



Key factors for successful sustainable heritage tourism in the Baltic Sea Region

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1 Background and aim of this paper

The Baltic Sea Heritage Tourism Information Service (BASTIS) is a work package of Agora 2.0, co-financed by the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013. The basic idea of BASTIS is to provide tailored market information for tourism SMEs, tourism authorities and tourism associations working in the Baltic Sea region (BSR) free of charge and easily accessible.

This paper provides a sound basis for the future structure and content of BASTIS derived from scientific desk research. It identifies key factors or core drivers for successful heritage tourism in the BSR and suggests a corresponding set of data to be compiled from existing data and market research results for BSR heritage tourism. Additionally, a comprehensive analysis on the availability of relevant market research data was undertaken in order to assess which market information could be compiled with a reasonable effort in terms of time and money.

In further project steps of BASTIS, the compiled information will be processed and presented in a web-based information service. Furthermore, a BSR tourism image analysis as marketing background information, management profiles of source markets and potential target groups for different BSR heritage tourism offers as well as a standardised benchmarking tool for BSR tourism SMEs and destinations belong to the work plan of BASTIS.

The BASTIS Advisory Board has the task to accompany this development and implementation with advice and comments based on the experiences of its members. This is to ensure that BASTIS will meet practical requirements and provide added value for heritage tourism in the BSR:

- ▶ Liisa Hentinen (Finnish Tourist Board, Finland)
- ▶ Rasa Liubinaite (Lithuanian State Department of Tourism, Lithuania)
- ▶ Thomas Mielke (Baltic Sea Tourism Commission (BTC), Sweden)
- ▶ Wolfgang Günther (Institute for Tourism Research in Northern Europe (N.I.T.), Germany)
- ▶ Nele Sõber (West-Estonia Tourism, Estonia)

2 Conceptual framework

A travelling person, **the tourist**, and a region she or he travels to, **the destination**, are essential for tourism. Other aspects, although they might be important, are secondary. This assumption is in line with a great deal of the tourism literature (e.g. Burkart & Medlik, 1981, p. 42). Quite often however, these basic essentials are not actively presented or discussed. In some papers the importance of the person travelling and the destination is simply stated as a starting point for the argumentation (e.g. Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002) or clandestinely pop up in conceptual graphs and figures (e.g. with Pearce, 2005, p. 17). Our approach is to focus on these aspects actively:

- What are the necessary requirements for a person to become a potential holiday tourist?
- What are the necessary requirements for a region to become a potential destination for holiday tourism?

