



# THRIC 2024

Dingle, Co. Kerry

# Abstracts

Room 2:

## Sustainable Tourism

Afternoon  
Session

**Title:** Measuring and Monitoring Resource Efficiency and Emissions in Irish Hotels

**Authors:** Sahar Attari, ATU; and James Hanrahan, ATU.

**Keywords:** Green hotels, hotel supply chain management, sustainable hospitality

**Abstract:**

This academic research focuses on measuring and monitoring resource efficiency and emissions in hotels as the first stage, followed by an exploration of how hotels can effectively reduce these emissions and increase resource efficiency through supply chain management. The study aims to understand the functions of hotel supply chain management and develop a framework to empower hotels in influencing their supply chain towards greater sustainability. For this study, a selection of 5- and 4-star hotels will be chosen to serve as representative samples. These hotels will be carefully chosen based on criteria such as size, location, and diversity in terms of their supply chain structures. By including a diverse range of hotels, the study aims to capture a comprehensive understanding of emissions and supply chain management practices within the hotel industry. Life cycle assessment is employed to measure emissions, while in-depth semi structured interviews with hotel managers and supply chain managers in two different formats provide insights into the structure of hotel supply chains. Content analysis is utilized to gain a holistic view of hotels' impact on supply chain management towards sustainability. The literature review categorizes some emissions sources into scope 1,2 and 3. The hotel industry is urged to adopt sustainability strategies informed by guidelines and research published by the UNWTO, Fáilte Ireland, etc. These strategies are essential for transitioning to net zero and reducing the environmental impacts associated with supply chain management. The anticipated outcome of this research is a comprehensive understanding of the role of supply chain management in reducing hotel emissions and the development of a holistic framework to guide hotels in reducing their environmental footprint through hospitality supply chain management. However, expected limitations include the challenge of measuring hotel's scope 3 emissions, particularly for hotels with complex supply chain and service combinations, as well as potential reluctance among hotel managers to share information about their suppliers

**Title:** Ensuring Tourists know you are Making a Difference: Comparing Social Enterprises in Ireland and Cambodia

**Authors:** Ziene Mottiar, Technological University Dublin and Simone Faulkner, University of Technology Sydney

**Keywords:** Social enterprises in tourism, social objectives, future tourists.

**Abstract:**

With the increased awareness of the global impact of consumption, tourists of the future are likely to be more interested in purchasing goods and experiences that have a social impact. Djafarova and Fouts (2022) explain that Generation Z (those born between 1995-2010) have a high level of awareness of ethical and environmental issues and intend to purchase 'high value ethical items in the future'. These behavioural changes are occurring at a time when academia is shifting the discourse from sustainability, which perpetuates continual growth (Bellato et al. 2023), to regeneration. In this paper we explore the role of social enterprises in this shift to a different way of developing and practicing tourism by focusing on creating positive social impact.

Social enterprises are an important type of business operation in tourism and hospitality which impact communities (Aquino, 2022) and destinations (Mottiar, Boluk and Kline, 2018). A key difference between social enterprises and other types of business is their social objectives. As Sheldon et al. (2017, p. 7) defines it, tourism social entrepreneurship is "a process that uses tourism to create innovative solutions to immediate social, environmental and economic problems in destinations by mobilizing the ideas, capacities, resources and social agreements, from within or outside the destination, required for its sustainable social transformation".

The potential for social enterprises (SEs) to capitalize on the potential shift of focus of tourists as they want to maximise their social impact is significant, but to do this their social mission needs to be central to their public-facing activities. This paper compares tourism SEs in Ireland and Cambodia and shows the different approaches they have taken in this regard. Ireland and Cambodia were chosen to represent contrasting contexts in the Global North and South, allowing for exploration of how differing socio-economic environments, entrepreneurial eco systems and types of tourists influence SE and tourist social mission awareness. This paper asks: To what extent do SEs emphasize their social objectives to tourists? How can we explain the different approaches to this? Do tourists perceive the social impact element of their activities?

Primary research involved qualitative interviews with representatives from 13 SEs – five in Cambodia and eight in Ireland. These organisations were chosen because they self-identified as SEs. The interview transcripts underwent thematic analysis. Additionally, secondary research was conducted via Web Content Analysis (WebCA; Herring, 2010) of the SE's websites, social media platforms and TripAdvisor pages – all publicly available

data. WebCA is primarily a quantitative tool, however, given our exploratory study and the small sample size, we expanded the scope to include a qualitative interpretation of the categories found on the various channels. The categories stemmed from our review of literature in the social marketing field and included: attributes of the company; attributes of the campaign; attributes of the cause (Inoue & Kent, 2014) and ethical business; social purpose; social ownership (Allan, 2005).

