

## A GREEN TOURISM BAROMETER IN THE TIME OF ECONOMIC CRISIS – THE CONCEPT AND CASE OF SLOVENIA

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### **Abstract**

This paper, first, defines responsible versus sustainable tourism and, second, develops a tool to measure a destination's transition toward more sustainable and responsible tourism. The proposed conceptual measurement model is based on Frey's classification of environmental social stages and presents destination stages from i) ignorance regarding sustainability, ii) to awareness, iii) to sustainability-based strategic thinking and iv) responsibility. The model is tested on the case of the Slovenian accommodation sector. The results are analysed and discussed considering the impact of a great financial and economic crisis (GFEC).

The proposed model (the green barometer) proved to be a useful tool in the case of Slovene tourism. The model showed that Slovene tourism has not finished its transition into a sustainable and responsible tourism destination. The stakeholders in Slovene tourism are well-aware of environmental problems and their impacts on business, but more action towards the implementation of sustainability, as well as more efforts in tourism strategy development, planning and responsibility, will be needed. However, and despite the economic crises that started in Slovenia in 2009, the sustainability of Slovene tourism has improved during the 2009-2012 period. At the destination level, economic factors appear to be of less concern for the destination public stakeholders compared to the industry level. However, the GFEC might have forced the tourism stakeholders to redesign their business model and intensify efforts in terms of their product quality and differentiation and to choose a more sustainable development path.

**Keywords** sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, green tourism, tourism barometer, great financial and economic crisis, Slovenia

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