

Concept for Sustainable Tourism in the Destination of Bratislava

Executive Summary

This concept outlines how Bratislava can achieve long-term sustainability in tourism across all key areas: **economic, environmental, technological, cultural, and social.**

It provides a clear yet effective framework for managing and developing sustainable tourism in Bratislava in the coming years and decades.

Assignment (in brief)

How to guide tourism in Bratislava toward overall sustainability

- basic principles of sustainability
- economic, social, cultural, environmental, and technological sustainability in tourism

The role and responsibilities of Bratislava Tourist Board – fundamental concept for the coming years

- positioning of BTB
- defining the BTB's primary and secondary activities
- proposal for BTB's competency framework

BTB's priorities for the coming Years (budget and communication)

- proposal for the redefinition of the capital city's brand
- proposal for the strategic direction of marketing activities...
- proposal for the scope of marketing activities...

Content of the concept for sustainable tourism in Bratislava

①

What is sustainability in tourism?

Sustainability is the balance between long-term local prosperity and visitor experience.

②

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

The mission of a modern DMO is **destination management**, not just marketing. In recent years, DMOs have been shifting their focus from marketing organisations to management organisations.

③

Visual Summary Goodbye Yesterday, Hello Tomorrow

A visual summary of the key points of the concept, designed for those who do not have time to read the full document or simply want to get acquainted with its main ideas.

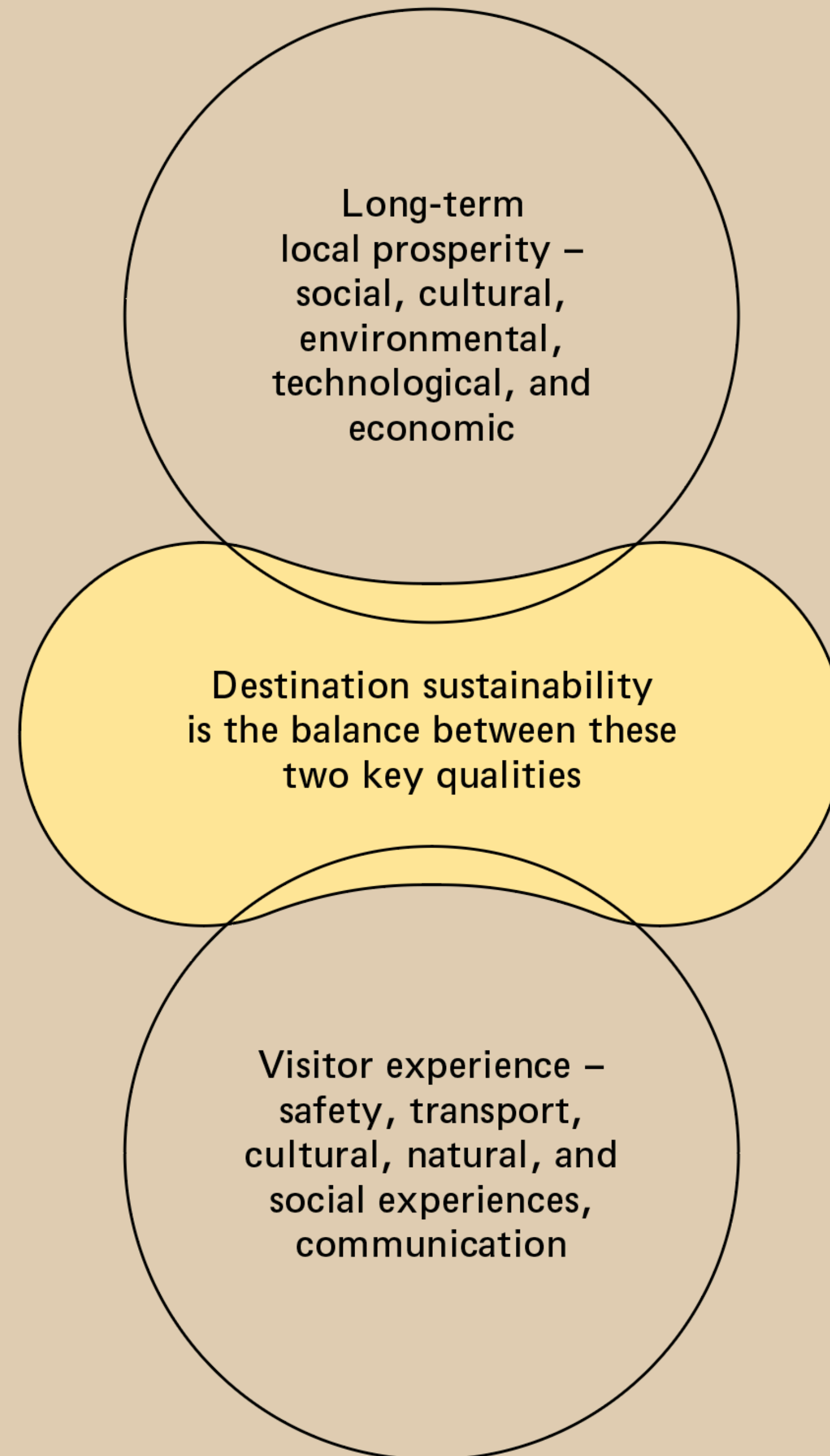
Concept for sustainable tourism
in the destination of Bratislava

