects of tourism and maximising the positive impacts.

Several respondents (30% of the experts) stated the need to “prioritize quality over quantity” because “mass tourism is definitely not sustainable”. “For over 60 years mass tourism has been the business model in Austria, which is definitely not sustainable” and “needs to rethink sustainability”.

Sustainability also means “satisfying the needs of the current visitors and local communities” and “guaranteeing the ability of future generations to meet their needs”. Most of the tourism businesses are family-run and “they have to pass it to the next generation”, so “they have to be economically stable”.

Challenges and Potential Solutions in Austrian Tourism

Austria provides “a perfect background for sustainable tourism” because “the tourism strategy in Austria is very clear into direction of sustainability”. In addition, an increasing number of tourism businesses, as well regional and local destination management organizations are becoming committed to sustainability. However, Austrian tourism is facing various challenges, and this section presents these challenges and potential solutions. Additionally, respondents do not perceive COVID as having a significant impact on sustainable development. Interviewees (half of the surveyed practitioners) believe that COVID did not influence or change anything significantly; only helped to enhance the pace of sustainable development and “it was just an accelerator for sustainable operation”. They note that various steps toward sustainability were already taking place without the pandemic.

The mobility issue

The issue of mobility and CO₂ emission are critical aspects of tourism in mountainous destinations like Austria. The majority of visitors still rely on cars, while a significant portion also opt for air travel. These unsustainable modes of transportation significantly contribute to the environmental degradation of the region. Interviewees (86% of the respondents) consider measuring and reducing CO₂ emission important. To address these challenges, Austria is increasingly investing in sustainable and climate-friendly mobility solutions, including the introduction of “KlimaTicket Ö”. This initiative offers regional, cross-regional and national KlimaTickets that are available for all public transport, covering public and private railways; city and public transport, and are valid for one year. The regular price of the “KlimaTicket Ö” is only 1095 Euros per year, and there are discounts available for young people, senior citizens and people with disabilities. The “KlimaTicket Ö” is valid for the whole country, meanwhile the regional “Klimatickets” are available in the federal provinces. Austria aims to be carbon neutral by 2035 and “KlimaTicket Ö”,

is introduced as a government initiative in support of the aspiration to achieve carbon neutrality.

Besides the “KlimaTicket Ö”, numerous initiatives aim to enhance climate friendly mobility. One of these programs is the Alpine Pearls project. This transnational collaboration involves Germany, Austria, Italy and Slovenia to promote sustainable tourism in the Alps. The core element of the project is “to develop eco-friendly mobility concepts for the future” and “helps visitors with luggage transport to encourage visitors to arrive by train”.

Several hotels also encourage guests “to arrive by train or bus” and “provide shuttle service for their luggage”. A participant who owns a hotel in an Alpine ski region mentioned that they encourage visitors to rent different ski equipment locally rather than bringing everything from home. This could significantly encourage tourists to use public transportation. A tourism policy maker emphasized the importance of “supporting the use of electric vehicles with the appropriate charging infrastructure on site”.

Certifications

Green certification programs, like the Austrian EcoLabel have become increasingly widely spread and several businesses are considering the sustainability certification. The Austrian Ecolabel also enables destinations to achieve green certification. Currently, three destinations boast with the Austrian EcoLabel: Region Seefeld, Saalfelden Leogang and Wagrain-Kleinarl. Wagrain-Kleinarl region is also accredited by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. The eco-labelling of destinations requires that these destinations meet certain levels of economic, social and environmental criteria. Certification organizations establish a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that destinations must meet. “These KPIs serve as the most important criteria to encourage destinations to uphold sustainability principles”.

The Austrian Hotel Association actively encourages and supports hotels to become certified. According to the experience of an expert who is a representative of the Austrian Hotel Association “a destination will be truly sustainable if the businesses operating there are also committed to sustainability”. As part of an EU project, the Association “created an environment where small and medium-sized enterprises (SMes) collaborated and learned from each other to achieve certification collectively”. This provided an excellent opportunity for the participants because “during the training sessions they gain inspiration from each other”. Initially the participation in the project was free of charge, as it was funded by the European Union. “However, participants now have to pay a small amount to take part in similar training courses provided by the hotel association”.

