

EUROPEAN GARDEN HERITAGE NETWORK

(Sustainable Tourism Practices)

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Statutory Declaration

“I declare in lieu of an oath that I have written this bachelor thesis myself and that I have not used any sources or resources other than stated for its preparation. I further declare that I have clearly indicated all direct and indirect quotations. This bachelor thesis has not been submitted elsewhere for examination purposes.”

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Abstract

The research work revises tourism potential of European gardens and parks in the context of sustainable development, investigates the case of European Garden Heritage Network (EGHN) as a successfully developing organisation, and describes best practices used for maintaining four dimensions of sustainability within gardens and parks of EGHN.

Table of Contents

Statutory Declaration

Abstract.....	I
Table of Contents.....	II
List of Abbreviations.....	III
Introduction	1
1 Sustainability and Potential Tourist Attractions of Gardens and Parks	4
1.1 Current Views on the Concept of Sustainability	4
1.2 Gardens and Parks as Tourist Attractions.....	5
2 EGHN in the Context of Sustainable Development	8
2.1 Past, Present and Future of EGHN.....	8
2.1.1 History and Foundation of EGHN	8
2.1.2 Current Activities and Future Plans of EGHN.....	9
2.2 Practices for Economic Sustainability	10
2.3 Practices for Environmental Sustainability	13
2.4 Practices for Social Sustainability	14
2.5 Practices for Cultural Sustainability.....	16
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	18
Bibliography	21
Annex A: Expert Interview with Ingelore Pohl, EGHN Project Development Manager.....	23

List of Abbreviations

BEST EN – Best Enterprise for Sustainable Tourism Education Network

EGHN – European Garden Heritage Network

NWHO – The Nordic World Heritage Office, Oslo

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

WCED – World Commission of the Environment and Development

Introduction

Nowadays sustainable development is considered to be an essential part of managerial philosophy at all industries without exception. Nevertheless, tourism businesses and cultural tourism sites in particular are not always managed with an equally keen interest in enhancing sustainability. There is a number of reasons for it and one of them is the unawareness of the own potential and possible practical ways to maintain sustainability.

The objectives of this work are to raise the awareness of the tourism potential of European gardens and parks in the context of sustainable development, to investigate the case of European Garden Heritage Network (EGHN) as a successfully developing organisation, and to describe best practices used for maintaining sustainability within gardens and parks of EGHN.

In accordance with the objectives given above, research area and research topic can be identify as “sustainable development of parks and gardens” and “EGHN and best practices to maintain sustainability” respectively.

Research questions set by this work are as following:

What is the current state of knowledge about the issue of sustainability, in business and in tourism industry?

Which tourist attractions can be offered by European gardens and parks?

How does EGHN work, what are the reasons for cooperation and which current projects are being implemented by the organisation?

Which practical steps can be taken in gardens and parks in order to maintain economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability?

Investigation for this work is done by means of literature review of the current publications about “sustainability”, “tourism sustainability”, and “gardens and parks as tourism attractions”. It also involves online research on the EGHN and the electronic documents published with regard to the implementation of this project

are analysed. Moreover, an expert interview with the Project Development Manager of the EGHN is implemented to get a profound insight into the structure, financial situation and coordination of the network.

Reflecting on approaches found in the literature about sustainable development in business, it is increasingly recognized that they have to be of a practical character.

To illustrate this, the latest work by Werbach (2009, p. 9) highlights the ways of implementing a strategy in order to save costs, reach a new consumer base, and get, keep and develop employees, customers, and community. Epstein (2008, p. 26) published 'Making Sustainability Work' which covers the specificity of how to execute sustainability within companies after 'Measuring Corporate Environmental Performance' written in 1996.

In tourism field attention to the practical approach has increased too. In this regard, the collective volume by Business Enterprise for Sustainable Tourism Education Network (BEST EN) is worth considering, as it represents the outcome of the annual think tanks held at consortium universities internationally and gives an insight on the ways of implementing sustainable tourism development in marketing, management, human resource management, risk management, and etc. (BEST EN, 2010).

Literature review therefore demonstrates that companies, including those in tourism industry, are no longer interested in the theory of sustainable development but are searching for the ways to start acting or even continue with it and keep it working in perpetuity.

Unfortunately, literature about gardens and parks lacks this approach. It is mainly written with a distinctive stress on their cultural value and offers a historic perspective on garden designs, interesting facts about the previous owners and architects contributed to a particular landscape. These books also provide comprehensive illustrative material and often comprise multiple case studies.