Executive summary

What is destination sustainability?

Destination sustainability is the balance between a location's long-term prosperity and the visitor experience.

Definition of sustainability in the context of a destination



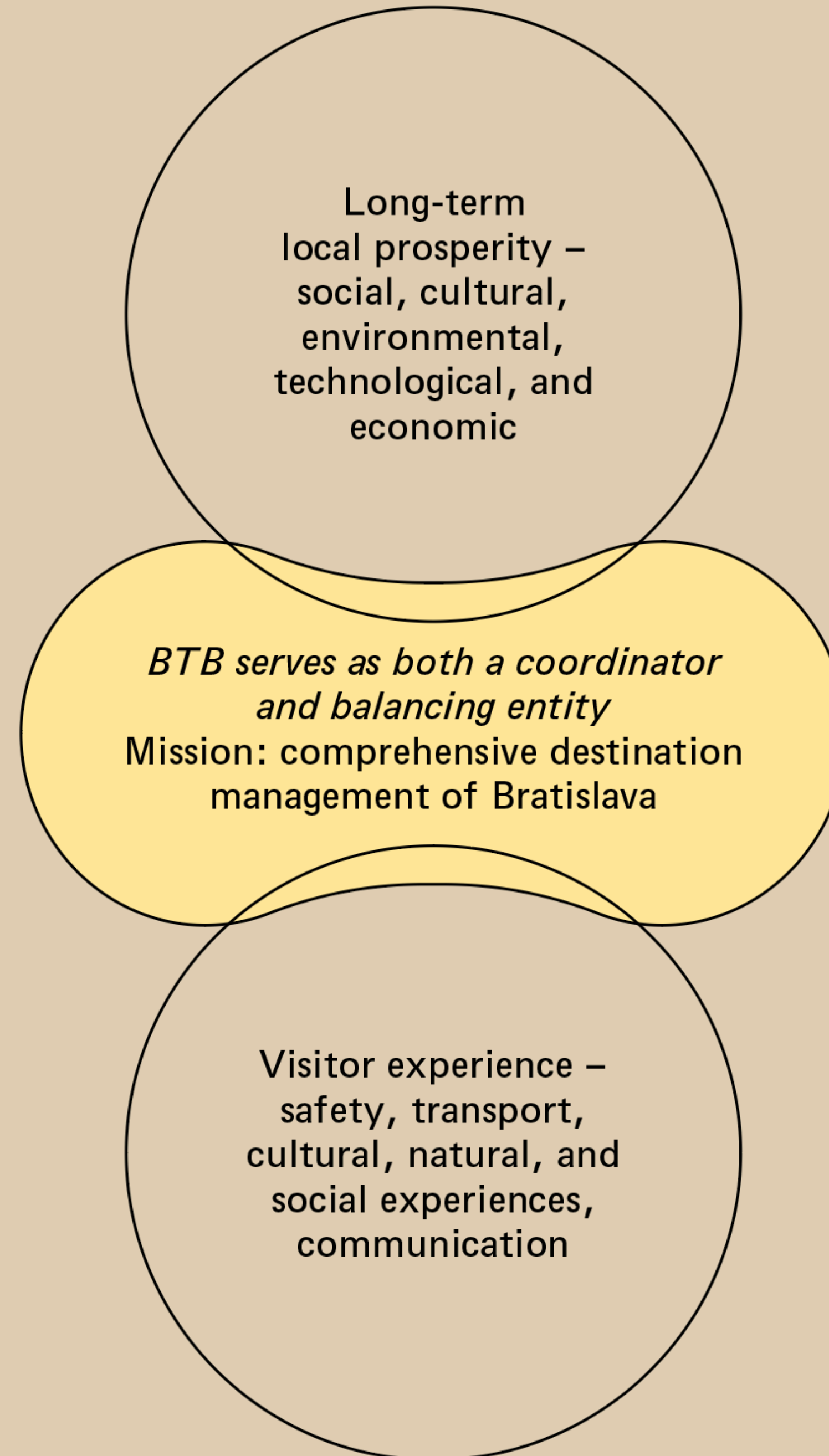
How to achieve sustainable balance in practice?

