

The sustainability of completed EU-funded cultural projects

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The aim of my research is to examine how sustainability requirements are handled within a cultural project's life-cycle, both during the planning stage and after the actual event. The requirements for receiving European Union funding are the following: the project should contribute to sustainable development and its results should be considered sustainable on the long term, from both social and financial points of view.

This paper presents the results of a survey focussed on collecting data about projects with complex, cultural and cultural tourism-related aims. It can be concluded that the evaluations carried out after these projects were completed did not cover indicators which directly prove financial sustainability.

Keywords: sustainable development, sustainability, project sustainability, cultural projects.

JEL codes: O22, Q55, Q57, Z19.

Introduction

In the case of European Union (EU) funded projects, sustainability can be defined, on the one hand, in terms of its contribution to sustainable development and, on the other hand, in terms of the long-term maintenance of its outcomes. European Union funding directives and guidelines define what sustainability means and emphasize its significance (EVALSED 2014; EC 2013).

Whilst sustainability should be demonstrated during a project's preparation phase, an ex-post assessment process is essential.

This paper analyses the sustainability of cultural tourism projects from Hungary, based on data collected through a survey. The investigation focussed on what outcomes were quantified, whether sustainability was among them, and, upon completion of the project, whether the expected outcomes had been realised and if the results had been compared to the expected outcomes.

The definition of sustainability and project evaluation

Explaining how the project will contribute to sustainable development and demonstrating that social and financial outcomes of the projects can be maintained in the long run should be part of the planning phase. The project plan

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and feasibility studies should show that the project meets the funding criteria of the European Union regarding sustainability in both respects.

In the literature, there is no clear definition of sustainability, and no distinction is made between the two approaches, meaning that, before examining or discussing the sustainability criteria, it is important to define both meanings.

The clear definition of the terminology framework is essential also because, in many cases, well-known terms have different meanings, and the confusion between the two different approaches to sustainability is frequently detectable.

Sustainable development

Finding the balance between economic growth and social welfare has proved to be a challenge for both politicians and managers over the past 150 years (Dyllick–Hockerts 2002).

The term “sustainable development” was first used in the United Nations’ 1987 Brundtland Report. The Commission chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland released a report titled *Our Common Future*. They saw the possibility of a new era of economic growth that was based on the realization of sustainable development on a global scale and also one that sustained the environmental resource base. The concept of sustainable development implies the existence of limitations. It refers to “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*” (UN 1987. 41). In other words, “*sustainable development is the continuous increase in social welfare without growing beyond the carrying capacity*” (Daly 1991. 302). Sustainability refers to the maintenance of the value of both the natural and the built environment.

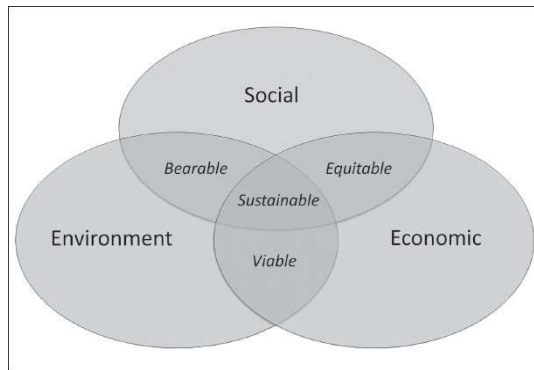
We differentiate between “strong” and “weak” sustainability. According to the former, natural capital cannot be substituted by other capital goods, while there is no such constraint according to the latter (Málovics–Bajmócy 2009).

Within the framework of the United Nations’ Millennium Project, 15 global challenges were identified. The future of humanity depends on how these challenges are addressed (UN 2009). It is difficult to envisage effective actions based on current paradigms in response to environmental problems that we are facing both at the economic and social level.

Regarding economics, two schools of thought can be identified. Ecological economics is a trans-disciplinary, problem-oriented approach, while environmental economics applies the same approach and uses the same methods as neoclassical welfare economics. Ecological economists challenge the views and proposed

solutions of environmental economists in numerous ways. They believe that environmental problems are not simply a result of market inefficiencies, and hence that more complex changes are necessary (Málovics–Bajmócy 2009).