The official marketing organization in Tyrol region (regional level) also “tries to motivate and help more partners to acquire the Austrian EcoLabel

or pursue other sustainable activities”. The institution also helps its partners “to be more sensitive, aware and knowledgeable about sustainability issues”. To support these goals, a competence center has been established.

Winter tourism issue

In the Alpine Area a significant portion of income is derived from winter tourism. The transportation sector’s emission of greenhouse gases exacerbates climate change, posing a significant threat to the sustainability of snow tourism in the area. The representative of a destination certified by the Austrian EcoLabel and accredited by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council pointed out that “snow cover is becoming a challenge due to the insufficient elevation of most regions in Austria. The production of artificial snow is increasingly expensive and resource-intensive. Consequently, businesses operating in the region are more or less forced to change their business model, as the climate crisis narrows the time window of possibility of skiing in the future”. According to a hotel owner, skiing is becoming increasingly expensive. “Guests typically stay in the region for a week, but purchase ski cards for only three or four days. As people try to save money during the holiday they prefer apartments which are now totally overbooked”. A tourism expert representing an official marketing organization at the regional level highlighted that “winter tourism needs to be more sustainable and also the key stakeholders in winter tourism, including cable car companies, snow manufacturers, skiing areas and energy manufacturers should prioritize sustainability”. Another hotel owner believes that “ski runs below 1000 metres will not survive, so the focus should be on those with natural snow”. However, this will inevitably shorten the ski season. Additionally, she noted that twenty years ago 80% of their income came from winter tourism, and the summer was such a “byproduct”. Now due to their involvement in an Alpine-Adriatic success project that extends to the Adriatic, the situation is reversed. Some people cycle while others walk the 220 kilometers. Consequently, summer tourism flourishes from the end of May until the end of October. Overall, the environmental factor has a significant importance because “nature is a treasure”.

The Role of the Most Important Stakeholders from Top Down

Interviewees (approximately 80% of the respondents) emphasized the role of various stakeholders in sustainable tourism development within the Austrian context. The manager of an eco-friendly hotel repeated several times during the interview that “sustainable tourism requires cooperation and collaboration” and “sustainable development can only succeed if all relevant actors within the industry pool together”. Overall, participants of the research noted that cooperation and collaboration have a crucial role in sustainable tourism planning and development.

Stakeholders in Austrian tourism can be categorized into three main levels, based on their influence: national, regional and local.

According to the respondents the Austrian government, the Austrian Tourism Bank, the Ministry of Economy and its affiliated organisation such as the Austrian National Tourism Office and Statistic Austria, as well as the media are the key actors at the national level. For example: “During the pandemic, the Austrian state offered financial support and subsidies to operators for the days lost due to “COVID”. Businesses made good use of this assistance. Various sustainability improvements were made that had not been possible before”. The experts also mentioned Plan T—“Master Plan for Tourism” which is also referred to as the most important document in the sustainable tourism planning and development in Austria. This document is known as “a comprehensive strategy for enhancing sustainability”. Regarding mobility issues—which is a critical aspect of tourism in the Alpine area—the most influential stakeholders are cable car companies and public transport companies, particularly the Austrian Federal Railways. The Ministry for Climate Action initiated the Clima Active program, which supports regions and promotes sustainable mobility—a key focus of the program.