In regard to tourism, gardens and parks are often included in the city guides and are briefly described for the unprepared tourist interested in culture, education or sightseeing.

This research should help to see the gardens and parks from the commercial perspective for the tourism industry and at the same time provide ideas for keeping the sustainability of the sites.

The first chapter of this work describes the current state of knowledge about sustainability in business and tourism industry and revises the assets of gardens and parks as tourist attractions. The second chapter is dedicated to EGHN and its practices: the first subchapter based on the expert interview with the EGHN Project Manager gives an insight into the present, past and future activities of the network. The last four subchapters describe practices corresponding to the four dimensions of sustainable development and introduced in gardens and parks of EGHN.

1 Sustainability and Potential Tourist Attractions of Gardens and Parks

1.1 Current Views on the Concept of Sustainability

The topic of sustainability has been frequently discussed since the first definition by former Norwegian prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland appeared in 1987 in a World Commission of the Environment and Development report. It was then introduced as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 43).

Over the last two decades the definition has been explained and speculated about in every possible way and has become rather diluted. Michael Pollan, a contributing writer to ‘The New York Times Magazine’ since 1987, verbalized it precisely. “The word ‘sustainability’ has gotten such a workout lately that the whole concept is in danger of floating away on a sea of inoffensiveness. Everybody, it seems, is for it whatever ‘it’ means” (New York Times, 16 December 2007).

The word “sustainability” is often misinterpreted and used to speak about green issues and being narrowed to purely environmental focus. Similarly, companies promote sustainable practices in order to create positive green image for themselves – a phenomenon called “green sheen” or in worst cases, when the perception promoted to the public is totally deceptive or misleading, it is named “greenwashing”.

Regarding tourism industry, it was not covered in the Brundtland report in 1987, though it was and continues to be vulnerable in terms of sustainable development. The situation has changed in the last twenty years and tourism industry has established its research areas and framework regarding the problem. Having had “green” misinterpretation times too, the term “sustainable tourism” is no longer diminished to ecotourism.

It should be emphasized that environmental component of sustainability in business practices, as well as in tourism, is an essential but not the central issue. Related to this is the metaphor created by Werbach, in which he suggests that we imagine operating a company on Mars. Having only a thin atmosphere, extremely low temperatures and intensely exposed to the sun, the entrepreneur would have to provide the employees and supply chain with clean air, potable water, protection from ultraviolet light, as well as pests and exotic diseases, and etc. (2009, p. 22). The metaphor shows how essential are the fundamental resources provided by the ecosystem of our planet and emphasizes that they are frequently taken for granted.

Still the concept of sustainability is not limited to the environmental protection and seems to require an ideal balance between the four widely accepted components/dimensions: economic, environmental, social and cultural. Sustainable development could be compared to a wooden barrel holding sustainability inside and each of the criteria (derived from each dimension) would be a wooden stave around it. Even if only one of the staves is shorter, the liquid is leaking out, meaning that, even if only one of the criteria is not fulfilled, sustainability is not working and the balance is disturbed.

Increasingly it is recognized that sustainability in tourism industry is the only way of being profitable today without regretting about it tomorrow and at the same time taking care of the community, cultural diversity and natural resources before it is too late.

This is especially fair for heritage and cultural sites like gardens and parks. Therefore the next subchapter is dedicated to the unique assets of such sites, which can be used as visitor attractions, given it is done in a sustainable way.

1.2 Gardens and Parks as Tourist Attractions

It is widely recognized that gardens and parks are an integral part of the cultural heritage and therefore represent an attraction for tourists visiting a particular city or place for the cultural and educational purposes. Nonetheless, the review of the

literature about gardens and parks in Europe demonstrates a lack of the tourism-specialized works, which could be used for effective management of a park or a garden with an aim of attracting visitors, maintaining their loyalty, increasing revenues, and etc.

The lack of tourism-specialized literature is symptomatic and seems to show that the importance of gardens and parks as tourist attractions is underestimated and undervalued. EGHN's report on spatial strategy argues that gardens and parks are the valuable assets for each city or place and can serve numerous aspirations of the visitors (EGHN, 2008, p. 5).

