

9<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC-BUSINESS CONFERENCE  
LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION, MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS:  
INTEGRATED POLITICS OF RESEARCH



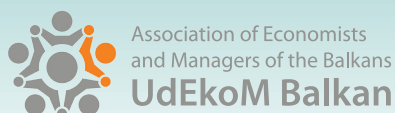
# LIMEN 2023

Graz University of Technology, Graz, Austria  
December 7, 2023 (hybrid)

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NINTH INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC-BUSINESS CONFERENCE  
LIMEN 2023

*Leadership, Innovation, Management and Economics:  
Integrated Politics of Research*

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Graz University of Technology, Graz, Austria  
December 7, 2023 (hybrid)

**Ninth International Scientific-Business Conference LIMEN**  
**Leadership, Innovation, Management and Economics: Integrated Politics of Research**  
**ISSN 2683-6149**

**Conference Proceedings (part of LIMEN conference collection)**

**Editor:**

**Vuk Bevanda** 

PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia

**Published by:**

Association of Economists and Managers of the Balkans – **UdekoM Balkan**

Ustanicka 179/2 St. 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

office@udekom.org.rs

+381 62 8125 779

**Conference partners:**

- Center for Advanced Studies in Management and Economics (CEFAGE-UE), Institute for Advanced Studies and Research, University of Evora, Portugal
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**LIMEN Conference is co-organized by:**

- Institute of Business Economics and Industrial Sociology, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering & Economics Sciences, Graz University of Technology, Graz, Austria
- Association of Economists and Managers of the Balkans - UdekoM Balkan

**Technical Editor:**

**Branimir Trošić**

**Printed by:**

SKRIPTA International, Belgrade

**Print circulation:**

100 copies

**Belgrade, 2024**

**ISBN 978-86-80194-78-3**

**ISSN 2683-6149**

**DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31410/LIMEN.2023>**

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CIP - Katalogizacija u publikaciji  
Narodna biblioteka Srbije, Beograd

005(082)  
336(082)  
004:007(082)  
330(082)  
502.131.1(082)

**INTERNATIONAL Scientific-Business Conference LIMEN  
2023 Leadership, Innovation, Management and Economics:  
Integrated Politics of Research (9 ; 2023)**

Conference Proceedings / Ninth International Scientific-Business Conference LIMEN 2023 Leadership, Innovation, Management and Economics: Integrated Politics of Research, Graz University of Technology, Graz, Austria December 7, 2023 (hybrid) ; [organizer Association of Economists and Managers of the Balkans [et al.] ; editor Vuk Bevanda]. - Belgrade : Association of Economists and Managers of the Balkans - UdekoM Balkan, 2024 (Belgrade : Skripta International). - XXIII, 476 str. : graf. prikazi, tabele ; 30 cm. - (International Scientific Business Conference LIMEN Leadership, Innovation, Management, Economics: Integrated Politics of Research, ISSN 2683-6149)

Tiraž 100. - Napomene i bibliografske reference uz tekst. - Bibliografija uz svaki rad. - Registri.

ISBN 978-86-80194-78-3

a) Menadžment -- Zbornici b) Finansije -- Zbornici v)  
Informaciona tehnologija -- Zbornici g) Ekonomija -- Zbornici  
d) Održivi razvoj -- Zbornici

COBISS.SR-ID 151628553

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## Preface

Organizing is an evolutionary phenomenon, distinctive because of the laws of existence and maintaining all structures in all processes of their functioning. As such, it is a civilizational phenomenon that occurs as a component of human, individual, and social activities and as a factor in the overall development of man and society. On the other hand, as a deliberate human activity, organizing involves seeking solutions to problems that occur on the way to achieving specific goals. No goal can be achieved without appropriate or necessary, or at least minimal organization of conditions, factors, and processes needed for goal achievement. However, the new era requires new types of leaders and managers and new forms of organization; demands those who are willing and able to lead the company/corporation/state, in a distinct competitive environment, with all the good and bad sides brought by the globalization of world economy.

The purpose of the annual LIMEN conference is to support the power of scientific research and dissemination of the research results with the objective to enhance society by advancing knowledge; policy-making change, lives, and ultimately, the world. Our objective is to continue to be the foremost annual conference on cutting-edge theory and practice of leadership, innovations, management, and economics, encouraging advancement via excellence, and interaction.