The key findings from the preliminary data analysis were that the SEs studied in Cambodia are more explicit in highlighting their social mission than those in Ireland. As a result there is a much greater awareness of their social mission by customers. For example while Cambodian SEs were found to highlight their social purpose and explain how their profits are used in their social media posts these are not aspects that were evident in the Irish SEs where the focus was on their activities and events. Content analysis of TripAdvisor reviews similarly show that the visitors to the Cambodian SEs are more likely to note the social objectives, cause and mission in their reviews.

While previous studies have examined SEs in tourism, there is limited research comparing how SEs in different global contexts communicate their social objectives to tourists. This research contributes to the emerging discourse on regenerative tourism by examining how SEs, as key actors in this paradigm, communicate their social impact. Specifically, this study contributes to the field by: 1) Identifying specific strategies used by SEs to balance profit and social objectives; 2) Demonstrating how Global North SEs can adopt effective practices from Global South counterparts; and 3) Highlighting the potential for SEs to capitalize on evolving tourist preferences for socially impactful experiences. These findings offer practical insights for tourism SEs seeking to effectively highlight their positive social impact to increasingly conscious consumers.

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**Title:** Demarketing Destinations: An Analysis of International Strategies to Combat Overtourism

**Authors:** John Carty, ATU.

**Keywords:** demarketing, degrowth, overtourism.

**Abstract:**

RESEARCH PURPOSE / GAP

Demarketing is a term, used in association with tourism, to describe active discouragement of visitors to destinations on a temporary or permanent basis (Hall & Wood, 2021). Demarketing is seen as a mechanism to improve overall sustainability of a destination, by addressing overtourism issues. Overtourism is a relatively new term, rarely used before 2017 (Santos-Rojo et al., 2023) and is defined as “an excessive negative impact of tourism on the host communities and/or natural environment” (Koenigs et al., 2018).

This research will investigate the role of demarketing in supporting degrowth of tourism, particularly in destinations experiencing issues with overtourism. This research aims to address the following research questions:

- RQ1: what demarketing strategies are tourism destinations utilising to combat overtourism?
- RQ2: what are the impacts of demarketing strategies on tourism destinations?
- RQ3: what can tourism destinations in Ireland learn from international demarketing efforts?

DESIGN / METHODOLOGY / APPROACH

To address the research questions, secondary research will be conducted in the form of a literature review and desk-based research relating to demarketing, degrowth and overtourism. A review of grey literature will also be conducted to analyse reports, policies, white papers, urban plans, etc. The focus will be on international examples from outside Ireland, as these are where examples are most prevalent in the forms of entrance fees, visitor zones and taxes, among other strategies employed. The focus will be on countries that share characteristics with Ireland, such as tourism density to ensure relevance to the Irish context. Google Scholar will be used to source academic articles and Google search will be used for grey literature. The timeframe for the study will be from 2020 to present. The search results will be screened using a thematic analysis approach to focus on strategy, destination reputation and a range of impacts (e.g. economic, environmental, promotion, policy, etc.).

FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTION

The research will provide organisations and destinations with insights of demarketing practices employed internationally. Positive and negative impacts will be presented, and

a commentary will be provided on how such strategies could be implemented in Ireland and any associated risks identified. The findings will have significance for academic audiences, as there is limited research in an Irish context to date. Industry and policy makers will also benefit from the findings as the research will present topics to generate discussion.

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Koens, K., Postma, A. & Papp, B. (2018) Is overtourism overused? Understanding the impact of tourism in a city context, *Sustainability*, 10(12), 4384, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10124384>

Santos-Rojo, C., Llopis-Amorós, M. & García-García, J.M. (2023) Overtourism and sustainability: A bibliometric study (2018–2021), *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, Volume 188, 122285