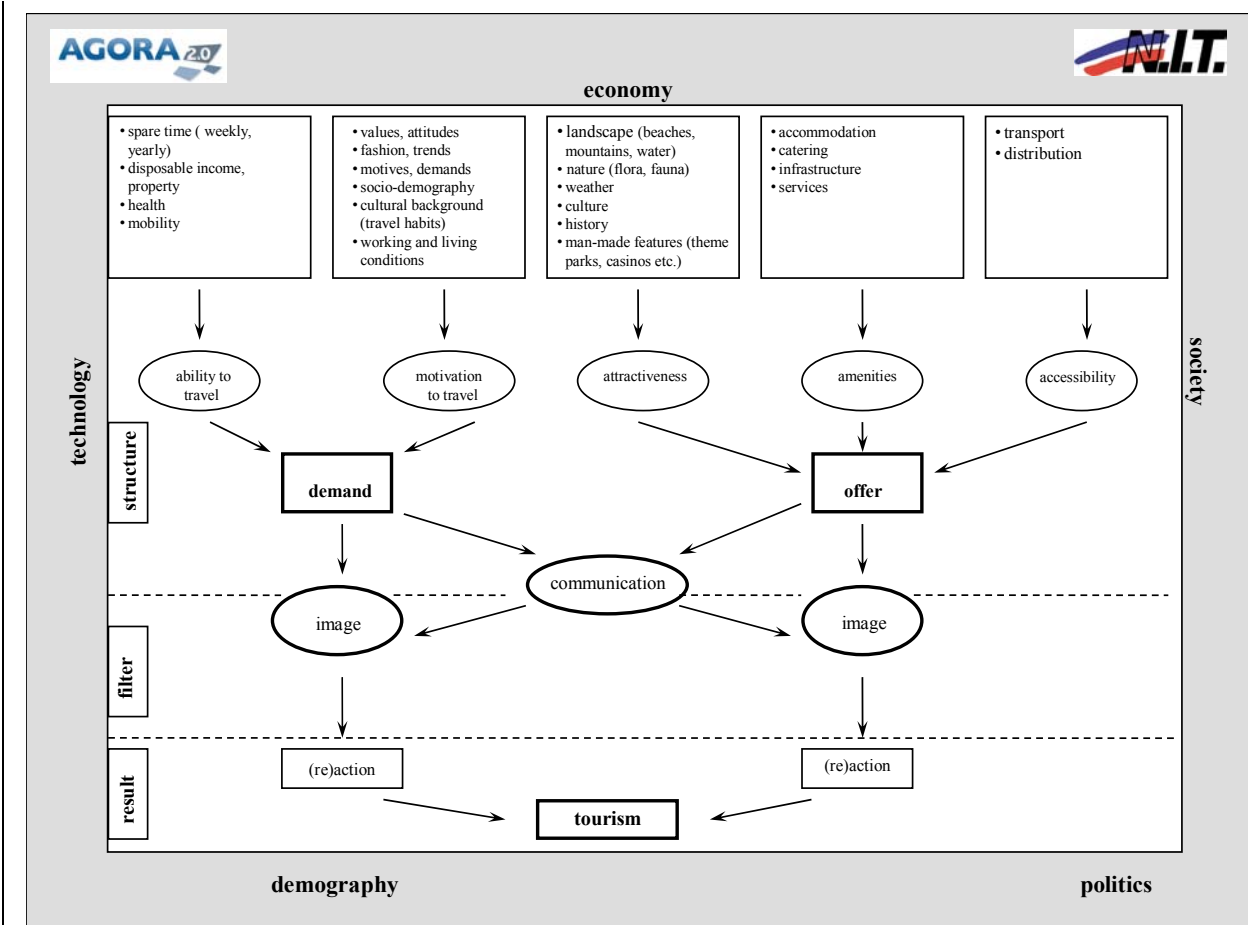
To this end we make use of a conceptual structural model to describe which central factors determine whether and where tourism takes place (Figure 1; cf. Lohmann et al., 1998; Lohmann, 2009). The model can be looked at as a “conceptual scheme” in the sense described by Pearce (2005, pp. 12-15): It goes beyond mere statements of the observed world but it is not, however, a fully functioning theory. It may prove helpful to organise scientific information and to allocate different phenomena in tourism.

The model has already been used for determining possible impacts of external factors on tourism (e.g. Lohmann, 2001a) and challenges in destination management (Lohmann, 2009).

In defining what leads to potential demand and a potential offer in tourism, it refers to the five factors being a prerequisite for tourism: (1) attractiveness, (2) amenities (or facilities) and (3) accessibility on the side of the region to become a destination and (4) ability and (5) motivation to travel on the demand side (Lohmann et al, 1998, pp. 69). This also applies to heritage tourism in the Baltic Sea Region.

These factors have been identified and discussed in the literature (cf. e.g. Burkart & Medlik, 1974/1981, pp 45-47, and Holloway, 1994, pp. 6-9, with respect to the destination factors; Thibault, 1984, pp. 37-51, on the ability in terms of time and money as a basis for leisure behaviour; Hudson, 1999, p. 7, and Pearce, 2005, p. 51 on motivation). It is quite common to name these aspects (e.g. attractiveness) together with their specific shape (what is it that makes a certain destination attractive?) when it comes to analysing the travellers’ choice process and its determinants (e.g. Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002).

Conceptual scheme: Tourism basics – framework and prerequisites



Attractiveness refers to physical features (e.g. the beauty of mountains), but may also be used in connection with some kind of event. Amenities are those essential services that tourists need, e.g. accommodation, food and local transport. Finally, accessibility refers to the means of transportation to the destination as well as the psychological distance ('to be reached easily') and the possibility of booking a trip to that specific destination (distribution channels). The assumption is that a region becomes a potentially successful tourist destination (in the sense that it is able to attract a large number of tourists) only if the region is perceived by potential tourists as having all these three characteristics. Or with regard to Baltic Sea Region heritage tourism: A heritage tourism offer becomes a potentially successful tourism product (in the sense that it is able to attract a large number of tourists) only if the offer is perceived by potential tourists as having all these three characteristics

Conversely, a person becomes a potential tourist only if she/he is able to travel (usually a question of time, money and health) and has the motivation to do so. Both factors, ability and motivation, are fundamental for the readiness to participate in holiday travel. They are not only necessary predispositions for a person to become a potential holiday traveller, but they also play an important role in determining the choice of a destination, the kind of activities during the vacation, etc.