LIMEN conference aims to bring together the international academic community (experts, scientists, engineers, researchers, students, and others) and enable interactive discussions and other forms of interpersonal exchange of experiences and popularization of science and personal and collective affirmation.

The annual LIMEN conference is committed to the highest standards of publishing integrity and academic honesty ensuring ethics in all its publications. Conformance to standards of ethical behavior is therefore expected of all parties involved: authors, editors, reviewers, and the publisher. The conference organizer follows the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines on how to deal with potential acts of misconduct.

All received full papers prior peer review process are subject to plagiarism check with iThenticate by Turnitin software. Any identified plagiarism automatically disqualifies a paper. Afterward, all full papers are double-blind peer-reviewed by the reviewers drawn from the editorial committee or external reviewers depending on the topic, title, and subject matter of the paper. Peer reviewers provide a critical assessment of the paper and may recommend improvements. Although the author may choose not to take this advice, we highly recommend that the author address any issues, explaining why their research process or conclusions are correct.

Association of Economists and Managers of the Balkans headquartered in Belgrade – Serbia in cooperation with the Institute of Business Economics and Industrial Sociology of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering & Economics Sciences at Graz University of Technology headquartered in Graz – Austria; along with the partner institutions, namely the Center for Advanced Studies in Management and Economics (CEFAGE-UE), Institute for Advanced Studies and Research, University of Evora, Portugal; Department of Law, Economics and Sociology, University of Magna Graecia, Catanzaro, Italy; Faculty of Economics, University of South Bohemia, České Budějovice, Czech Republic; Rio de Janeiro Institute College (Faculdade Instituto Rio de Janeiro – FIURJ), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the European Professors of Industrial Engineering and Management (EPIEM) organized 9th International Scientific-Business Conference

titled: Leadership, Innovation, Management, and Economics: Integrated Politics of Research – LIMEN 2023 on December 7, 2023 at the Graz University of Technology, Graz, Austria in a hybrid format (in-person, online and virtually).

LIMEN 2023 conference addresses various contemporary business and economic challenges. The evolution of implicit leadership theories is explored, highlighting shifts in understanding leadership. AI-driven HR practices in SMEs, the application of large language models in recruitment, and the integration of crowdsourcing with intellectual capital for enterprise renewal are examined for their innovative potential. The impact of management styles on employee well-being, the relationship between innovation and competitive advantage, and eco-innovation in Albania's accommodation sector are analyzed for their implications on business strategy and sustainability. The digital transformation of retail, AR/VR in marketing, and content marketing's role in consumer loyalty are also discussed, alongside the ethical concerns of greenwashing in marketing communication. Other studies investigate the sustainability index in corporate performance, the resilience of eco-metals, mobile banking acceptance in Austria and Romania, and the role of standards and patents in Western Balkan economic growth. Income inequalities in Greece's post-COVID tourism industry and logistics in unstable markets are assessed for their broader economic impacts, etc.

The keynote speaker at the LIMEN 2023 conference was Professor Sandra Lovrenčić, Full Professor, Head of the Department of Theoretical and Applied Foundations of Information Sciences, Head of Centre for Volunteering and Humanitarian Work, University of Zagreb Faculty of Organization and Informatics, Varaždin, Croatia with the topic "Artificial Intelligence and (Knowledge) Management".



Within publications from the LIMEN 2023 conference:

- 20 double peer-reviewed papers have been published in the **LIMEN 2023 Selected Papers**,
- 55 double peer-reviewed papers have been published in the **LIMEN 2023 Conference Proceedings**,
- 67 abstracts have been published in the **LIMEN 2023 Book of Abstracts**.

Altogether LIMEN 2023 publications have more than 800 pages. All full papers have DOI numbers and ORCID iD integration.

Participation in the conference took **more than 250 researchers** representing **24 different countries** from different universities, eminent faculties, scientific institutes, colleges, various ministries, local governments, public and private enterprises, multinational companies, associations, etc.