From Marketing to Destination Management

From marketing to destination management

Shifting from marketing to destination management means a more proactive and strategic role for DMOs (now Destination Management Organisations) in shaping tourism.

**BTB as a coordinator
between the city's
long-term prosperity
and visitor
experience**



What do we actually want to sustain?

In short, we don't just want to maintain the status quo—we aim to **continuously enhance and improve our city through tourism.**

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

The new mission of BTB is comprehensive destination management, not just marketing.

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

The letter "M" in DMO has long stood for marketing. Now, the new "M" signifies a shift towards a more systematic approach—management. This broader role encompasses three key mandates: **development, facilitation, and comprehensive growth.**

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

① Destination management mandate

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

- 1 Destination management mandate**
- 2 Facilitation mandate**

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

- 1 Destination management mandate**
- 2 Facilitation mandate**
- 3 Destination development mandate**

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

Long-term
local prosperity –
social, cultural,
environmental,
technological, and
economic

1 – Destination management mandate
Development and discovery of the Bratislava
destination – its cultural and natural assets,
along with infrastructure building

2 – Facilitation mandate
Connecting and networking tourism,
the city, the state, and its residents

3 – Destination development mandate
Managing marketing to support the
comprehensive growth of the destination

Visitor experience –
safety, transport,
cultural, natural, and
social experiences,
communication

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

Budgeting and mandates go hand in hand
As a destination manager, BTB must have sufficient resources, structured into **three separate multi-source budgets, funded by both public and private sectors.**

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

**Three mandates,
three dedicated
BTB budgets**

Three mandates, three dedicated BTB budgets

1 Destination management mandate

Aims to discover, showcase, and develop the cultural, social, and natural assets of the region.

1 Destination management budget

A budget allocated for investments in infrastructure, cultural and environmental assets of the city, and product development.

2 Facilitation mandate

Focuses on connecting and networking between the city, businesses, communities, and organisations. Supports capacity-building and unifying stakeholders' activities.

2 Facilitation budget

A budget dedicated to building connections between stakeholders, educating both BTB members and non-members, linking communities with tourism, and other facilitation activities.

3 Destination development mandate

Drives sustainable growth through funding innovation, strategic storytelling, and targeted promotion.