The basic criteria of a sustainable society are social justice, striving for a better quality of life, using natural resources in a sustainable manner, and maintaining environmental quality.



Source: Dyllick–Hockerts 2002. 132

Figure 1. The Triple-P concept of sustainability

Sustainable development rests on three pillars: society, economy, and environment (Figure 1). All three have to be taken into consideration, including the interactions between them, to maintain a dynamic equilibrium between society, economy and environment, that is, all three pillars have to be sustainable (DGEC 2006).

When sustainability is taken into consideration during project planning, the entire plan's chances of contributing to/towards sustainability should be assessed based on the principles of prevention and prudence (Gyulai 2013). Also, the following should be investigated: has the project been evaluated according to the criteria of social utility, have its potential long-term impacts been assessed, and have the direct impacts of the investment been investigated?

Concerning the relationship between *culture and sustainable development*, culture is considered to be a cornerstone for the sustainable organic development and an important integrating role is attributed to it. The cultural and tourism investments considered to be sustainable are those which (NFÜ 2007):

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- permit the renewal of natural resources by taking into account the carrying capacity of the natural environment,
 - understand that local communities are an important component of cultural and tourism products,
 - accept that local communities should get a proportionate share of the positive economic outcomes of tourism,
 - respect the interests and requests of local communities regarding the development of culture and tourism.

The principle of sustainable development should be taken into consideration when compiling proposals, and efforts should be made to protect and improve the environment during project implementation.

The sustainability of projects

The European Union's development policy places an emphasis not only on making contributions towards sustainable development but also on sustainability, that is, on the durability of the results of interventions – i.e. events or activities – funded at multiple (programme or project) levels (EVALSED 2014). In the case of individual projects, it should be assessed whether sustainability criteria are met during the different phases of the project cycle, whether the project can set up a system that is viable on the long run, and whether it can maintain its intended impacts. Impact assessments and feasibility studies compiled in the preparation phase form the basis for selecting the best projects for funding based on their cost-effectiveness, sustainability and output (Magyarország Kormánya 2014).

Project evaluation criteria were first laid out by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in the *Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance*, which has since become widely accepted. These evaluation criteria, namely relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, are also included in the EU's standard evaluation methodology (OECD 1991; EC 1999).

The purpose and timing of the different evaluation criteria are presented in Table 1. Further, we discuss the sustainability criteria in more detail. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable. *Institutional sustainability* refers to the ability to provide efficient management and an efficiently functioning organizational framework. *Financial sustainability* refers to the ability to secure the funding necessary for sustainability (NFÜ 2008a), meaning that the project can operate within its planned budget without the need for additional funding.

Table 1. Purpose and timing of the project evaluation criteria

Timing of evaluation	Purpose of evaluation criteria	Evaluation criteria
Ex-ante	The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient, and donor. It analyses the programmes, examines their objectives and expected results.	Relevance
Mid-term	The extent to which outputs and/or the desired effects are achieved with the lowest possible use of resources. It analyses the efficiency of implementation, whether it meets requirements, and whether deadlines are kept.	Efficiency
Mid-term	The extent to which the project's objectives were achieved. It measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – about the inputs.	Effectiveness
Ex-post	The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention. This involves the effects resulting from the activity on social, economic, environmental and other development indicators.	Impact
Ex-post	It measures whether the benefits of the activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn following the completion of the implementation phase. It analyses the effects of programmes about the needs they have set out to address.	Sustainability

Source: Nagy 2011

During the preparation phase, it should be assessed whether the project will be sustainable within planned budgetary constraints and whether its results can be maintained once funding has ceased.

The cost-benefit analysis (CBA) is a basic tool used when aiming for an optimal choice. It identifies every possible effect and assigns a monetary value to it, to determine the project's overall costs and benefits. The cost-efficiency analysis (CEA) is used to find the optimal solution to a specific objective (KVVM 2002).