At regional level, the regional tourism organizations in each of the 9 provinces play an important role in product development and facilitating collaboration with the national level and local level. An expert in tourism from Tyrol at regional level mentioned that they established a competence center for sustainability and have sustainability coordinators in each destination. They assist them in creating strategies and monitoring. Various trainings are offered for the coordinators “to develop the common understanding of sustainability”. The expert from the Tyrol Tourist Board considers not only planning as important but also monitoring. This is a relatively new initiative, as it was launched in 2023. The sustainability coordinator for Innsbruck Tourism, the official tourism organization at local level in Tyrol province, also emphasized the importance of reporting. Additionally, she highlighted two significant issues in terms of sustainability: the communication and awareness which are important alongside the three pillars. A respondent from a regional destination management organization discussed the relationship between tourism businesses and local farms. In an eco-friendly hotel in Vienna, there is collaboration with local producers to offer guests local products, particularly wines.

At the local level, tourism needs to consider stakeholders on-site, including the local residents, tourism businesses and visitors. Tourism businesses, particularly hotels play a crucial role in this context. Accommodation providers are increasingly implementing environmentally friendly measures such as energy-efficient lightning, waste reduction initiatives, water-saving systems and launching information campaigns on energy consumption to educate guests and locals about sustainable tourism practices. Approximately 5 years ago, the

owner of a hotel in the Alpine ski region introduced an environmental contribution fee for the apartments. Guests willingly accepted this initiative and voluntarily pay the contribution amount of 2 Euros 50 cents as it is not compulsory. This was considered important as many guests arrived in the mountains with large bags of rubbish, which were often left in the apartments. As the owner explained: “We know how to separate rubbish in the hotel kitchen, but when guests start cooking in the apartments and throw away old spaghetti with plastic, it creates extra work for us. I really want to deal with this issue in some way”. Moreover, during and after the pandemic several tourism businesses established a set of criteria that they needed to meet.

Despite the efforts of hotels to offer innovative and pioneering sustainability solutions, there remain unresolved challenges. Hotel representatives consider employee loyalty as the most crucial factor within the social dimension of sustainability. Furthermore, finding skilled and motivated staff is also challenging. Hotel professionals pointed out that “it is difficult for the industry to attract workers due to unstable working hours, weekend and holiday shifts, low wages, and predominantly female workforce in conditions that are not very family friendly”. Many hotels fail to realize that retaining staff is more cost-effective, especially for those operating seasonally. Additionally, many employees have migrant backgrounds, which can also be a source of problems. The president of the Austrian Hotel Association also mentioned the issue of labour problems. The Association tries to offer advice to the small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) on how to improve working conditions. Additionally, they collaborate with hospitality schools to organize different events to make working in the hospitality industry more attractive. Furthermore, the Hotel Association provides trainings, workshops and webinars for young hoteliers. They have established a competence center aimed at offering a wide range of information about various topics, including energy management and the process of obtaining an Austrian EcoLabel. On the one hand, businesses can save money by conserving energy and minimizing waste. On the other hand, they can attract customers or guests for whom sustainability is very important and who are willing to pay a higher price for a more sustainable experience. The Hotel Association has established good relationships with several organisations that help their members. “United Against Waste” supports hotels in reducing food waste. Additionally, there are startups that offer eco-friendly products.

In addition to various organizations, businesses and local residents, tourists also play predominant role in sustainable tourism within a destination. An expert noted that tourist who prioritize sustainability during their holiday can contribute higher value to the destination as they are more conscious and willing to pay more in comparison to standard tourists in order to receive services which are really sustainable. Furthermore, some experts highlighted the challenges of managing

overtourism in some picturesque destinations, such as Hallstatt in Salzkammergut. They attempted to utilize the pandemic as an opportunity to develop strategies for better visitor management. However, now that the pandemic has subsided and visitors are returning, the task is proving to be more challenging.