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# Circular Economy in the Tourism Sector: An Overview of Tourism Enterprises and Tourist Behavior

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Received: January 30, 2024  
Accepted: March 31, 2024  
Published: August 6, 2024

## Keywords:

Sustainable tourism;  
Circular economy;  
Business challenges;  
Tourist behavior



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**Abstract:** *The tourist industry, after a slow recovery following the pandemic events, is regaining positions in the ranking of the most profitable sectors worldwide. Indeed, considering its high environmental and social impact, the tourism sector cannot escape the challenge of sustainability, by embracing the circular economy approach.*

*Currently, this challenge, although debated in the academic literature, is not yet sufficiently studied at the managerial level, so tourism enterprises do not have adequate tools to evaluate their circularity. This paper aims to provide an overview of existing circular economy frameworks in the tourism sector, both at academic literature and managerial level.*

*The research is approached according to qualitative methodology, consisting of the literature review on the circular economy in the tourism sector, and the identification of best practices at international and Italian level. This study has a theoretical impact, providing a literature overview on the debated topic and the potential gaps to be filled, and a managerial impact, providing a set of guidelines deriving from the analysis of existing best practices.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The level of growing competition in the market and the greater interest in sustainability issues cannot fail to also affect the tourism sector, one of the driving sectors for the European and, in general, global economy (European Parliament, 2017). Just consider that in the European panorama alone the tourism sector guarantees 10.4% of the PIL and employs around 25 million workers within it. The interest in the search for more sustainable tourism comes from many sides: the community in which tourism develops, the tourists, from national and international organizations that push towards greater generalized sustainability and tourism operators who intend to invest in long-term development end of their activity (Bux & Amicarelli, 2023; Fennell & Bowyer., 2019). The phenomenon of sustainable tourism, also called ecotourism, is therefore developing, which has the objective of reducing negative emissions on the environment by adopting tools such as the circular economy and implementing best practices recognized by literature and stakeholders (Axhami et al., 2023). The evolution of the tourism sector and its transformation into a sector with low environmental impact require, in addition to the willingness of stakeholders to develop ethical and sustainable tourism, that the literature provides implementation methodologies for the best practices to be adopted, methods of evaluating the best practices implemented and specific communication channels and methods concerning these aspects (Guerra & Gonçalves, 2024).

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## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand the level of in-depth analysis of the topic of sustainability applied to the tourism sector, an analysis of the literature was carried out. This search was carried out using the Scopus database, which allows you to identify texts/articles/essays through the use of keywords. The keywords used refer to the world of sustainability linked to the tourism sector to identify the best practices that tourism operators should implement in the principles of the circular economy. The keywords used, therefore, were sustainability, tourism, circular economy and best practices. The results are different in relation to the different combinations of keywords, but the reduced interest in the topic is easily seen due to the few articles that focus on the topic. Although with some combinations of keywords, it is possible to access a large pool of articles, already from the abstract it is possible to understand how the centrality of sustainability is recognized, but the impact of the tourism enterprise on the global sustainability objectives (Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022).

Thanks to the combination of the keywords used, 196 articles were identified, some of which were common to multiple combinations. Among these, an initial selection was made by reading the abstract, which allowed the identification of texts/articles/essays in line to draft this article. From this initial selection, approximately 60% of texts/articles/essays were not found suitable for drafting this article. The characteristic of these 100 texts/articles/essays was to mention the tourism sector within them but to focus on different elements. The remaining 40% of texts/articles/essays appear to be in line with the objective of drafting this article and have therefore been read in their entirety. After reading the 69 texts/articles/essays with abstracts in line with the purpose of the article, it was considered that only 23, and therefore approximately 14% of the 169 initially identified as texts, articles, and essays were really useful for the drafting of the same.

**Table 1.** Relevance of the literature review

Keywords	Circular economy, touristic	Circular economy, tourism, sustainability	Circular economy, tourism, best practice	Circular economy, touristic, best practice	Circular economy, touristic, sustainability	Total number of articles read
Articles resulting from the search	13	135	16	2	3	169
Articles with an abstract in line with the aims of the article	8	44	14	0	3	69
% of articles with an abstract in line with the aims of the article	61,54%	32,59%	87,50%	0,00%	100,00%	40,83%
Articles useful for the purpose of the article	5	11	5	0	2	23
% Of articles useful for the purpose of the article	38,46%	8,15%	31,25%	0,00%	66,67%	13,61%
Articles falling within the category but not in line with the purpose of the article	5	91	2	2	0	100
% Of articles falling within the category but not in line with the article's purpose	38,46%	67,41%	12,50%	100,00%	0,00%	59,17%

Source: Own research

Among the 23 publications (as texts, articles, and essays) resulting from the search in the Scopus database, a different approach to the subject of sustainability in the tourism sector is identified.