Not every socio-economic effect is measurable. Therefore, in addition to estimating performance indicators, costs and benefits that cannot be expressed in terms of money, one should also take into consideration the following aspects: the (net) effect on employment, environmental protection, social equality and equal opportunities (EC 2006). When analysing different alternatives, every project is an optimisation problem where the goal is to find the optimum between individual and social utility. The methods proposed for the financial analysis of projects are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Methods for the financial analysis of projects

Cash-flow analysis	Expenditures and cash inflows	Profitability analysis	Cost-benefit analysis
	Cost recovery		Cost-effectiveness analysis
	Financing		Simplified analyses
	Liquidity and sustainability		Socioeconomic cost-benefit analysis

Source: Szegediné 2012

In the case of European Union proposals, sources of funding, policy areas, and responsible individuals have to be identified, and the data that describe sustainability and their time frames also have to be provided.

When drawing up the *operational and sustainability plan*, the expected outcomes of the development intervention and the financial sustainability plan should be presented, and the long-term financial equilibrium should be demonstrated, i.e. (NFÜ 2008b):

- the expected costs of maintenance and operation of the investment/development activity up to the end of the operational period,
 - sources of funding and risks involved,
 - expected income.

Regarding the development activity, the aspect which is primarily assessed is the extent to which the benefits of the programme or project can be continued after the funding has been withdrawn. In addition, the following are examined (OECD 1991): the extent to which the beneficiaries have utilised the realised outputs, and whether this has contributed to any change in practice; in case new institutions had been created as a result of the intervention, whether these continue to function; whether the intervention-related long-term objectives of the donor and beneficiaries can be reconciled; and what were the major factors to influence the achievement or non-achievement of the programmes' sustainability.

Sustainability indicators can be monitored up to five years following the conclusion of the EU-funded projects.

Project maintenance commitment refers to the beneficiary taking on the obligation of maintaining and operating the project's output following project implementation, or else repaying the funds received. This guarantees to finance for the long-term operation of the investment (Magyarország Kormánya 2014). The maintenance period is five years, although in the case of micro enterprises and SMEs it is three years. Maintenance reports and indicator assessments can be requested, and the maintenance of the investment can be inspected on site.

The project's cost-benefit analysis, which takes into account the benefits generated by the project at the level of the society as a whole, is the main source of information for the socio-economic impact assessment. A study evaluated the quality of the cost-benefit analyses in some countries and found that they were of extremely poor quality (PwC 2005). In the case of in-depth evaluations, evaluators compare ex-post information with the ex-ante CBA.

Indicators are widely used in project assessment. They help quantify the extent to which the objectives of the project have been achieved. An indicator is a number, which points to the real nature of a phenomenon, signals changes and their characteristics and extent, but it is not suitable for identifying causes. Indicators do not express everything about a project's performance, but they give an overview of how the implementation was carried out and how the objectives were achieved (EVALSED 2014).

Good indicators meet the so-called SMART criteria; that is, they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based (Fekete 2013). There are several types of indicators, such as: resource, output, result and impact. Sustainability-related indicators belong either to the *result indicators* group, which consists of the immediate and direct effects of the project or to the impact indicators group, which consists of the indirect and longer-term consequences of the project.

In the case of cultural investments, it is more expedient to use the term "sustainability" rather than "returns", as, in the majority of cultural projects, long-term operability is ensured both by the income generated by the project and by some form of community contribution. Investments also produce external economic effects, and the benefits generated by the project should be considered at the level of the society as a whole. The evaluation process of the sustainability of cultural events can be divided into phases – the determination of critical values and factors serving as a basis for safe capacity planning for the venue or event (NFÜ 2007).

The State Audit Office (ÁSZ) periodically checks the monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects. Their findings suggest an evolution in terms of evaluation practices from the mainly natural evaluation principle of development activities financed entirely from domestic sources to the evaluation practices of development activities financed from EU funds.

Nevertheless, it was confirmed that the result-oriented indicator system was not fully suited to the comparison of objectives and results, and with *the focus*

being on fast-tracking payments, often less attention was paid to whether the funds were being efficiently used.

In addition to making sure that no funds are lost, the compliance with regulations is achieved, and the strategic goals are realised, a project's sustainability should be considered equally important. At project level, the maintenance requirement could not be applied. It is often planned that the achieved result will be maintained by using government budget surpluses. The compliance with the maintenance requirement of investment projects is hindered by changes in the economic environment (ÁSZ 2002–2012).

The survey's results show improvements in the application and methodology of evaluation and monitoring. However, it is also obvious that there are still methodological and practical issues in the field of project sustainability evaluation.