Consequently, many destinations are adopting strategic approaches and beginning to develop local development strategies with the active involvement of local communities. The CEO of a consultancy firm stated that “the holy trinity of destination management involves optimizing the visitor experience, effectively engaging stakeholders, and ensuring economic prosperity through experience-based destinations”.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Sustainability has emerged as a conscious priority across various sectors worldwide, including tourism. The Austrian tourism planning and development process also emphasizes sustainability as one of the key principles. As a significant proportion of tourism products and services are located in the mountainous holiday resorts in Austria, and a significant portion of their income relies on winter tourism, the global environmental changes have a significant impact on the country’s tourism industry. This research aims to explore the sustainable dimensions of Austrian tourism by examining the perspectives and experiences of various experts and stakeholders engaged in the planning and development of sustainable tourism practices in Austria. Austria is a small country with a strong claim “to be one of the greenest destinations”. Stakeholders at all levels are committed to sustainability and are moving in the same direction, which requires an extensive knowledge transfer, education and awareness raising.

It can be concluded that innovative and pioneering sustainability solutions are being implemented, but Austria still faces various challenges on its path to becoming one of the most sustainable tourism destinations in the World. The effects of climate change, the mobility issue and the labour problems cause difficulties. Austria has implemented various initiatives in the way of sustainability, including the introduction of the KlimaTicket Ö and training programs by the Austrian Hotel Association. Additionally, Austria has been actively participating in an international project supporting sustainable mobility. However, certain challenges, such as overtourism and labour shortages, still lack definitive solutions.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This paper presents limitations and opportunities for future research. Regarding limitations of this paper, the research did not incorporate the perspectives of leaders from each of the nine provincial tourism associations. Furthermore, stakeholders considered important and influential by the respondents, such as Austrian Federal Railways and the cable car companies, declined to participate in the research due to time

constraints. Therefore, one possible avenue for future research could be deeper examination of specific challenges, involving further stakeholders especially from the transport sector. As other studies have examined the impact of climate change on Austria's tourism and focused on the environmental aspects of sustainability further studies need to be conducted on the other challenges, such as overtourism or labour shortage. It would be interesting to identify possible solutions for these issues which are mainly related to the social pillar.

The results of this study and the conclusions were drawn on a small sample and focused on a single country. Hence, further research should explore other countries in order to provide generalised and applied solutions to other mountainous destination.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The dataset of the study is available from the authors upon reasonable request.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

FUNDING

Supported by the únkp-23-4 new national excellence program of the ministry for culture and innovation from the source of the national research, development and innovation fund.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the interviewees for their participation in the research and for providing useful information to support the success of the research. Figure 1 has been adapted from "Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 45, Roxas FMY, Rivera JPR, Gutierrez ELM, Mapping stakeholders' roles in governing sustainable tourism destinations, p. 387–398, Copyright (2020), with permission from Elsevier". Figure 2 has been adapted from "Climate Services, 17, Damm A, Köberl J, Stegmaier P, Alonso EJ, Harjanne A, The market for climate services in the tourism sector—An analysis of Austrian stakeholders' perceptions, 100094, Copyright (2020), with permission from Elsevier". Figure 3 has been adapted from "Journal of Cleaner Production, Lee KF, 9, Sustainable tourism destinations: the importance of cleaner production, p. 313-323, Copyright (2001), with permission from Elsevier".

APPENDIX

Questions of the Interview

1. What does the term "sustainability" mean to you?
2. What do you understand "Sustainable Tourism" to be?

3. What metrics or indicators do you consider the most important for addressing sustainability in the Austrian context? Please mention the most important environmental, economic and socio-cultural indicators! Why are these important?
4. What actions have been done in the last 10 years to achieve Sustainable Tourism in Austria?
5. What policies will your destination adopt in the future that will contribute to sustainable tourism development?
6. Who are the most important stakeholders in sustainable tourism in Austria?
7. Who are responsible for planning, implementation and monitoring of sustainable tourism strategies?