3 Destination development budget

This budget consists of four subcategories and focuses on the comprehensive growth of tourism in the city:

- Momentum Budget supports established activities and markets
- MICE budget
- New Markets Budget for exploring new markets for Bratislava
- Visitor Experience Budget enhances visitor engagement and services

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

1 Destination management mandate

1 Destination management mandate

The core mandate of sustainability.
Focuses on **discovering, preserving, showcasing, and developing** Bratislava's cultural, social, and natural beauty in a way that is **responsible and respectful to local life.**

1 Destination management mandate

BTB's responsibilities under this mandate:

- **Deepening the understanding of Bratislava**
- **Co-creating local narratives**
- **Uncovering hidden gems, ensuring their development, protection, and accessibility**
- **Infrastructure development**
- **Cultural and natural asset cultivation,**
including:
 - Cultural programs
 - Social initiatives
 - Environmental oversight

1 Destination management mandate

BTB with an expanded mandate discovers and develops the natural and cultural treasures of Bratislava, and helps build the infrastructure that makes them accessible and feasible.

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

2 Facilitation mandate

② Facilitation mandate

BTB is a facilitator and catalyst for valuable, inspiring collaborations between tourism stakeholders and the city, between businesses and communities, between international partners and Slovakia, and between the state and the city.

2 Facilitation mandate

BTB's responsibilities under this mandate:

- **Bridging missing connections**
- **Creating platforms for dialogue**
- **Coordination and facilitation of information resources about events in the city**
 - Centralized databases, open data initiatives, interactive calendars
- **Education, upskilling and capacity building**
- **Raising sustainability awareness**
 - Skills development
 - Unified branding strategies
- **Developing certification programs and incentives for service quality improvement**

② Facilitation mandate

BTB should act as a facilitator, creating opportunities for collaboration and continuous improvement.

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

③ Destination development mandate

3 Destination development mandate

BTB is responsible not only for marketing Bratislava but also for co-driving the city's overall prosperity—economically, environmentally, culturally, socially, and technologically. Growth strategies must align with these broader responsibilities.

3 Destination development mandate

BTB's responsibilities under this mandate:

- **Prioritising and aligning marketing campaigns**
- **Strategic allocation of resources**
- **Bundling campaigns**
- **Joint marketing initiatives**
- **Thematic experience curation**
- **Research and implementation of financial innovations**
- **Curating visitor experiences and strategic storytelling**
- **Targeted marketing**
- **Digital innovation**
- **Business diplomacy**

③ Destination development mandate

While marketing and promotion are still core responsibilities of the third mandate, **BTB must now also prioritise the city's overall sustainability in these activities.**

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

**Three mandates
as action steps**

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

1 Destination management mandate

1 Destination management mandate

Where to start with the destination management mandate in Bratislava?

1

Establishing a dedicated budget for the development of Bratislava as a destination (2025–2035).

2

Creating or redefining the position of a sustainable tourism advisor for the mayor.

3

Forming a cross-sectoral team to develop a unified narrative of a sustainable city and integrating it into tourism strategies.

1 Destination management mandate

Additional priority needs and ideas from tourism stakeholder discussions:

- Integrating tourism development into urban planning
- Annual planning and budgeting for destination development
- Addressing the lack of qualitative data and KPI
- Implementing a visitor data collection system
- Improving Bratislava's access points
- Updating legislation to reflect sustainability goals and BTB's expanded role
- Creating a database of the city's environmental assets
- Creating a database of the city's cultural assets
- Establishing a long-term project management structure to identify new funding opportunities
- Developing infrastructure for cycling tourism
- Aligning Bratislava's tourism initiatives with broader economic policies and national export activities
- Creating a platform (e.g., a series of workshops with Slovakia Travel) to connect Bratislava's tourism with Slovakia's national brand
- Introducing feasibility study processes and standards
- Better integrating tourism with public transport
- Developing and co-creating flagship events or event series
- Establishing decentralized tourism information points

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

- 1 Destination management mandate**
- 2 Facilitation mandate**

2 Facilitation mandate

Where to start with the facilitation mandate in Bratislava?

1

Redefining BTB membership benefits

Membership benefits and available resources should be redefined with a focus on sustainable tourism development. This should include tiered membership levels or packages tailored to both existing and potential new members.

2

Creating the “Bratislava Essential Pack”

A welcome package for new and existing tourism stakeholders (hotels, travel agencies, etc.), including key city information, major themes, attractions, events, access to an updated image library, a shared calendar, and an information hub.