Gardens and parks are vital contributors to urban design and public realm offering a wide range of experiences and services. They give a unique opportunity to experience natural beauty and man-made landscapes, which in turn forms the image of the city or place. They are used by those who love gardens and admire the heritage as venues, where the arts and culture can be found. They offer space for recreation, contact with the nature and sport activities. Apart from learning sciences from the vegetation of a garden, green spaces like parks and gardens also invite to affordable outdoor learning (ibid., p. 8-9).

Other area of intervention is the community involvement, as every park or garden can offer activities for all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Furthermore, there are specific therapy gardens and courses related to health and wellness. Alternatively, gardens and parks can be used as event settings.

Gardens and parks are inclusive; meaning they are easy to understand, free to enter or have reasonable entrance fees, open to all generations and often all year round. Enjoyment and use of gardens and parks does not require any specific social, educational or ethnic background, skills or knowledge of any particular language (EGHN, 2008, p. 8).

In summary, gardens and parks have an enormous potential to attract visitors: from culture and nature to therapy and sports. They also have an advantage of

being inclusive. In the next chapter it will be demonstrated that this potential can be effectively managed, as it is being done by EGHN.

2 EGHN in the Context of Sustainable Development

2.1 Past, Present and Future of EGHN

2.1.1 History and Foundation of EGHN

The idea of the network was born in 2003 with the intention to increase public awareness of gardens and parks for modern city and regional development. Moreover, it was aimed to foster the experience exchange between members and enhance the funding of current projects.

As it was confirmed by the EGHN Project Development Manager during the expert interview, the initiative came from her and her colleague back then as they worked at the Institute of Spatial Planning, TU Dortmund. EGHN was applied as regional project for the Interreg programme after the partners in Europe have been found. Interreg is a Community initiative, which aims to stimulate interregional cooperation between the member lands of the European Union.

EGHN project won the competition and received a 50 per cent refunding of the expenses connected with the project plan for the period from 2003 till the end of 2008. EGHN Project Development Manager emphasised that competition had been rather tough and statistically only five to twenty per cent of all projects are confirmed.

EGHN declared itself as a group of partners who are determined to ensure gardens and parks are managed positively as cultural assets to promote regional development and sustainable tourism. The following six key action areas were identified to achieve this aim:

- spatial strategy
- inter-regional gateways
- transnational themes
- access
- interpretation
- education

After the policies had been stated during the first action, the following actions were implemented one by one. The information on cultural, social and economic activities was gathered by means of case studies for anchor (gateway) gardens in each region; visitor surveys were implemented to analyse the demand side and remarket the potential of the assets; best transport and access practices were explored to improve the situation at the partner gardens; the results of the work were summarized and the objectives for the future cooperation were set.

EGHN project within Interreg programme not only enhanced communication and experience exchange between gardens in different European lands, but raised the profile of the heritage sites and attracted attention of the regional councils, planning authorities and tourism unions. These partners are essential as only they can implements the new projects and foster policies at the regional level.

2.1.2 Current Activities and Future Plans of EGHN

After Interreg project had terminated in 2008, EGHN dismissed all the members and was restructured. Now it operates as a non-profit organization within the scope of economic activities of Stiftung Schloss Dyck and includes more than two hundred sites in five European countries (England, Germany, Netherlands, France and Belgium). As stated by the EGHN Project Manager, the number of visitors to the gardens of the network has been showing a dramatic increase, in Stiftung Schloss Dyck ,for example, it increased from 95.000 in 2003 to approximately 220.000 in 2010.

EGHN is open to the new partnerships and new seven European parks and gardens have used this opportunity this year. In September 2010 the first European Garden Award was handed out. This action not only raised the public awareness of heritage gardens and parks and created new partnerships, but showed the willingness of EGHN to expand on global scale, as one of the awards was given to High Line Park in New York.

Furthermore, EGHN is preparing a new application for Interreg programme. This time it aims to find partners in Sweden, Italy, Greece, Malta, Ireland and Estonia.

As EGHN focuses on developing thematic routes composed of gardens with similar themes across Europe, these countries could make a valuable contribution to the network. Other important issues of the new project include climate change and social development of the urban areas.

EGHN can be seen as a successful cooperation of heritage sites, which allows for better opportunities in making partnerships with planning authorities, raising funds and the regional and international profile of heritage parks and gardens in Europe.

The cooperation also enhances exchange of best practices and experience. Some of the sustainable practices of the network will be described in the next subchapters. The examples introduced below are taken from the practices of three gardens belonging to EGHN: Hestercombe Gardens (Somerset, UK), Painshill Park (Surrey, UK), and Stiftung Schloss Dyck (North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany).