Research method

This research was aimed at exploring what was happening during the completion of the projects, what were the main characteristic features of their fulfilment and what was the evaluation basis of the sustainability requirements. After defining the problem, the next step was to decide which respondents were to be surveyed, the way in which they should be approached and the method of data collection.

By primarily evaluating ex-post projects, I intended to have an overview of the extent to which projects had realized their objectives and whether the sustainability of projects had been examined. In the case of projects with cultural aims, according to the preliminary expectations, sustainability was to be evaluated not only in the planning phase, but also after the actual completion of the projects. Based on a few years of operation, it is possible to assess whether a project's effects are sustainable beyond the implementation phase.

By using materials published on the Internet by the beneficiaries of EU funded projects, a database was created containing all those projects with cultural aims. The following sources were used:

- the "Széchenyi 2020" page of the governmental website "MAGYARORSZÁG.HU",
 - the homepages of county seats (capitals),
 - the homepages of the Forster Gyula Centre for the Protection of the
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National Heritage, the Hungarian National Museum, and the Hungarian National Asset Management Inc.,

- Internet search engines.

The information on these homepages varies in terms of quality. In some cases, the entire documentation of the project is virtually available, and in other cases, only its title. The database assembled in 2015 consists of information on 125 projects related to culture, cultural heritage and cultural tourism development.

The projects included in the database have the following characteristics:

- they implemented complex, culture-related development objectives,
- cultural impacts and objectives are indirect and cannot be delineated,
- in 94 cases out of the 125 investigated, the goals are tourism-related to demonstrate the projects' sustainability, positive social, economic and financial impacts,

- with few exceptions, information was available only regarding projects that had just been concluded, were ongoing or still in the planning stage,

- the beneficiary is most often a municipality, a company or an institution established by the municipality to engage in development activities, state-funded institutions responsible for asset management or heritage protection,

- municipal organizations that deal with projects operate in diverse forms. Since they differ in terms of organizational structure and in the way in which they assign responsibilities, it is difficult to identify the competent organizational unit and individual.

In the questionnaire, in addition to the basic project-related information, such as project budget, the amount of funding received and its composition, questions about sustainability, unused real estate, and the project's quantifiable results were also included. The respondents were also asked about the monitoring process following the completion of the projects.

Many among those invited to respond reacted only after several reminders, or not at all.

The project indicators were provided in the surveys by the respondents, whilst the qualitative analysis rests on the indicators included in the projects' funding contracts.

Data and results

Out of the 125 questionnaires sent out, 36 (28.8%) were returned. In the light of low survey response rates in general, this ratio is acceptable, although

the quality of the answers varies. The survey may be considered as a pilot since the number of respondents is low, but it is a cornerstone for a survey covering a later period. Should it be possible to reach a wider circle of the people surveyed, it would be somewhat easier to draw quantitative conclusions from their responses.

Five of the 36 projects were completed by using domestic sources, but with tiny budgets compared to EU-funded projects. The latter, on average, had a budget of close to two billion HUF with, on average, 87% of the funding coming from the EU. In six cases, the project was fully funded by the European Union.

Looking at the actual completion period of the projects, 31 projects were completed in the period 2010–2015, the other five projects having been carried out by using labelled support funds between 2005 and 2008.

Looking at the types of programmes within which the projects have been carried out, 26 out of 36 projects were completed within the framework of the Operative Programmes of the New Hungary Development Plan, and five were financed from different sources (Norwegian Fund, South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme, Hungary-Slovakia Cross-border Cooperation Programme, European Regional Development Fund Central Europe Programme). Four projects were completed by international consortia.

From the perspective of geographical distributions, eleven projects were located in South Transdanubia, five in Central Transdanubia, and the remaining projects were spread all over the country. It should, however, be noted, that, curiously, none of the returned questionnaires were from Budapest.

The project objectives, either directly or indirectly, almost exclusively relate to cultural tourism.

Eight city-centre restoration and tourism development projects form one group. Such investments are difficult to evaluate in terms of sustainability since, as public places and certain monuments have been restored, they are sustainable. An increase in visitor numbers and in spending by individual visitors may generate additional income, just as well as those elements of the projects which gave birth to more services and businesses. Hence there are no direct, measurable benefits, but only the tourist-attraction value of the restored sites and increases in visitor numbers. However, the monitoring of these indirect results is rarely found among the projects' indicators.

