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Strategic Orientation of Croatian Island Local Governments from the Aspect of Sustainability and Their Practical Application

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Abstract: *Public institutions today, starting from smaller levels up to district and ministry levels, are focused on sustainability based on leadership, considering that sustainability contributes to improving the quality of life, health, and well-being of the community. Nevertheless, this is frequently merely a declarative orientation that is not put into practice. For what reason will we be researching the islands? for many reasons. The islands serve as ideal test sites for sustainability in three ways: first, because of their geographic and economic constraints; second, because biodiversity preservation is imperative; and third, because of the social dimension of sustainability, which is associated with the unique lifestyle of the Adriatic island population. This paper aims to investigate, i.e., compare the number of strategic documents that exist or are in the stage of practical application among local self-governing units on Croatian islands, based on sustainability criteria.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is a global issue that is versatile, segmented, and highly influential on the further development of today's generations as well as the existence of future generations. By adopting and continuously using the concept of sustainability, man influences his destiny and cares about the future of the next generation. Global and local sustainable tourism management is a multifaceted process that involves the cooperation of economic, state, and non-governmental managers and is closely tied to the environment, including today's environmental issues and natural resources. The management of sustainable development requires a different way of thinking, as well as knowledge and experience from various social and natural sciences. Every sector and society must be approached separately and that system balance must be established. The objective is to create a long-term sustainable destination. More and more travelers are choosing smart, sustainable travel destinations, lodgings where ethical, sustainable business practices are practiced, and visible examples of sustainable building techniques. The travel industry is being revolutionized by sustainable tourism. Eco-friendly islands, locally sourced restaurants, eco-friendly bars, and eco-friendly hotels are just a few examples of innovative, knowledgeable, and adaptable sustainable tourist destinations that are emerging. Modern travelers are well-educated, usually go alone or in small groups, and make use of the newest technologies to make visiting destinations that support and practice sustainability easier. To stay competitive, all tourism stakeholders will need to adopt new technologies and apply sustainability goals. Local authorities, on the other hand, will be responsible for building, managing, and maintaining social, economic, and environmental infrastructure; keeping an eye on planning procedures; establishing local environmental protection policies and regulations; and supporting the implementation of national and subnational environmental protection policies. These responsibilities are outlined in Agenda 21. In order to promote sustainable development, local

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governments must educate, mobilize, and respond to the public on this issue because they are the level of government closest to the people. The main objectives of the work are to arrange and make clear the corpus of theoretical scientific knowledge that has been developed and contributed to our comprehension of the challenges associated with creating and advancing sustainable development on the Adriatic islands; furthermore, an empirical study has been carried out to determine the kinds of initiatives that local self-government units have put in place to carry out the sustainability of the island.

2. THE SPECIFICITY OF THE ADRIATIC ISLANDS

A piece of land that is encircled by water, or the sea, on all sides is called an island. When multiple islands are near to one another, they form groups known as islands or archipelagos. These groups can be made up of thousands of islands, like the Philippines, or they can be long, ranging from a few hundred to over a thousand kilometres, and they can also be isolated, like offshore or oceanic islands, located far from the mainland (Armanda & Bačmaga, 2021). As technology advances, satellite imagery continues to reveal new islands. As far as is known to date, if we were to add up all the islands belonging to the countries of the world together with the islands belonging to Antarctica and other territories, there are approximately 670,000 islands in the world (Starc, 2015a).

The Croatian islands include almost all the islands of the eastern coast of the Adriatic and its central part, making it the second largest island in the Mediterranean. "There are 1,246 of them, and they are geographically divided into 79 islands, 525 islets and 642 rocks and reefs. Although they determine the territorial sea, which makes up almost 37 % of the total area of Croatia (without the islands, the territorial sea would be about two-thirds less), the islands occupy only 3,259.57 km2, i.e. 5.75 % of the surface of the Croatian mainland. The largest is called Cres (405.70 km2), and the slightly smaller one is called Krk (405.22 km2). Smokvica Vela (1.04 km2) is the smallest island in the Kornati group. Galicija (0.01 km2) is the smallest islet, and Badija (0.97 km2) is the largest. There are just 77 islands bigger than 1 km2 and 20 larger than 20 km2. They have more coast than land because of the noticeable indentation (Pag is the most indented, and Hvar is the longest). Of Croatia's 6,278 km of sea coast, 4,398 km (69.5%) are on the island (Starc, 2015a).