REFERENCES

1. Choi HSC, Sirakaya E. Sustainability indicators for managing community tourism. *Tourism Manage.* 2006;27(6):1274-89.
2. Lozano-Oyola M, Blancas FJ, González M, Caballero R. Sustainable tourism indicators as planning tools in cultural destinations. *Ecol Indic.* 2012;18:659-75.
3. Moscardo G, Murphy L. There Is No Such Thing as Sustainable Tourism: Re-Conceptualizing Tourism as a Tool for Sustainability. *Sustainability.* 2014;6(5):2538-61.
4. Hanrahan J, McLoughlin E. A framework for analysing the local authorities tourism planning in Ireland: A socio-cultural perspective. *Eur J Tour Res.* 2015;11:73-86.
5. de Bruyn C, Said FB, Meyer N, Soliman M. Research in tourism sustainability: A comprehensive bibliometric analysis from 1990 to 2022. *Heliyon.* 2023;9:e18874.
6. Dodds R. Sustainable tourism and policy implementation: Lessons from the case of calviá, Spain. *Curr Issues Tour.* 2007;10(4):296-322.
7. Frey N, George R. Responsible tourism management: The missing link between business owners' attitudes and behaviour in the Cape Town tourism industry. *Tourism Manage.* 2010;31:621-8.
8. Burbano DV, Valdivieso JC, Izurieta JC, Meredith TC, Ferri DQ. "Rethink and reset" tourism in the Galapagos Islands: Stakeholders' views on the sustainability of tourism development. *Ann Tour Res Empir Insight.* 2022;3(2):100057.
9. Hsu CY, Chen MY, Nyaupane GP, Lin SH. Measuring sustainable tourism attitude scale (SUS-TAS) in an Eastern island context. *Tour Manag Perspect.* 2020;33:100617.
10. Mihalic T. Conceptualising overtourism: A sustainability approach. *Ann Tourism Res.* 2020;84:103025.
11. Schönherr S, Bichler BF, Pikkemaat B. Attitudes not set in stone: Existential crises changing residents' irritation. *Tourism Manage.* 2023;96:104708.

12. Schönherr S, Peters M, Kuscer K. Sustainable tourism policies: From crisis-related awareness to agendas towards measures. *J Destin Mark Manage*. 2023;27:100762.
13. Benner M. From overtourism to sustainability: A research agenda for qualitative tourism development in the Adriatic. *Ger J EconGeogr*. 2019;2(64):74-87.
14. García-Buades ME, García-Sastre MA, Alemany-Hormaeche M. Effects of overtourism, local government, and tourist behavior on residents' perceptions in Alcúdia (Majorca, Spain). *J Outdoor Rec Tour*. 2022;39:100499.
15. Byrd E. Stakeholders in sustainable tourism development and their role in sustainable tourism development. *Tour Rev*. 2007;62(2):6-13.
16. Kuščer K, Eichelberger S, Peters M. Tourism organizations' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic: An investigation of the lockdown period. *Curr Issues Tour*. 2022;25(2):247-60.
17. Rasoolimanesh SM, Ramakrishna S, Hall CM, Esfandiar K, Seyfi S. A systematic scoping review of sustainable tourism indicators in relation to the sustainable development goals. *J Sustain Tour*. 2023;31(7):1497-517.
18. Nguyen TQT, Johnson P, Young T. Networking, coopetition and sustainability of tourism destinations. *J Hosp Tour Manag*. 2022;50:400-11.
19. Han S, Ramkissoon H, You E, Kim MJ. Support of residents for sustainable tourism development in nature-based destinations: Applying theories of social exchange and bottom-up spillover. *J Outdoor Rec Tour*. 2023;43:100643.
20. Choi HSC, Sirakaya E. Measuring Residents' Attitude toward Sustainable Tourism: Development of Sustainable Tourism Attitude Scale. *J Travel Res*. 2005;43(4):380-94.
21. BBC. Hallstatt: Austrian town protests against mass tourism. Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66634889>. Accessed on 27 Aug 2024.
22. Statistics Austria. Arrivals & overnight stays. Available from: <https://www.statistik.at/en/statistics/tourism-and-transport/tourism/accommodation/arrivals-overnight-stays>. Accessed on 27 Aug 2024.
23. Mercer's Quality of Living City Ranking 2023. Available from: <https://www.statistik.at/en/statistics/tourism-and-transport/tourism/accommodation/arrivals-overnight-stays>. Accessed on 10 Apr 2024.
24. Stoddard JE, Pollard CE, Evans MR. The triple bottom line: A framework for sustainable tourism development. *Int J Hosp Tour Adm*. 2012;13(3):233-58.
25. Yuedi H, Sanagustín-Fons V, Coronil AG, Mosen~e-Fierro JA. Analysis of tourism sustainability synthetic indicators. A case study of Aragon. *Heliyon*. 2023;9:e15206.
26. Inskeep E. Tourism planning: An integrated and sustainable development approach. New York (US): John Wiley & Sons; 1991.
27. McIntyre G. Sustainable Tourism Development: Guide for Local Planners. Madrid (Spain): World Tourism Organization; 1993.