In particular, there is greater attention and greater depth in the reporting of virtuous projects in the field of sustainable tourism, programs studied and implemented by countries, cities, islands, or specific geographical areas (Ferronato et al., 2023; Magaudda et al., 2023; Hadzi-Nikolova et al., 2022; Falcone, 2019; Zafeirakou et al., 2022) to highlight through concrete examples that it is possible to aspire to sustainability in the tourism sector. The objective of informing the community of these examples and models of behavior is certainly virtuous, but the inability to identify common guidelines can be an obstacle to the sustainable development of the tourism sector.

Some interesting aspects that can be deduced from the literature are certainly the interest of both tour operators and actual tourists in undertaking paths to achieve sustainable development and the approach to the circular economy in the tourism sector (Velooso et al., 2021). Tourists, in fact, thanks to the greater awareness that derives from the increasingly central role of sustainability, are driven to search for real tourist experiences, which allow them to know and delve deeper into the communities with which they interface, discovering their uses and customs, culture and traditions. Greater awareness pushes tourists to improve their behavior in order to reduce the impact that their presence may have on the place visited. Their goal is to visit and explore the place where they are located, without changing the lifestyle of the native community, but rather by studying it and creating a connection with it, preserving the characteristics of the place intact for future generations and future tourists (Velooso et al., 2021). At the same time, tourism operators cannot avoid satisfying the needs of their stakeholders in order to survive in an increasingly competitive market (Salvioni et al., 2022) and are therefore driven to understand their needs and identify ways to satisfy them. The preservation of the place itself is recognized as a common interest between tourists and the communities of tourist places, to improve the economic and social living conditions of the community thanks to the contribution of tourism, without however forgetting the aspect of preservation environmental.

Finally, from the literature, we understand that the desire to improve sustainability performance in the tourism sector cannot be continued by individual operators, but must find a broader scope thanks to the intervention of state or regional organizations to identify a common project of sustainability (Ushakova, 2023; Magaudda et al., 2023). Collaboration allows you to develop a sense of common trust that pushes you to undertake the initial investments to implement circular economy techniques within the tourism sector.

### 3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

The objectives of the circular economy and those of the tourism sector can be aligned with the desire to preserve the available resources for as long as possible by limiting the impact that human activity has on that place (Drechsel et al., 2018). The identification of a close link between the circular economy and the tourism sector must also be highlighted in relation to the impact that tourism has on the production of waste and the use of a city's environmental resources (Nocca et al., 2023; Vardopoulos et al., 2023).

The objective of the circular economy is to implement techniques for using and reusing products to extend the life cycle of products, reducing waste and waste to a minimum (Gennari & Cassano, 2020). The objective of the tourism sector, in the same way, must be oriented towards respecting the resources of the locality in which it is located, improving the economic and social conditions of the community in which it is located and limiting its environmental impact, if not developing strategies that improve the environmental conditions of the locality (Manniche et al., 2017; Styles et al., 2013).

Concretely, thanks to the collaboration of experts on the subject and supranational programs such as the COSME Program of the European Union, examples of virtuous behavior that can be more or less easily implemented by different operators are evaluated and reported in documents that are easier to access tourist. Among the concrete examples above, we can mention the initiatives of large hotel chains such as the Intercontinental, the NH Hotel Group, or the Ibis Hotel, but also the investments of individual tourist operators such as the Ladybird Farm leisure center, the Svart Hotel or Camping Blue Ocean.

The objectives pursued can be divided into three main fields: eliminating waste and pollution by reducing the waste typical of the sector, keeping the materials being used within the life cycle for as long as possible and regenerating natural systems in which the tourist operator develops.