Spatially, the Croatian islands are divided into seven regional self-government units (Istria, Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Lika-Senj, Zadar, Šibenik-Knin, Split-Dalmatia, and Dubrovnik-Neretva counties). There are about fifty islands in the permanently inhabited areas, and in the summer months, that number is double. The state invests an average of more than HRK 1.6 billion annually (period from 2006 to 2017) in the construction of the necessary basic infrastructure, subsidies, and support in the Croatian Islands. Implementation of the "Croatian Island Product" Project, support for the implementation of island association projects with funds from the Ministry of Regional Development and the European Union (2017), free public road transportation on the islands for specific passenger categories, infrastructure projects, water subsidies (prices) for islanders who are not connected to the water supply system, and assistance for island employers to maintain jobs (Starc, 2015a).

In addition to being a natural phenomenon, the sea also has immeasurable significance as a factor in the overall development of the country. The Adriatic belongs to the seas and is the deepest indented gulf of the Mediterranean Sea on the European mainland. The whole of the islands is the most valuable spatial reserve for the development of the best forms of tourism, and as the island's tourism industry and other economic sectors grow, the overall and active population must

grow proportionately as well. Modernizing the current infrastructure and establishing more efficient sea transportation links with the mainland and other islands are necessary to improve the quality of the visitor experience.

"The fundamental modern anthropogeographic features of small (but also large, note) Croatian islands are fast population decline, abandonment of traditional economic pursuits, the advanced age of the surviving population, lack of creativity, restoration of phytogeographical (reforestation with marquis and dense low forests) and ZOO geographical basis, degradation of built infrastructure, historical and cultural heritage, and old, ambient architecture," the conclusion reads (Magaš, 2008).

Insisting that the growth of tourism and the rest of the island's economy be accompanied by an appropriate increase in the active and total population is necessary because the islands as a whole are the most valuable spatial reserve for the development of the best forms of tourism. To enhance the quality of the visitor experience, it is essential to upgrade the current infrastructure and create better sea transportation connections with the mainland and other islands. The preservation of the previously protected area, the establishment of the region's development potential, and the thorough integration of local self-government and government institutions' activities into the system enable the aforementioned. The primary characteristic of the Adriatic islands is their small size, as indicated by their names. The organization and upkeep of life on the Adriatic islands is severely hampered by this particular fragmentation of the Croatian islands. All functions, when placed in their proper spatial context, are based on the concepts of optimality and reason. Nevertheless, it is not feasible to apply these universal norms and principles when it comes to islands that differ in size, structure, location, historical legacy, and biodiversity. According to the system approach method, the island is first viewed as a system, and then it is positioned within its larger environment until its uniqueness is integrated into the entirety of the larger system that governs its operations. This means that the processing of the island is ongoing. The only way to systematically cultivate the islands without undermining the appeal of residing on that remote portion of the mainland is in this manner.

3. SUSTAINABILITY AS A STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADRIATIC ISLANDS

Today, all modern economic and social trends find their starting point in the concept of sustainable development, because damage to the environment and space is damage to society as a whole. Planning, preserving and carefully exploiting your resources is the key to quality and long-term economic growth. In the current civilizational environment, this means that it is necessary to find a common (overlapping) interest of the economy and the local community with the care and correct use of heritage. Sustainable development, as a complex concept, integrates three dimensions: ecological sustainability, economic efficiency and social responsibility. This concept of the mentioned term is known as the "three pillars model" (Giddings et al., 2002).