28. Muller H. The thorny path to sustainable tourism development. *J Sustain Tour*. 1994;2:131-6.
29. Agyeiwaah E, McKercher B, Suntikul W. Identifying core indicators of sustainable tourism: A path forward? *Tour Manag Perspect*. 2017;24:26-33.
30. Boluk KA, Rasoolimanesh SM. Introduction to the special issue on “Deepening our understandings of the roles and responsibilities of the tourism industry towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”. *Tour Manag Perspect*. 2022;41:100944.
31. Petrevska B, Mihalič T, Andreeski C. Tourism sustainability model for a world heritage destination: the case of residents’ perception of Ohrid. *Eur J Tour Res*. 2023;34:3408.
32. Hoppstadius F, Möller C. ‘You have to try being a role model’—Learning for sustainability among tourism entrepreneurs in a Swedish biosphere reserve. *Eur J Tour Res*. 2018;20:28-45.
33. Roxas FMY, Rivera JPR, Gutierrez ELM. Mapping stakeholders’ roles in governing sustainable tourism destinations. *J Hosp Tour Manag*. 2020;45:387-98.
34. López-Sánchez Y, Pulido-Fernández JI. Incorporating sustainability into tourism policy: A strategic agenda for Spain. *Eur J Tour Res*. 2014;7:57-78.
35. Waligo VM, Clarke J, Hawkins R. Implementing sustainable tourism: A multi-stakeholder involvement management framework. *Tourism Manage*. 2013;36:342-53.
36. Freeman RE. Strategic management: A stakeholder approach. Boston (US): Pitman; 1984.
37. Donaldson T, Preston LE. The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence and implications. *Acad Manage Rev*. 1995;20:65-91.
38. Mathew PV, Sreejesh S. Impact of responsible tourism on destination sustainability and quality of life of community in tourism destinations. *J Hosp Tour Manag*. 2017;31:83-9.
39. Damm A, Köberl J, Stegmaier P, Alonso EJ, Harjanne A. The market for climate services in the tourism sector—An analysis of Austrian stakeholders’ perceptions. *Clim Serv*. 2020;17:100094.
40. Hardy A, Pearson LJ. Examining stakeholder group specificity: An innovative sustainable tourism approach. *J Destin Mark Manage*. 2018;8:247-58.
41. Leslie D. Responsible tourism: Concepts, theory and practice. Wallingford (UK): CABI; 2012.
42. Manente M, Minghetti V, Mingotto E. Responsible Tourism and CSR: Assessment Systems for Sustainable Development of SMEs in Tourism. Cham (Switzerland): Springer; 2014.
43. Elkington J. Partnerships from cannibals with forks: The triple bottom line of 21st-century business. *Environ Qual Manag*. 1998;8(1):37-51.
44. Garau-Vadell JB, Gutierrez-Taño D, Diaz-Armas R. Economic crisis and residents’ perception of the impacts of tourism in mass tourism destinations. *J Destin Mark Manage*. 2018;7:68-75.
45. Penagos-Londono GI, Rodríguez-Sánchez C, Ruiz-Moreno F, Torres E. A machine learning approach to segmentation of tourists based on perceived