Eleven projects planned to increase visitor numbers by simultaneously restoring castles, fortresses, and monuments, by building visitor centres, and developing related services and exhibitions. In these cases, the increasing visitor numbers often appears among the targeted results and so it can be monitored.

Infrastructure development was targeted in five projects.

The intention to create new jobs is also often mentioned, although the total number of jobs created by these projects is not significant.

Consequently, the beneficiaries and those maintaining the results or the output in whatever form have little experience regarding the interval following project implementation, both regarding project sustainability and achieved results as measured by indicators. Apart from the indicators, the projects are not evaluated quantitatively, and so I asked for the opinions of those who had implemented the projects. They were requested to rate a *project's sustainability* and its impact on the *quality of life*, *cultural tourism* and the *number of jobs* on a scale of 1 to 7 (Figure 2). The answers given about *sustainability* can be grouped as follows:

- The majority of respondents gave maximum scores (average: 6.8) meaning that, in their opinion, the project results were sustainable.

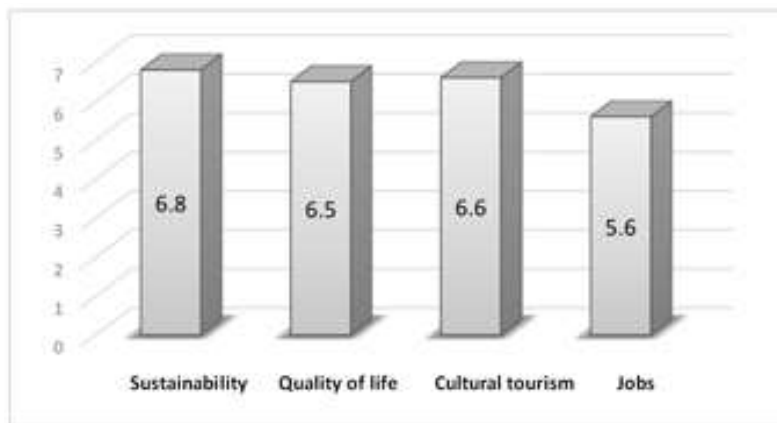
- Only six respondents answered “yes” when asked whether the donor had monitored sustainability. In the other cases, the results had not been monitored, partly because little time had elapsed since the physical closure of development activities.

- Several respondents consider sustainability problematic since the economic and financial environment is subject to unforeseeable changes. Sustainability is, for example, adversely affected by increasing costs.

- The majority of respondents were, however, optimistic about their projects' sustainability. They foresaw increasing incomes and decreasing costs. A larger number of attractions and improved tourism-related services mean more visitors, which in turn means higher incomes to cover their costs.

- Energy-efficient operation, and energy and infrastructure-related investments also decrease maintenance costs.

- The obligation to create and maintain new jobs means additional expenses in wages and salaries and social security contributions, which are difficult to cover. The operation of renovated sites further increases costs but does not generate enough income.



Source: author's own research

Figure 2. Assessment of the analysed projects' sustainability and their impact on the quality of life, cultural tourism and the number of jobs (on a scale of 1 to 7)

One respondent said that the sustainability of the project's results, the achievement of the expected outcomes as measured by indicators was highly questionable, primarily due to an increase in operating costs. Following the granting of funds, there was a significant drop in visitor numbers, primarily due to the economic crisis which began in 2008. This external risk factor was not foreseeable, and the base data pre-date 2008. The project funding agreement was signed in 2010, but, due to delays, the project was closed only in 2014. In the meantime, the sum granted decreased by more than 10%, while the indicators remained the same.

In another case, the respondent said that the reconstruction and content realised as a result of the project were not enough in themselves and that the attraction needed to be continuously renewed for it to draw enough visitors to become profitable.

For the sake of adequate maintenance and continuous renewal, it is also important to choose the right operator. In the case of projects carried out by a consortium, following the closure of the project, it may cause problems if the main beneficiary, who is taking the highest risk, does not have enough information about the other members of the consortium.