The ecological dimension primarily concerns the preservation of biodiversity, the preservation and rational use of natural resources, the reduction of environmental pollution, and concern for endangered species, their habitats, ecosystems, and the like. There are five areas based on which the ecological dimension of sustainable development is monitored in the case of the Adriatic islands: atmosphere, land, seas, waters and biodiversity. From a sustainability perspective, protected areas have several objectives, such as biodiversity conservation, development of

a sustainable local economy, and conservation benefit sharing, according to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2008). Protected areas can certainly contribute to the concept of sustainable development from different perspectives (Getzner & Jungmeier, 2012).

The social dimension refers to social relations, respect for human rights, achievement of social well-being, transparency of social activities, and involvement of people in decision-making. The social dimension can be traced through five areas: health, social justice, education, population, security and housing. The economic dimension of sustainable development is based on the principles of matching economic development with resources and production capacities, and the economic dimension is observed through two areas, namely: production and economic structure and consumption (Kletzan et al., 2006). All three dimensions of sustainable development are impossible without the existence of an adequate institutional framework, which is a necessary prerequisite for implementing regional development goals, measures and policies. This is precisely why, in recent scientific analyses and conclusions, the institutional framework has been highlighted as the fourth dimension of sustainable development. Also, considering the specificity of the development of the Adriatic islands, the authors of the paper believe that culture is also a special dimension of sustainable development. The concept of sustainability is perceived as striving for harmony or balance between economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability.

4. THE ROLE OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (abbreviated name of the institute, IISD) defines sustainability, focusing more on the sustainable management of organizations: "adopting business strategies and activities that would meet the needs of the company and its stakeholders in the present for the protection, preservation, and strengthening of human and natural resources, which are considered to be needed in the future.". It is important in this definition to state the 'needs of companies and their stakeholders today'.

Most of the research on the role of local self-government in planning and promoting sustainable development was done in America and Australia, mainly case studies on examples of positive practice in cities that have proven to be very active in the implementation of various measures and projects within the framework of promoting development based on the principles of sustainability (Saha & Paterson, 2008). Case studies describe concrete activities that have been undertaken, problems that have arisen during implementation, ways in which problems have been solved, and which can serve as lessons for future similar activities in cities around the world (Portney, 2001). More recent research has gone a step beyond case studies and provided a comprehensive overview and analysis of sustainability programs and policies in the observed American cities. It examined local aspects of sustainability by considering sustainability measurement and offering a single index of "serious" sustainability for the largest US cities. It also examined the relationship between sustainability and economic growth and discussed issues of governance, equity and implementation. In addition, he presented extensive case studies and empirically based analysis of why some major cities are more ambitious than others in their sustainability efforts. In his further works, Portney goes deeper and deeper into the issue of promoting sustainable development at the local level, primarily observing the role of local self-government, but also non-profit organizations, the local community, the entrepreneurial sector, etc. In his works, he focuses on two components of sustainable development, ecological

and economic. Apart from him, research on the concept of sustainable development in the activities of local self-governments was done by Conroy (2006) and Jepson (2004) in Saha and Paterson (2008), but with an emphasis on environmental protection.

Conroy (2006), in Saha and Paterson (2008), went deeper into the organizational component of local self-government units and investigated the lack at the organizational level; that is, he investigated officials in local self-government units and sustainable development, their perception of the importance of the concept of sustainable development for planning emphasis on environmental protection was also present in research. Žuvela (1996) on the example of local governments in England and Wales, where the potential role that local governments can play in the integration of economic development and the environment was investigated. Campbell (1996), in Saha and Paterson (2008), spoke about the relationship between planning and sustainable development; he focused on planners, who are the main actors in mediating conflicts between the economy, the environment and social justice. He emphasized all three components, that is, the social component, which is often forgotten, and which is an integral part of the "planning triangle", where sustainable development is in the middle of these three components.