- destination sustainability and trustworthiness. *J Destin Mark Manage*. 2021;19:100532.
46. Zekan B, Weismayer C, Gunter U, Schuh B, Sedlacek S. Regional sustainability and tourism carrying capacities. *J Clean Prod*. 2022;339:130624.
47. Haid M, Albrecht JN, Finkler W. Sustainability implementation in destination management. *J Clean Prod*. 2021;312:127718.
48. Fresneda-Fuentes S, De Fuentes-Ruiz P, Lobo-Gallardo A. Sustainability dimensions and World Heritage site management: the case of the Royal Alcazar of Seville, Spain. *Eur J Tour Res*. 2022;32:3217.
49. Lee KF. Sustainable tourism destinations: the importance of cleaner production. *J Clean Prod*. 2001;9:313-23.
50. Sarantakou E. Contemporary Challenges in Destination Planning: A Geographical Typology Approach. *Geographies*. 2023;3:687-708.
51. Marinello S, Butturi MA, Gamberini R, Martini U. Indicators for sustainable touristic destinations: a critical review. *J Environ Plann Man*. 2021;66(1):1-30.
52. Tanguay GA, Rajaonson J, Therrien MC. Sustainable tourism indicators: selection criteria for policy implementation and scientific recognition. *J Sustain Tour*. 2013;21(6):862-79.
53. Lozano-Oyola M, Contreras I, Blancas FJ. An Operational Non-compensatory Composite Indicator: Measuring Sustainable Tourism in Andalusian Urban Destinations. *Ecol Econ*. 2019;159:1-10.
54. Blancas FJ, Contreras I, Lozano-Oyola M. Evaluating destinations' efforts to improve sustainability in tourism using the inter-temporal decomposition of a composite indicator. *Environ Impact Asses*. 2023;98:106947.
55. Master Plan for Tourism. Available from: <https://www.bmaw.gv.at/en/Topics/tourism/plan-t.html>. Accessed on 12 Oct 2023.
56. Trawöger L. Convinced, ambivalent or annoyed: Tyrolean ski tourism stakeholders and their perceptions of climate change. *Tourism Manage*. 2014;40:338-51.
57. Damm A, Greuell W, Landgren O, Prettenhaler F. Impacts of +2 °C global warming on winter tourism demand in Europe. *Clim Serv*. 2017;7:31-46.
58. Steiger R, Damm A, Prettenhaler F, Pröbstl-Haider U. Climate change and winter outdoor activities in Austria. *J Outdoor Rec Tour*. 2021;34:100330.
59. Steiger R, Scott D. Ski tourism in a warmer world: Increased adaptation and regional economic impacts in Austria. *Tourism Manage*. 2020;77:104032.
60. Goers S, Kapeller R, Schneider F, Dirschmid D, Ludwig R. Regional economic costs of climate change: An interdisciplinary impact assessment for Upper Austria. *J Environ Manage*. 2023;345:118634.
61. Gühnemann A, Kurzweil A, Mailer M. Tourism mobility and climate change—A review of the situation in Austria. *J Outdoor Rec Tour*. 2021;34:100382.
62. Neger C, Prettenhaler F, Gössling S, Damm A. Reprint of: Carbon intensity of tourism in Austria: Estimates and policy implications. *J Outdoor Rec Tour*. 2021;34:100434.

63. Olefs M, Formayer H, Gobiet A, Marke T, Schöner W, Revesz M. Past and future changes of the Austrian climate—Importance for tourism. *J Outdoor Rec Tour*. 2021;34:100395.
64. Creswell JW, Creswell DJ. *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 5th ed. Los Angeles (US): SAGE; 2018.

How to cite this article:

Hajmásy GS. “On the Way to Becoming One of the Most Sustainable Tourism Destinations in the World”—The Austrian Way. *J Sustain Res*. 2024;6(3):e240062. <https://doi.org/10.20900/jsr20240062>