In the case of in-depth evaluations, evaluators compare ex-post information with the ex-ante CBA. In the case of the projects that were included in our survey, they did not even attempt to make such analyses.

Regarding *unused properties*, we assumed that, within the framework of these projects, investments are made without any plan concerning the fate of the properties which are abandoned. They are not given new roles, their maintenance costs are not taken into consideration, and they cannot be sold as the income would reduce the amount of the funding received. Concerning the 36 projects, 12 abandoned properties were mentioned, out of which seven were linked to the “European Capital of Culture, Pécs 2010” project. The issue of unused properties has not been addressed to date.

I grouped the *indicators* based on their main characteristics. Next to the name of the group, in brackets, the number of projects is mentioned, where the given indicators were used.

Output indicators:

- Size and capacity of the new building, part of building (8)
- Size of the renovated building (5)
- Size of the area, the number of buildings made accessible to people with disabilities (6)
- Number of cultural heritage buildings, monuments (6)
- Number, size, and capacity of venues created for events, educational and communal purposes (5)
- Number and size of buildings that have been saved (1)
- Size of the area that has been developed (5)
- Virtual information points created (2).

Result indicators:

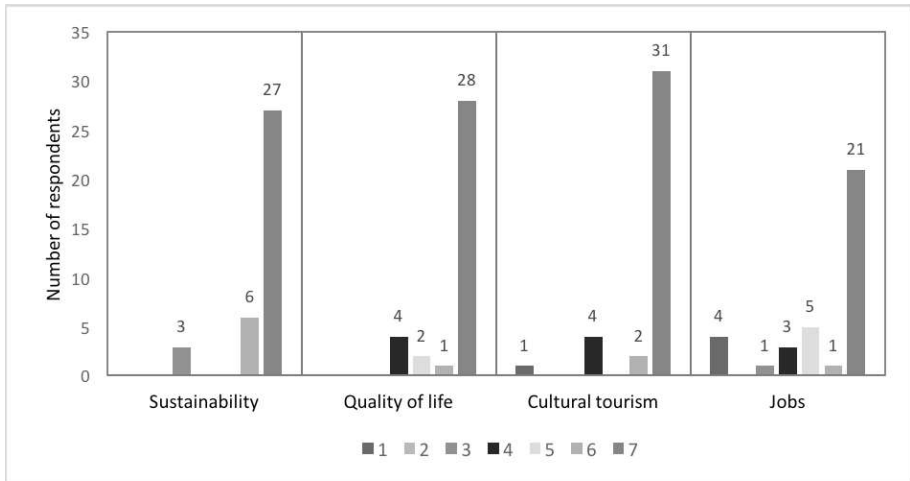
- Increase in income due to funded tourism service (9)
 - Number of jobs kept or created for women or people with disabilities (19)
 - Number of visitors and the increase in visitor numbers at the funded tourist attraction (17)
 - Induced investment – private investments invited, new businesses established as a result of the programme (7)
 - Network developed in collaboration, professional relationship, partnership (2)
 - Number of institutions, municipalities, beneficiaries, residents affected (7)
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- Number of promotional and marketing activities (3)
 - Number of heritage attractions, cultural programmes and paying participants (6)
 - New roles of the city (3)
 - Number of satisfied residents, level of satisfaction with services (5)
 - Nights spent and turnover in tourist accommodation establishments (2)
 - Size and capacity utilization (rate) of commercial units, number of services offered (6)
 - Renewable energy generation, energy saving, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (2).

There were no indicators included in the funding agreements which would have permitted the direct and exact evaluation of sustainability. However, there are a number of result indicators which quantify an instant, direct impact – those factors which have a positive impact on financial sustainability: increases in income, increases in visitor numbers, induced investments, increase in the number of nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments, and the number of paying participants at cultural programmes (6).

A positive impact is only presumed since the costs associated with a given indicator are not known. However, it can be assumed that the increases in visitor numbers and income have a positive impact on financial sustainability. I found no example of a complex sustainability evaluation, where associated costs and funding requirements were taken into consideration. The evaluation is one-sided since an increasing number of paying programme participants is of little avail if the costs of the programme's implementation unfavourably affect financial sustainability. Long-term maintainability is not investigated based on the quantified indicators.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of opinions regarding the project's sustainability, its impact on the quality of life, cultural tourism and the number of jobs on a scale of 1 to 7. In the respondents' opinion, the projects have the most favourable impact on cultural tourism, which is understandable considering that these projects are related to tourism. Three-quarters of respondents did not doubt that the projects were sustainable since they gave a maximum rating (7) to sustainability. The lowest rating given was also relatively high (5). The projects have the least impact on the number of jobs.