2.2 Practices for Economic Sustainability

Maintaining economic sustainability is by far the most challenging task for gardens and parks. Heritage gardens and parks are particularly vulnerable as they have to follow preservation policy and therefore often are not able to offer their assets in full volume.

Cultural heritage sites are often owned by local councils and are therefore dependent on their support, funds and donations. This makes them active and brings financial resources for the restoration and preservation of their assets and cultural values like garden designs and historic buildings. Nonetheless, they cannot be called economically sustainable as they do not generate any income.

Local councils and purposely created trusts, for example the Hestercombe Garden Trust or the Painshill Park Trust, should be seen as important players in overseeing the restoration and preservation of the gardens and parks and facilitating of new projects, collaborations and sponsorships. Local councils may invest in gardens and parks but – as long as the investments are not paid off – in financial terms they invest in the past (restoration) and the present (preservation) and not in the future (sustainable development).

As the EGHN's report on the contribution of parks and gardens to a sustainable regional development argues, gardens and parks should be managed as modern businesses, meaning they should generate income to cover costs, employ and train staff, adopt sustainable policies, guarantee customer satisfaction (EGHN, 2004, p. 1).

The notion of "customer" or "visitor" should be seen as a key notion for the success. According to the EGHN report, which presents the results of the experts' questionnaires on the essential factors in development strategies, the biggest number of points is scored by attractiveness for a visitor, new visitor groups and offers (EGHN, 2006, p. 6). Creating a wide range of offers and a strong USP for a garden or park is an effective way to achieve all these aims.

Painshill Park in Surrey, UK, could be a role model for the other gardens regarding strong USP. It has a narrow focus on child activities and offers various "party time packages" for the children aged from four to eight. Each package is thoroughly planned and has its own title and scope of activities. For example, Christopher Robin's Day Out is designed for the children aged four to eight and children follow the letters left by Christopher Robin around the garden in order to find the honey pot, while the children involved in Happy Earthday Party discover the garden pond and examine the found species under the video microscope at the Discovery Centre.

"Party time packages" make the offer even more attractive, as they include not only necessary features like room for up to 25 children and three-hour-long entertainment, but a set of invitations, a little gift for the birthday child and free tickets for limited number of parents. This approach makes visitors be delighted and willing to come back in order to experience another program from the provided variety.

It is not exclusively "party time packages" what makes Painshill Park children-oriented. Different workshops are scheduled at holidays and children have an opportunity to create craftworks and express themselves. Moreover, the garden

has a strong base of staff trained to work with children represented by volunteers, who often are retired teachers, and student teachers on placement.

Other possible offers which could target definite visitor segments would be courses for garden lovers and workshops on pruning different species. Stiftung Schloss Dyck in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, laid out topical areas similar to private gardens in terms of size and possibilities, where garden lovers can find inspiration for home gardens. Additionally, garden days with experts take place annually in spring.

USP can also be built-up of little but unique features which can only be found at a particular garden. At Stiftung Schloss Dyck there is a Celtic tree horoscope and a Bamboo Garden with 30 species opened in 2005. Hestercombe Gardens in Somerset, UK, the winner of gold for Small Visitor Attraction for 2010/2011 in South West Tourism Excellence Awards, feature a hawk walk in the garden with an introduction to falconry experience. The project "Contributors Wall" is aimed to raise the funds for the restoration of the watermill: visitors can buy a brick, which will be engraved with the wording of their choice.

Customer-orientation can be expressed with additional free services and goods. For example, these can be free launch for a coach driver or free parking.

Generally the assets and grounds of a park or garden can bring profit by entrance fees to permanent and seasonal exhibitions, private events like weddings, corporate events like conferences and meetings, backdrops for television and film productions, as long as the preservation concerns are respected.

Signature events like annual open-air cinema or festivals have an enormous potential for attracting visitors, creating USP and positive image, and generating income. According to the EGHN report on the contribution of parks and gardens to a sustainable regional development, Painshill Park highlights three signature events, Battle of Painshill, Festival of Fireworks, and Santa in the Grotto, and a successful event like firework display can attract up to ten thousand visitors (EGHN, 2004, p. 9).

Similarly to all other commercial uses of the assets, heritage value of the site should be respected during signature events, as careless use of the historic rooms and garden designs could ruin attempts at achieving cultural and environmental sustainability.