3

Establishing a tourism coordinator position at city hall

Unlike the mayor’s tourism advisor, who focuses on strategic decisions, the tourism coordinator will handle daily operations, ensuring tourism integration with city processes and initiatives on an ongoing basis.

2 Facilitation mandate

Additional priority needs and ideas from tourism stakeholder discussions:

- Active recruitment of new members and a multi-tier membership model
- Joint planning processes and inter-organizational communication channels
- Collaboration on organizing strategically important events
- Connecting existing cultural and social activities in the city
- Developing a certification program linked to the Bratislava card
- Tourist Satellite Account
- Annual facilitation budget and planning
- Collaboration with city districts as BTB partners
- Designing new tourist routes and optimizing existing ones
- Launching the "Discover Your City" program
- Initiatives for environmental protection
- Setting up a dedicated tourism contact line/email
- Developing educational curricula for BTB members

Three new mandates for Bratislava Tourist Board

- 1 Destination management mandate**
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3 Destination development mandate

Where to allocate marketing expenditures in the coming years?

1

**Primary Priority:
Optimise what already
works (Momentum
budget)**

A key step toward sustainable growth is enhancing existing successful activities. BTB must stabilise its Momentum budget and associated processes to maintain visitor interest, particularly among travellers from German-speaking countries and other markets with strong transport connections (train, car, bus, boat, or plane).

2

**New Markets priority:
Pilot campaigns for new
visitor segments**

Bratislava offers excellent trekking infrastructure and nature easily accessible from the city. We recommend pilot campaigns targeting “Urban Trekking” and “History + Trekking” travellers, as well as cycling tourists in the summer months.

3

**Optimising real-time
visitor marketing
(Visitor Experience
budget)**

Implementing a Zero Moment of Truth marketing approach, emphasising visitor reviews and social media presence to attract similar travellers through shared experiences on platforms like YouTube and search engines.

3 Destination development mandate

How to better structure the budget for sustainability and diversified funding.

1

Momentum budget chapter

Maintaining and strengthening visitor inflows from markets with an established interest in Bratislava.

2

“New Markets Growth“ budget chapter

Expanding interest in Bratislava from well-connected regions with low awareness or targeting niche markets across multiple countries (e.g., history enthusiasts, urban trekkers).

3

MICE Communication budget chapter

Increasing the number of congresses and business visitors.

4

Visitor Experience budget chapter

Continuously improving visitor offerings and experiences, including real-time engagement.

3 Destination development mandate

Additional priority needs and ideas from tourism stakeholder discussions:

- Developing a "Reason to Fly" document
- Annual communication planning across all four marketing budget areas
- Enhancing the Bratislava card strategy
- Establishing a network of sustainability-conscious suppliers
- Securing full funding for BTB from municipal taxes
- Building an international network of tourism ambassadors
- More exploratory tours
- Creating a shared contact database

Summary:

Goodbye Yesterday Hello Tomorrow *(Visual summary)*

Goodbye Yesterday, Hello Tomorrow, (visual summary)

Tourism is about marketing.

Tourism is about sustainable destination management.

Short-term marketing goals.

Thinking in decades (participating in shaping the city's vision and narrative, developing business infrastructure, protecting cultural heritage, etc.).

Visitors, visitors, visitors, visitors!

Long-term prosperity of the place + visitor experience.

Quantity.

Quality of experience.

One-day visits.

The visitor is in Bratislava "with both feet."

**BTB has a single mandate:
To communicate Bratislava.**

BTB has three mandates:
1. Destination development,
2. Facilitation,
3. Sustainable tourism growth.

One (low) budget.

Multi-source financing, three budget chapters for each mandate.

Public-private sector collaboration.

Public-private sector collaboration (remains because it works!).

Summary:

From Marketing to Destination Management

Shifting from marketing to management means taking a more proactive and strategic role in shaping tourism.

BTB's new mission is comprehensive destination management, not just marketing Bratislava. In this concept, BTB should act as a catalyst and developer of the destination, aiming to support and balance Bratislava's long-term prosperity and the visitor experience.

The full version of the sustainable tourism concept for the Bratislava destination will be available [at this link](#).