Source: author's own research

Figure 3. The distribution of opinions regarding the analysed projects' sustainability and their impact on quality of life, cultural tourism and the number of jobs (on a scale of 1 to 7)

In summary, the cultural impact of development activities cannot be separated from the project's other, primarily tourism-related elements and their impact.

Conclusions

A significant number of my findings, regarding the evaluation and sustainability of projects, have general relevance; they are not solely characteristic of cultural projects. However, in the case of cultural projects, both in the planning and assessment phase, sustainability should be complexly evaluated, taking into consideration both its social and financial aspects.

In the preparation phase, the feasibility study serves as a basis for – and is part of – the proposal; it demonstrates that the given project can create a system, which is operational on the long term and can maintain the targeted effects. The demonstration of quantifiable results related to project sustainability is a key element of project planning. The project cannot receive any funding without meeting the sustainability criteria of a complex interpretation of benefits generated by the project and their presentation at the level of the society as a whole.

However, following the conclusion of the project, funding agencies fail to carry out a complex evaluation of the sustainability principle. The system that has been set up is not comparable – or at most only partially so – to the one described in the feasibility study due to frequent structural changes and frequent changes in funding.

Ex-post information is not compared with the ex-ante CBA. Only those quantitative indicators are monitored which are included in the funding agreement. In addition to this, the collection of data that would facilitate monitoring should be required of beneficiaries. Whether the project can operate without any additional intervention or funding is not monitored either, even though it is a relatively easy-to-check financial sustainability requirement.

Monitoring is carried out by primarily using administrative and not substantive methods. According to respondents, sustainability is not monitored. This is, in fact, not strictly true since those who are responsible for monitoring activities do check whether the project has been realised, whether the result of the investment is tangible, whether what has been realised is continuing and operational and the established institution is operating. However, they do not check whether these are done according to the original plan.

The indicators, which serve as a basis for the project monitoring and evaluation, are agreed upon in the funding contract. Even though the sustainability of cultural projects is considered to be important, these indicators are only very indirectly suitable for the evaluation of project sustainability. On the one hand, they do not tell everything about the project's performance, while, on the other hand, only those indicators are evaluated that are included in the contract and are sometimes not correctly chosen. As a result, following implementation, they cannot monitor whether the project's maintenance is in line with the social and financial sustainability objectives that were laid down in the preparation phase.

According to the respondents, none of projects' indicators measures financial sustainability, and the ones that measure the social aspect do so only indirectly.

The utilization of European Union funds and monitoring their sustainability are problematic in part due to the lack of objectives that can be properly quantified, and hence their realisation is difficult to monitor.

In the case of empty and unused properties, there is a need for change in the European Union practices, according to which when such property is sold the income generated by the sale reduces the number of funds received. Empty

properties mean a type of capital loss for the beneficiaries: properties found at key locations in cities, towns, villages, etc. are deteriorating as they are allowed to stand empty, and without any function, a new role would presumably mean extra costs for the operator.

It is a paradox of project and programme evaluation that we can get the most information from those actors whose objectivity is questionable since beneficiaries and project managers are interested in proving that their projects are successful. A more comprehensive quantitative evaluation than using the above indicators is not possible because of frequent structural changes, frequent changes in financing, and a lack of information gathering that could serve as a basis for the evaluation.

Ultimately, in the case of cultural and cultural-tourism projects, sustainability was not investigated thoroughly enough during the evaluation of project results considering its significance. It did not appear among the quantifiable results and following the projects' implementation. The numerical ex-post evaluation of the sustainability was done only indirectly, and no signs of complex ex-post evaluation could be detected.

Measurable sustainability-related criteria should be included among the indicators and it is also necessary to develop the evaluation methodology. As sustainability, owing to its importance, appears among the numerical indicators not only indirectly, its ex-post evaluation is essential.

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