2.3 Practices for Environmental Sustainability

The “green” nature of gardens and parks as tourist attractions can be misleading concerning environmental issues. It is widely known that green spaces produce oxygen for the urban areas and reduce the negative impact of the exhausted fumes and excessive CO₂.

Nonetheless, gardens and parks like other tourist attractions make use of transportation; have gastronomic venues and shops on their premises, need energy and water; and their visitors produce litter.

Furthermore, gardens and parks, though a part of the nature, indeed are modified landscapes. In other words, gardens and parks take up parts of the ecosystem and represent smaller artificial ecosystems. In order to create and maintain garden designs human deliberate actions, techniques and tools, which are not characteristic for the nature are required.

A variety of methods to make the process of gardening more sustainable are applied at Hestercombe Gardens. These methods comprise managing woodland with the replacement of introduced species in favour of native trees; maximising habitat types and species diversity; supporting fungal flora and insect population by leaving felled timber to rot; composting green waste; no pesticides are used and herbicides are limited; using limiters on the taps across the site, and etc.

The negative environmental impacts caused by the visitors are managed by means of recycling paper, cardboard, and glass; composting food waste. Train and Bus package trips offered in partnership with West Somerset Railway are aimed to reduce the negative impacts caused through traffic flows.

In regard to the energy, not only control systems to managed heating are applied, renewable energy in form of biomass under floor heating using wood and water-powered grid generator is incorporated in the restored mill and barn buildings. Additionally, solar panels are planned.

Sustainable practices applied at Hestercombe Gardens are a good illustration of the engagement and creativity. They show how much effort is required to reduce or avoid the negative impacts of gardens and parks on the environment.

2.4 Practices for Social Sustainability

Reflecting on social sustainability in connection with gardens and parks makes apparent the need to distinguish between social and cultural sustainability. The understanding of the concepts “culture” and “cultural heritage tourism” determines the overlapping of these two dimensions.

The report ‘Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Heritage’ identifies cultural heritage tourism as not only tangible but also as intangible heritage, most of which is represented by social aspect of the culture and includes societal structures, traditions, values, and religion (NWHO, 1999, p. 2).

It also enumerates potential positive and negative socio-cultural impacts. In interests of this work it is necessary to distinguish between mainly social and mainly cultural impacts. Mainly social positive impacts include building community pride, enhancing the sense of identity of a community or region, broadening community horizons; and negative impacts – increased division between those who benefit and do not benefit from tourism and conflict over land rights and access to resources (ibid., p. 7).

Mowforth and Munt define social sustainability as the ability of a community to absorb inputs and to continue functioning either without the creation of social disharmony or by adapting its functions and relationships so that disharmony created can be alleviated or mitigated (Mowforth, & Munt 2009, p.104).

Summarizing these views, the prosperity of local and regional community can be considered the starting point for the sustainable social development at a tourist attraction site.

In regard to this, educational collaborations with universities and institutes are valuable to maintain social sustainability at a garden or park, as such collaborations broaden community horizons and build community pride locally; and provide educational opportunities for the community regionally. The cultural value of educational collaborations is doubtless as well.

The Genesis Project, Somerset College in Taunton, specialises in traditional building regeneration and advises on new constructions concerning traditional construction materials in combination with recycled waste, and modern techniques in order to save energy and reduce waste. It is nationally recognized in sustainable construction education. At Hestercombe Gardens the project provides education and training opportunities by means of the courses in traditional construction, energy efficiency in older buildings and heritage skills.

Hestercombe Gardens Trust has also collaborated with the University of Bristol to form a new Institute for Garden and Landscape History.

Similarly, Stiftung Schloss Dyck in North Rhine-Westphalia collaborates with RWTH Aachen University and Heinrich-Heine University Düsseldorf offering specialist events in obtaining the Master's degree in Redevelopment/Design and Management.

Social sustainability is partly created by making the gardens and parks accessible to all and by creating disabled access to the cultural heritage and tourist facilities of a site or providing index plates in different languages. Free access for children and reduced rates for groups can also be seen as socially sustainable approach to the management of a site.

Furthermore, work placements for students and volunteer jobs make experience exchange and communication within local community stronger. The fact that garden and sites provide jobs to the members of the community should not be

neglected too. For example, newly renovated Stiftung Schloss Dyck provided 40 new jobs within a short period of time (EGHN, 2004, p. 3).

One more way to strengthen a community is to support it by means of buying food supplies and other goods locally. These goods can also be building materials, all necessary supplies for a restaurant and products for souvenir shops.

