

# Strategic co-management platform for tourism destination

Andris Klepers, Dr.geogr., Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences;

Institute of social, economic and humanities research

[andris.klepers@va.lv](mailto:andris.klepers@va.lv)

Postal address: Cēsu street 4-107, Valmiera, LV-4201, Latvia

Phone: +37129419818; Fax: +371 64207229

## **Abstract**

Progress towards advanced smart tourism solutions at local tourism destination management level has been slow, despite various powerful tools for tourism management on national level have been developed in the recent years. To support data-driven and service-oriented computing for strategic management geospatial web platform is considered a viable solution for gathering and sharing of collected and well-structured thematic data. It is developed as participatory co-management platform so that the information flows including key performance indicators are easily managed and interpreted by many destination stakeholders. This paper aims to explore development steps of geospatial platform to implement decentralized destination management. These findings demonstrate applications of technological solution in small-scale functional destinations where capacity for larger investments in smart-tourism elements is limited.

**Key words:** smart tourism, destination, co-management, geospatial, governance

Dr. geogr. Andris Klepers (researcher and associate professor) has completed PhD in University of Latvia and exchange studies in the University of Copenhagen, Trier University and postdoctoral studies in the University of Eastern Finland. He is the full time researcher in the Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Latvia. His research interests include destination management, tourism marketing and cluster development being involved in various development projects and is active in cooperation with industry stakeholders.

## **Statement of contribution:**

*What is the contribution to knowledge, theory, policy or practice offered by the paper?*

The main contribution is advanced practical application for strategic co-management in form of geospatial platform that can be used for participatory tourism destination management realizing decentralized tourism destination governance. Co-management theory has been used with lot of practical insight rooted in theoretical concepts discussed by other authors about role and transformation of destination management organizations e.g. adaptive management, participatory management, decentralized governance and not using single strategies for diverse destinations. Practical

application using geospatial approach in representation of key-performance indicator data allow to display functional tourism destinations in action. This solution has been launched and will contribute further following the continuum “how smart-tourism tools are contributing for their decision-making process and destination competitiveness”.

*How does the paper offer a social science perspective / approach?*

Tourism regarding tourism destination management and governance strategies is part of the social science. The knowledge platform solution developed using participatory destination management is integrated across the fields of information technologies and geography, the social science and complexity science. Social science approach is valid to explain empowering of stakeholders from tourism industry to be involved in decentralization of destination marketing strategies and in destination management in general. Social science perspective is needed to explain efficiency of decision making process exploiting such kind of “smart tourism” element. Network theory has applications in many disciplines including social science with the one of the crucial aspects - involvement of thematic social business networks in tourism destination governance.

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### **Declaration of interest**

There are no financial or other conflicts of interest associated with this paper.