Assessing Sustainable Tourism: Insights from Four Regions in Quebec

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Abstract: This communication proposes to share the outcomes of a comprehensive sustainable tourism diagnosis conducted in four distinct regions of Quebec, namely Montérégie, Mauricie, Lanaudière, and the Magdalen Islands. The study encompasses a diverse range of 45 tourism enterprises operating across various sectors within the industry. This project represents the results of my postdoctoral internship.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, Diagnosis, GPC-ODD, Quebec regions, Tourism enterprises, SDGs, Best practices.

Context

The United Nations has been organizing World Summits on Sustainable Development since 1972, and sustainable development (SD) strives to balance social needs, environmental sustainability, and fair economic practices. In 2015, the UN adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets applicable to the tourism sector. Villeneuve et al.'s (2017) methodology led to the development of the SDG Target Prioritization Grid (GPC-ODD) in 2018. This tool connects local initiatives to SDG targets, diagnoses, prioritizes targets operationally, analyzes potential synergies or antagonisms among proposed actions, and establishes action plans and indicators at all levels, promoting continuous improvement and effective accountability.

The GPC-ODD is a versatile tool across sectors, addressing the dual challenge of the tourism industry being vulnerable to climate change (CC) and contributing significantly to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. GHGs primarily come from transportation, food, waste management, and the life cycle of infrastructure and goods for tourists. Despite emission reductions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the post-2020 recovery has surpassed 2019 levels. Coordinated efforts are crucial to mitigate CC impacts, reduce GHG emissions, and enhance resilience to CC effects. The UNWTO advocates shifting towards lower-emission tourism to align with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C warming limit.

Reducing GHG emissions is one facet of sustainable development in tourism. The 169 targets in the 2030 Agenda create a complex network of interactions, analyzed through sustainability...
systemic analysis (Villeneuve 2016, Villeneuve et al. 2017, Tremblay et al. 2020). Sustainable practices involve measures such as renewable energy use, energy efficiency, eco-friendly transportation, circular economy integration, short supply chains, responsible water management, and support for ecosystem conservation. These actions help alleviate CC impacts, reduce vulnerability, educate stakeholders on CC, and preserve the natural allure of destinations. The GPC-ODD tool aligns with multiple SDG targets, and can be adapted for various domains, showing promising results during ongoing field validation.

**Methodologie**

My project allowed for adapting the GPC-ODD to the tourism sector and testing it in four destinations in Quebec with various stakeholders, such as managers of regional tourist associations and tourist businesses operating in different sectors like accommodation, events, outdoor activities, etc.

The study utilized a methodology previously proven successful by the Chaire en éco-conseil in other sectors, ensuring its applicability and effectiveness within the tourism domain. By implementing this tool, we assessed and evaluated the current state of sustainable tourism practices within the targeted regions and across various tourism-related enterprises.

**Objective:**

The primary goal of this presentation is to offer a detailed diagnostic overview, including the identification of challenges, prioritized targets, associated actions, success stories, and key findings. The project's core involved the adaptation of the Sustainable Development Goal Target Prioritization Grid (GPC-ODD) to the tourism sector, transforming it into a powerful diagnostic tool for businesses in the industry.

**References**


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