Country store at Stiftung Schloss Dyck offers wide range of products: delicatessen, honey, natural cosmetics, and arts and crafts from local suppliers. Fruit shop also cooperates with local farmers and offers berries and vegetables in season.

It is obvious that there is a need to vary practices for social sustainability from site to site, as, for example, the social impacts of tourism to some Asian land with an aim of recreation and heritage tourism to some European land cannot be the same. In case of the heritage tourism to European gardens and parks the central issues are those connected with the strengthening of the local and regional community by means of collaborations and cooperation of its members.

2.5 Practices for Cultural Sustainability

Cultural sustainability is especially vulnerable at the heritage sites open to the public and actively visited by tourists. As mentioned by UNESCO, cultural tourism can lead to the revival of traditions and restoration of the heritage sites but it can also have the opposite effect (The UNESCO Courier, 1999, p. 21).

NWHO concurs with it and calls tourism “a double-edged sword” for a heritage destination. On the one hand, cultural heritage is a tourism attraction, which leads to financial and political support for management of this heritage. On the other hand, there is a potential conflict, because tourism can damage cultural heritage and limits on the number of visitors can damage tourism (NWHO, 1999, p. 1).

Potential cultural impacts are also viewed from two opposite perspectives: positive and negative. Potential positive impacts include promoting intercultural understanding, encouraging revival of traditional crafts, providing funding for site

preservation and management, and enhancing local and external appreciation for cultural heritage. Potential negative impacts comprise cheapening of culture and traditions, loss of cultural identity, undermining of local traditions, displacement of traditional residents, damaging of attractions, loss of authenticity and historical accuracy in interpretation, and selectivity for the development of heritage attractions (NWHO, 1999, p. 7).

Gardens and parks with their historic designs and heritage buildings and ability to be inclusive for any foreign culture have all the qualities for the development of the potential positive impacts like intercultural understanding and enhancing appreciation for cultural heritage.

Additionally, thoroughly planned and designed exhibitions can preserve authenticity and historical accuracy in interpretation of the site. For example, Stiftung Schloss Dyck has two permanent exhibitions since 2003. Exhibition “History” occupying baroque ground floor rooms has a setting of baroque ceiling, rococo tableaux and Chinese silk wall covering, while exhibition “Landscape” dedicated to garden design of the 18th and 19th centuries not only contains historic landscape paintings but offer unique views at the English landscape garden from the windows.

Genesis Project applied at Hestercombe Gardens can be as well mentioned in regard to cultural sustainability. Use of traditional construction materials at the heritage site and transfer of the experience from generation to generation are two distinctive features, which make this project culturally sustainable.

These practices demonstrate that gardens and parks, if managed sustainably, can effectively capitalize on the positive impacts of cultural tourism and mitigate the negative ones.

In the next chapter general conclusions on the conducted research will be drawn and best practices for sustainable development of gardens and parks will be summarized. It will also provide recommended applications of this knowledge and identifies the way for further research.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research for this paper has been conducted in the field of sustainable development in cultural tourism with the focus on European gardens and parks.

With the help of the examples provided by members of EGHN, best practices used to enhance sustainability in European gardens and parks have been identified. This has been done by means of analysing the practices of Hestercombe Gardens (Somerset, UK), Painshill Park (Surrey, UK), and Stiftung Schloss Dyck (North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany).

It must be due to the broad understanding of the concept and the pressing nature of the issue, that the topic of sustainability and sustainable development has generated such broad variety of literature and scientific works. Numerous publications in turn gave birth to versatile approaches, classifications and different views upon terminology.

Found in the literature about sustainability in tourism sphere, the use of the words “tools” and “strategies” can serve an example of various views upon terminology and classifications. The techniques, similar to which Mowforth and Munt (2009, p. 110), call “tools of sustainability”, are called “strategies” in the report ‘Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Heritage’ (NWHO, 1999, p. 14). Likewise, “tools of sustainability” partly cover “visitor management strategies” recommended by David Weaver but are structured differently, as Mowforth and Munt (ibid.) split “codes of conduct” from “visitor management techniques”, and Weaver (2006, p. 182) describes “codes of conduct” as a part of his “visitor management strategies”.

The cacophony in the use of terminology and variety of classifications and subdivisions of the techniques, tools, and strategies make the research in the field of sustainable tourism highly complicated and challenging but on the other hand it clearly demonstrates keen interest of the people involved in the tourism research and activities to the topicality of the sustainability.