The described general conceptual scheme is presumed to be a suitable framework for the definition of a relevant content. Hence, in this project (1) attractiveness, (2) amenities (or facilities) and (3) accessibility on the side of the region to become a destination as well as (4) ability and (5) motivation to travel on the demand side are understood as key factors or core drivers for a successful heritage tourism in the BSR.

3 Indicators to be covered with BASTIS

Taking into account the conceptual framework, the needs expressed by the future BASTIS users in the Agora meeting in March 2010 in Greifswald and the availability of data, as researched within the first few months of this project, the following set of indicators to be covered within BASTIS could be identified:

Key factors demand side	Related relevant market info	Data format	Possible sources
Ability to travel	Global trends	Links, reports	ETC, UNWTO
	Economic situation (source markets and BSR), e.g. available income	Statistics, reports	Eurostat, OECD
	Tourism spending	Statistics, reports	UNWTO, OECD, ETC
Motivation to travel	Travel intensity, destinations, purpose of the travel, etc.	Statistics, reports	Eurobarometer Tourism
	Motivation and expectations by target groups and focus issue (nature, culture, other, ...)	Statistics, reports	Eurobarometer Tourism (?)

Key factors destination	Related relevant market info	Data format	Possible sources
Attractiveness of the destination	Image analysis	Report, forum (?)	BDF, Agora guest surveys, web survey BASTIS (?)
	Number of arrivals and overnight stays and day trippers (national and international)	Statistics	Eurostat, TourMis, national statistical offices
	Duration	Statistics	Eurostat, Tourmis, national statistical offices
	Number of visitors on heritage sites	Statistics	Heritage sites à la TourMis (Austria)
	Visitors expectations on heritage sites	Report	Agora guest surveys
Amenities of the destination	Number of beds	Statistics	Eurostat, Tourmis, national statistical offices
	Heritage sites	Profiles	Heritage sites
	Information centre, ...	Profiles	Heritage sites
	Tourism infrastructure	Profiles	Heritage sites
Accessibility of the destination	Distribution channels (fair, cooperations, internet etc.)	Profiles	Heritage sites
	Information channels used by target groups	Statistics, report	Eurobarometer Tourism, Agora guest surveys
	Booking behaviour	Statistics, report	Eurobarometer Tourism, Agora guest surveys
	Tour operators by thematic foci	Contacts, addresses, organisations, link pool	Heritage sites, other Agora partners
	Travel behaviour (transport, accommodation, organisation,	Statistics, report	Eurobarometer Tourism, Agora guest surveys (?)

In addition to the identified statistical and market research indicators BASTIS should be supplemented by further information, relevant for the marketing of SMEs working in heritage tourism in the BSR:

- ▶ Best practices (including links to well done descriptions/pictures/clips/maps/newsletters of the different regions/tourism providers in the BSR)
- ▶ Toolbox (methodologies)
- ▶ Timetable
- ▶ Market place for educational institutions
- ▶ Recommended publications

4 Structure of BASTIS

As a lot of data corresponding to the indicators identified in chapter 3 is not available at the requested level or not available at all in public, there is a huge need for the different heritage tourism stakeholders in the BSR to actively share information. In BASTIS, we plan to use the “new” possibilities of “Web 2.0”. BASTIS should not be a tool where information is disseminated by one central source but rather democratically shared by the users who require heritage tourism market information in the BSR.

It is the idea to create a kind of pre-structured Wiki, in which we provide the structure and start with the content that is available. Then the BASTIS users contribute directly what is missing and update old data. Concerning the structure, the core of BASTIS could consist of profiles on:

- ▶ Source markets (including the image analysis)
- ▶ BSR countries (including links to heritage sites)
- ▶ Heritage sites (including the benchmarking tool)
- ▶ Segments (nature, culture, etc.)

5 Further steps - Timing

In the process of setting up and implementing BASTIS the following timing is planned:

Activities	1/2010	2/2010	1/2011	2/2011	1/2012	2/2012
Identify relevant data						
Compilation and processing of existing data						
Technical set-up of the BASTIS WebService						
Set up and run BASTIS NewsService						
BSR tourism image analysis						
Management profiles on source markets target groups						
Develop and implement a standardised benchmarking tool for BSR heritage tourism						
Evaluation of BASTIS						
Permanent concept for BASTIS						

6 Literature

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