This aspect indicates the awareness that, without profitability today, care for the environment and humanity cannot exist. Sustainable management elevates the context of sustainability and synthesizes it with the concept of management. Sustainable management is necessary as part of human ability to successfully maintain the quality of life on the islands, which is due to increasing depopulation, and which, due to the accelerated development of tourism, raises the question of "taking responsibility" by its very concept. According to what has been stated, the central issue of this work is the assumption of responsibility and, consequently, the assumption of consequences. Governance itself, as a term, can be defined as "the participation of a wide range of institutions and actors in the production of policy outcomes including coordination through the application of networks and partnerships" (Johnston et al., 2000). Sustainable management has transformed into strategic management, where the financial benefit is reflected in a certain decision, and has its own economic, ecological and social dimensions. In this way, sustainable management directs business and public policies towards a fairer, more successful and sustainable world with the cooperation of all stakeholders of the local community, i.e. a sustainable tourist destination. It is impossible to separate the concept of management from social and political processes. Knowing the answers to the following queries is essential to comprehend the political and social dynamics involved in governance: Who makes the decision? What are the fundamental guidelines for decision-making? How will those in charge be held responsible? How will choices be carried out? Furthermore, a social and political process can be understood as the foundation of a comprehensive view of biodiversity conservation. In particular, sociologists' understanding of protection and conservation as a "social and political process" focuses on how they can take a more active role in conservation within political frameworks, representing six essential components of the social and political process: human dignity, legitimacy, governance, accountability, flexibility and learning, and reduction of local power (Johnston et al., 2000).

4.1. Local Self-Government as the Bearer of Island Development

Family farms and crafts and their products can be the backbone of the development of the island, that is, the municipality, from organically grown food to still present and recognized products on the market (e.g., Plavac mali, honey, lavender, peppers, and other sweets, etc.). Organized placement of these products can contribute to local development, but there is certainly a lot

of space for new, original island souvenirs that are in demand on the tourist market, where existing, cheaper, imported products do not represent competition. Natural specificities (as well as cultural and historical values) are used only at the primary level of tourist exploitation, which threatens to endanger them. One of the most used resources are localities for bathing (beaches and coves), which in some cases are already quite endangered by uncontrolled construction or inconsistent "urbanization" and are losing their primary quality (cleanliness of the sea, number of beds in relation to the area of available beaches). On the other hand, the hinterland, hills, and fields are very little used for tourism (cycling, walkways, etc.) and represent the potential for the development of tourism outside the summer season. Cultural-historical, traditional, architectural, and other values represent great tourist potential, but unfortunately only in the form of poorly maintained objects of admiration for curious and casual passers-by. The possibilities of generating additional content are numerous, as are the possibilities of additional income.

To determine the direction of development, it is necessary to have a vision, preferably defined through the dialogue of all sectors in the community (public, business, and civil). The word "vision" is often pronounced as if it is generally known and acceptable to everyone, where it is necessary to start with the "carrying capacity of the island.". High-quality functioning of local self-government, especially in the area of planning and spatial management, and the unification of island development factors at different levels are the keys to progress. If a system is established that is immune to incoherent, selfish lobbying, it will achieve long-term and general benefits. As already stated, the construction of tourism facilities must be significantly limited and put into the function of real employment or self-employment, and into the function of "carrying island capacities.". Tourism, agriculture, and fishing must be developed within the scope of the profession and carrying capacity of the island and must complement each other. Since tourism is the leading economic branch, it bears the greatest responsibility for helping the development of other branches (agriculture and fishing) as well as the holders of these branches—family farms and crafts. Agriculture, fishing, and heritage are currently not in synergy with tourism, but their placement in the tourism sector is very small, and they are suppressed by "imported" services and products. Fishing is a branch that suffers from the unresolved situation of sea management, so individual interests threaten and reduce the diversity of fish, which is the situation on all Croatian islands.