Regarding approaches, books written as practical manuals on how exactly to implement sustainable development at a company dominate on the market. And it is inspiring to see that books about tourism sustainability are demonstrating practical approach too.

Nonetheless, there is a deficiency of the literature which can be used by gardens and parks as tourist attractions in order to maintain sustainability of the sites.

Summarizing the findings of the paper, the first chapter shows that the concept of sustainability is often diminished to environmental dimension only but, nevertheless, the importance of the sustainable issues is widely accepted and undoubted. The first chapter also displays the enormous potential of the gardens and parks as tourist attractions. It argues that the assets of gardens and parks cannot be reduced to only cultural or natural; they are unique landscapes, which also can be used for education, recreation, sports, outdoor learning, and wellness purposes.

As for the second chapter, it opens with the subchapter giving an insight into the life of EGHN. The unique information about its foundation, structural and financial background has become available through interviewing of the EGHN Project Development Manager and explains how the cooperation within the network has allowed for better opportunities in raising funds and exchange of the experience.

The four subsequent subchapters analyze each component of sustainable development in connection with the practices which can be found in EGHN.

The part dedicated to economic sustainability states that gardens and parks can and should be managed on a business basis. In order for gardens and parks to attract new visitors and generate income the USP should be created in each particular park or garden. As long as the preservation concerns are respected, commercial uses of the cultural assets can include a wide range of offers.

In the subchapter about environmental sustainability the myth of gardens being perfectly environmentally friendly is shattered. As tourist attractions and modified

landscapes gardens and parks require a real effort from the management to keep the sustainability in balance.

The next issue under consideration is social sustainability in gardens and parks. This subchapter highlights strengthening of the local and regional communities by means of collaborations. Other identified ways include accessibility to all, work placements and volunteer jobs, and buying the supplies locally.

Regarding cultural sustainability and the last part of this work, gardens and parks can effectively capitalize on the positive impacts of cultural tourism, enhancing appreciation for cultural heritage and intercultural understanding. By means of exhibitions authenticity and historical accuracy in interpretation can be preserved.

Described practices are aimed to create awareness of the enormous tourism potential of gardens and parks as attractions. They can also be used as an inspiration by the management of cultural tourism sites (and those of gardens and parks in particular) for reworking the approach to the cultural sites in order to make sustainability work.

This research could be a starting point for further research in the sphere of cultural tourism. For example, EGHN with its structure, financing, USP and practices could be compared or contrasted to a similar organisation existing in some other part of the world.

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Annex A: Expert Interview with Ingelore Pohl, EGHN Project Development Manager

Who initiated the project? What was the idea behind it?

Christian Grüßen and I initiated EGHN back then as we worked at the Institute of Spatial Planning, TU Dortmund. The idea was to increase awareness of parks and gardens for modern city and regional development. Moreover, we wanted to foster the experience exchange, enhance the funding of the current projects and attract more cultural tourists to the parks and gardens. Therefore, we started searching for partners in Europe, particularly for planning authorities.

So, what is EGHN exactly?

EGHN is the result of a project application for the Interreg programme. By means of this program we intended to gain the funding for our aims (listed above). Naturally, the funding played an important part in terms of a motivation for the partners within the EGHN, though the partners still had to pay the half of the expenses and Interreg provided the other half.

What is an Interreg project? How does it work?

Once or twice a year EU program Interreg calls up for regional projects on the selected topics like environment, flood control, cultural heritage, innovation, social integration, and etc. The decision in favour of a definite regional project is made by the jury and the competition is rather tough as only five to twenty per cent of projects are selected.

Are you aware of any similar to EGHN projects in Europe?

Not at the European level and not of those dedicated to the parks and gardens. There is ERIH (European Route of Industrial Heritage) and some other thematic routes (like Brick Gothic Architecture or Art Nouveau) within Europe. Furthermore, there are other garden networks in Europe like the one in Lower Austria.

In terms of funding, you have mentioned that half of the project expenses were to be paid by partners. So, what were the conditions exactly?

The expenses for the project, in our case EGHN, were paid by partners in advance and the 50 per cent refunding from EU followed then from regional funds. Interreg funding is always to be used for the benefits of the local communities, for example create jobs, and not only serve the needs of a single garden or park.

EGHN comprises many gardens and park and these across Europe. What is the internal structure of the network?