**Title:** Integrated Non-Monetary and Monetary Valuation of Basecamp Aurora Tourism: An Icelandic Case Study

**Authors:** James David Broome, University of Iceland

**Keywords:** Valuation, Northern lights, Ecosystem services, Aurora borealis, Cultural ecosystem services

**Abstract:**

The aurora is a spectacular natural phenomenon that regularly occurs in the night sky at high latitudes (Brekke & Egeland, 1983; Eather, 1980; Falck-Ytter, 1999). It is a manifestation of interactions between space weather and our planet which can ultimately result in a variety of functions in geophysical, biophysical and socio-ecological systems (Broome et al., 2024a; Broome et al., 2024b). There are many ways in which people interact with, and obtain benefits from, these functions, which can be conceived of as ecosystem services (ES) (Broome et al., 2024a; Broome et al., 2024b; Costanza et al., 2017). One way that such benefits are derived is through aurora tourism and recreation, which occurs in all nations that are located in close proximity to the auroral oval (Broome et al., 2024a; Mathisen, 2017; Weaver, 2011). The phenomenon attracts people from throughout the world, many of whom travel great distances to reach a variety of high-latitude destinations where viewing the aurora is most accessible and reliable. Aurora tours are commonly conducted as ‘chase tours’, where groups travel to distant and remote areas to view the phenomenon, away from light pollution (Bertella, 2013; Heimtun & Lovelock, 2017; Jóhannesson & Lund, 2021), while there are also ‘basecamp’ models where aurora viewing is marketed as a location-specific activity. The provisioning of ES can contribute to individual and collective well-being, and information about the value of ES can be crucial for decision-makers and resource managers with the aim of conserving or enhancing the benefits derived from nature (Huynh et al., 2022; Summers et al., 2012; Summers et al., 2018). This also includes information about cultural ES and non-material benefits (Cooper et al., 2016; Gould et al., 2019; Hirons et al., 2016; Nowak-Olejnik et al., 2022), including those linked to tourism (Kaltenborn et al., 2019; Willis, 2015). Cultural ES are often underrepresented in environmental management decisions (Bryce et al., 2016), despite being some of the most highly perceived among people (Hirons et al., 2016; Lyytimäki & Pitkänen, 2020). Primary ES valuation studies can provide such information, making the benefits of nature more apparent and allowing stakeholders, decision-makers and resource managers to more fully comprehend and assess potential synergies and trade-offs when making decisions (Armatas et al. 2018; Bark et al., 2016; Turner et al., 2021). In particular, integrated approaches to ES valuation have the potential to more thoroughly inform decisionmakers about the impacts of ES through a mixture of economic and non-monetary information (Cheng et al., 2019; Cook et al., 2019; Cook et al., 2020; Romanazzi et al., 2023). The main aim of this conference contribution is to present the results of a recent case study in Iceland (winter season 2023-2024), where basecamp aurora tourism has been evaluated in a location-specific context, thereby introducing and informing discussion on some of the underlying values and benefits linked to the auroral phenomenon. This is achieved by employing a field



survey utilizing non-monetary and monetary valuation techniques, including and five-point Likert psychometric scales designed for the cultural ES framework (Ram & Smith, 2022; Smith & Ram, 2017), and contingent valuation using the metric of 'willingness to pay' (Cook et al., 2020). The respondents are comprised of individuals from widespread national backgrounds who purchased an aurora tour at the Aurora Basecamp, (approx. 5km south of Hafnarfjörður in the outskirts of Reykjavík). The results contribute to a discussion about the value of dark skies, which is an increasingly popular regulatory topic for mitigating light pollution in rural communities with tourism-based economies (Alva et al., 2023; Mitchell & Gallaway, 2019; Silver & Hickey, 2020).

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**Title:** Partnerships for Sustainable Destination Certification: Case of Dublin City

**Author:** Mariia PereLygina and Barry Rogers

**Keywords:** sustainability accreditation, destination certification, sustainable destination.

**Abstract:**

This abstract presents a case of sustainability destination certification of Dublin City and its first lessons. Even though this process is at an early stage, it has been proved that engagement of stakeholders is one of the defining elements of sustainable tourism development (Day, Morrison & Coca-Stefania, 2021).

The partnership of Dublin City Council (DCC) with EarthCheck and the start of destination certification were officially announced in April 2024 although a number of significant steps were made beforehand. Among them, the signing of the Glasgow Declaration declares Dublin's commitments to cut tourism emissions in half over the next decade and reach Net Zero emissions as soon as possible before 2050. Dublin City officially received the European Capital of Smart Tourism 2024 designation: the judging panel recognised Dublin's initiatives in accessibility, sustainability, digitalisation and cultural heritage. Moreover, the new DCC Tourism Strategy (Dublin City Council, 2023) states the goals to build deeper cultural, environmental and social experiences in and across our capital city.

One of the central requirements for a certification program is a creditable and proved-over-time basis to adhere to the standards (Jørgensen, 2024). The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) criteria are a widely applied and broadly recognized framework. It was "created to provide a common understanding of sustainable tourism" (The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (2019, p. 1). The GSTC Destination Criteria is a set of performance indicators that present minimum requirements in four areas: Sustainable management, Cultural sustainability, Socio-economic sustainability, and Environmental sustainability. At the same time, the GSTC Framework is not a certification. While the market offers a great number of certification providers, GSTC-accredited destination certifications are limited to 3: EarthCheck, Green Destinations, 1 and Vireo. Informed about the positive experience of County Clare with EarthCheck in becoming Ireland's first certified sustainable destination, Dublin City started the globally recognised EarthCheck Sustainable Destinations certification process in September 2024.

Figure 1. Stakeholders of Sustainable Destination Certification (case of Dublin city). Based on Morrison and Maxim (2022) and Day, Morrison and Coca-Stefaniak (2021)



The start of the certification process has shown that partnerships are key to success because sustainable tourism requires efforts from various stakeholders (Morrison & Maxim, 2022). As Figure 1 shows, the sustainable destination certification process includes various stakeholders: national authorities, e.g. Failte Ireland, local authorities such as DCC, certification provider (EarthCheck), domestic and international visitors, private sector businesses (tourism, transportation, events, etc.), local communities (local residents) and NGOs, and educational bodies (universities). As such, the group of partners is committed to the goal and works together in synergy instead of taking individual actions.

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