1. Eliminate waste and pollution by reducing the waste typical of the sector: over time the hotels of the Manotel chain have provided for the recycling of the bars of soap made available to their customers, but which they did not finish during their stay. The soap recovery step produces two advantages. The first concerns a social aspect as the process of recovering the soap bars is carried out by people with intellectual disabilities while their distribution is guaranteed by the riders, thus guaranteeing them a satisfactory and useful job for the community. The second advantage concerns the methods of reusing these bars of soap, which are first analyzed to ensure their quality and then redistributed to humanitarian associations for their reuse.

2. Keep the materials you are using within their life cycle for as long as possible: two paths can be followed to guarantee a long life cycle for the objects that make up hotels. The first example is that of the Accor Hotel chain which promotes the use of secondhand for the furnishing of its hotels, preferring to purchase furniture from markets or repair furniture through artisans rather than buying new designer objects. The second example is that of the hotels of the Ibis chain, where furniture discarded by hotels is given a second life thanks to the donation of the same to those who request it.

3. Regenerate the natural systems in which the tourist operator develops: the objective can be achieved by building or renovating hotels according to high standards of environmental performance, reducing carbon emissions thanks to the greater use of renewable energy resources and placing hotels in places easily reachable by public transport to encourage tourists to reduce their environmental impact when moving from one place to another thanks to the use of the public transport service.

Providing relevance to sustainability and ethical initiatives toward tourist locations allows us to incentivize other operators to approach the world of sustainability and implement strategies that allow the concepts of the circular economy to be satisfied (Giurea et al., 2022). The various characteristics that diversify the tourism sector internally must certainly be taken into consideration, from geographical and dimensional differences to those in the type of tourists in which one is interested. In this sense, there are no elements in the literature that allow us to unequivocally identify possible paths to take in order to achieve a higher level of sustainability. The impact of studies in this area and of information on the most virtuous cases is therefore relegated to a marginal role compared to what it could be if, at the same time, precise indications were provided for all tourism operators (Li et al., 2023; Wang & Nguyen, 2022). However, it is worth remembering that several articles offer sustainable solutions in relation to the tourism sector, highlighting problems that concern the majority of tourism businesses, such as food waste, and

proposing useful solutions to marginalize this impact (Fennell & Bowyer, 2019; Lagioia et al., 2024). A second element to which attention is paid is water waste and therefore some studies are interested in researching ways in which to exploit rainwater and develop a water recirculation system that allows waste to be limited (Ghafourian et al., 2022).

The objective of this article, which is to provide a broader scope on the topic of sustainability in the tourism sector and to identify possible initiatives that can be followed, proposes that tourism operators delve deeper into the topic and begin to approach the circular economy through elements of common problems. Think, for example, of the food waste resulting from buffet consumption practices or the search for foods outside of the seasonal period. It could be a good practice to reduce buffet consumption to favor consumption by ordering and to favor products of local origin and that reflect seasonality. This behavior could also develop positive impacts on the community in which the tourist operator is located. Another method of approaching the circular economy could be to reduce energy consumption by implementing sustainable energy sources but also by educating tourists to consume more considerable energy sources. A third solution could be to emphasize maintaining the biodiversity of local flora and fauna, implementing solutions that may be attractive to tourists. Examples of this are the development of areas dedicated to the cultivation of flowers or areas for growing fruit and vegetables, but also areas in which to house farmyard animals or for the repopulation of insects such as bees. These elements are useful from the point of view of environmental impact and at the same time increase the attractions of the tourist location, offering tourists new possibilities to get closer to nature or understand processes that they would not have the opportunity to experience in the areas from which they come.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The topic of the circular economy in the tourism sector is certainly a factor to take into consideration for the development of the sector in the coming years. The growing importance that sustainability assumes in the daily life of every individual will only highlight the possible waste of resources and the negative impacts on the community by tourism operators, who will not be able to avoid studying and implementing strategies that strengthen their image regarding these aspects. The implementation of the strategy to be adopted cannot be transversal to every tourist operator but must consider the peculiarities of the place and the characteristics of the host community. However, the literature must deal with the identification of guidelines that can be followed by all types of tourist operators in order to guarantee greater valorization of the theme. Furthermore, the literature will have to provide the appropriate tools so that each tourist operator, having identified the particularities that characterize it, can implement optimal strategies to reduce its environmental impact. The discussion on the topic must therefore increase and cannot fail to respond to requests for greater sustainability from this sector.

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