During the period of EGHN as Interreg project, from 2003 till the end of 2008, the structure and decision-making of the network was regulated in accordance with EU detailed rules. Stiftung Schloss Dyck was called Lead Partner and responsible to the EU for the project finances but at the same time each partner was responsible for their own financing and expenses. The cooperation was coordinated by regional coordinators among all the partners, the project first numbered eight and after the extension of a period - ten anchor gardens, where the most activities took place). International Steering Group was a supervisory body, which on a voluntary basis included a representative from each partner. Decisions concerning personnel, except for the entire project, were made by each partner independently.

And how does the structure look now, after the INTERREG project has been implemented?

As Interreg project terminated in 2008, EGHN had to restructure and to find new sources of financing itself. The Master Plan and Rules and Regulations were made which followed by the dismissal of all partners. Since then EGHN is a non-profit organization operating within economic activities of Stiftung Schloss Dyck. Daily operations are in hands of the management unit, which not only includes the personnel of Stiftung Schloss Dyck but those of the commissioned companies. There exists also an advisory board, which ensures effective communication among partners. The advisory board has annual meetings with a chairman and

vice-chairman and includes representatives from all the regions with at least five gardens involved.

How does the network finance itself now?

Revenues are generated through membership fees paid by the regional partners, which are involved into regional garden routes of EGHN, and/or by means of gardens' contribution to EGHN. Moreover, there are benefits from the single projects and activities, for example, applications for support from the ex-partners like federal state government of North Rhine-Westphalia. From our side it was a conscious decision in favour of non-profit organization and not of a union or some other form, because it gives more freedom in terms of formal regulations.

How do you coordinate and manage the financial part of EGHN?

By means of the so-called contribution to the financing of EGHN's fund of funds the money can be gathered and spread again among the partners. It is still essential to have a regional coordinator at each region. That is how EGHN works.

What kind of improvements did the project bring to the partner gardens and parks?

Interreg project allowed for some innovations and improvements like fixing plates with the directions, organizing exhibitions, creating of a bus stop, installation of an interactive information terminal, and etc. Marketing measures like creation of a website www.eghn.eu and information materials to the thematic routes are even of a bigger importance. Of course, it also added definite publicity and created broader awareness of the problems which many gardens have to face and overcome. For example, the park and the castle in Nordkirchen (the key garden of the Münsterland route) have received new visitor centre park elements have been reconstructed. The project also fostered the exchange of experience among the gardens' management. Stiftung Schloss Dyck, for example, gave lead to the Bad Driburg, where the upcoming light and art festival Illumina will take place.

Could you give some numbers demonstrating the success of the EGHN project? Increase in the number of visitors, expenditure per visitor?

It is almost impossible to evaluate the increase in number of visitors or expenditure per visitor within the framework of our project. The point is many parks and gardens of EGHN are free of charge and there are no tickets to be counted. It is also next to impossible to identify the genuine and single reason for the increase in numbers. One tangible fact is that in Stiftung Schloss Dyck the number of visitors has increased from 95.000 per year in 2003 to approximately 220.000 this year. Concerning other gardens, we get information that many tourists use EGHN guides and printed information from the website to plan visits of several gardens of the EGHN. One more number may be 250.000 copies of the information material of various kinds, which has been distributed by now.

In how far is it important for the garden heritage sites of EGHN to have official partners like county councils, tourism unions, and etc.?

Such stakeholders are the key players for a project like EGHN. Only they can take care of the implementation of programs and foster policies at the regional level.

Do you accept new members to EGHN?

Yes, we are open to the new partnerships within Europe and this year seven new parks and gardens have joined EGHN. We also welcome partnerships on the global scale in the future and the European Garden Reward given to High Line Park in New York made a clear statement on that. The conditions are the partners should fulfil the quality requirements of EGHN, be open to the public and be ready to pay their contribution to the financing of EGHN.

Speaking about present and future plans of EGHN, what are the current activities? What are the plans for future?

In September 2010 the first European Garden Award was handed out. We are also working on the integration of some selected business partners like market gardens, hotels and restaurants. One more project that we have initiated is a possibility of booking tour packages with a focus on the garden visits. These should be marketed internationally within EGHN. We also prepare a new application for Interreg programme with an aim to expand the coverage area of

EGHN and to find partners in Sweden, Italy, Greece, Malta, Ireland and Estonia. In this new project we would like to implement the successful existing thematic routes and integrate other important tourism issues like climate change and social development of the urban areas.