5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The goal of the research is to address the problem of the sustainability of existing models of tourism management, especially tourism on the Adriatic islands, which are of special interest to the Republic of Croatia. Therefore, the need for the construction of new models and measures of the management context is emphasized, as is possibly also the search for an improved concept of more effective management of island development and tourism on the islands. The research aims to study and investigate the current state of island management, its future development, and sustainable tourism, based on the available scientific literature and other sources; on the platform of a wider context, clearly see the problem and investigate to what extent there is a management problem; what is the role and significance of local self-government in the management context of development; and how it is possible to reach its solution. The state and perspectives of Croatia's sustainable development policy towards the islands will be explored, the necessary contemporary trends of sustainable integral management will be presented, and perspectives on the development of sustainable models for the development of the Adriatic islands will be reviewed. The goal is to investigate the prerequisites for the sustainable use of the island's

resources, with a preference for researching the prerequisites for the sustainable use of the island for tourist activities and those industrial branches that are necessary and specific for the island's development. The possibilities of applying the principles of sustainable development on the islands will be explored, and two hypotheses about local self-government, without whose involvement there is no sustainable development on the islands, will be put forward:

Hypotheses H1: Local self-government units of the Adriatic islands base their vision, mission, and strategic documents on sustainability.

Hypotheses H2: The feasibility of the sustainability of the unit of local self-governments of the Adriatic islands is only declarative and is not implemented in practice.

6. METHODOLOGY

The sample included 35 units of local self-government, which are exclusively located on the islands of the Adriatic, and out of the total number of 59 units of local self-government, there are 18 cities and 41 municipalities, of which 51 have their headquarters on the island, while 8 of them have their headquarters on the mainland (Zadar, Sveti Filip i Jakov, Pakoštane, Šibenik, Vodice, Trogir, Split, and Dubrovnik). The surveyed local governments that have their headquarters on the islands answered which initiatives or activities they implement and what level they assign to each activity or initiative, giving the lowest possible rating, rating 1 as the lowest priority rating, and rating 5, i.e. the rating of a high level of priority. However, to prove the set hypotheses and achieve the set goals, it was necessary to analyze the content of the strategic documents of 5 randomly selected units of the island's local self-government. The questionnaire was created to determine the application of sustainable development on the Croatian islands and is divided into two parts. The first part contained questions about the role of the local self-government unit in planning and promoting sustainable development, in terms of determining the existence and content of formal development strategies, strategic and action plans that contain sustainability goals, then the existence and application of indicators for measuring progress towards sustainability, achieving internal organizational adaptations to promote sustainable development and others. The second part of the research contained previously determined initiatives to promote sustainable development, and the islands were asked to answer whether they had undertaken any of the above-mentioned initiatives and to highlight the main obstacles/problems they face, etc.

The second method, content analysis, was selected with the goal of objectively and methodically identifying the characteristics of the application of sustainable development concerning the strategic documents and the actual application of specific sustainability elements. The objective of the study is to draw an objective conclusion from the strategic documents of sustainable development on the Croatian islands. An analysis of the contents of five randomly selected plans in the observed islands (one for each county) found that the development documents mostly contain sustainable development goals, that is, sustainable development as a concept appears in the definition of visions, strategic goals, and priority measures. This is logical to expect considering that development strategies at local levels must be aligned with strategies at higher levels (county, state), and all of them contain sustainable development goals. In fact, we are talking about European priorities that should be respected when applying for projects with EU funds. Thus, the strategies mostly had to meet European criteria (e.g., sustainable development, employment, energy efficiency, and others). Furthermore, it can be noted that in the planning documents, the

main goals and projects go in the direction of economic growth, reducing unemployment, and raising the standard of living of the local population living on the islands. The reason for this is the multi-year economic crisis in the Republic of Croatia, which also affects the islands in all countries, regardless of the advantages they achieve due to tourism compared to other cities in other countries. Also, it can be noted that rarely does any strategy for the sustainable development of the island have defined indicators that will be used to measure progress towards the achievement of the set goals, including goals in the field of sustainable development. This is a negative characteristic and indicates an existing problem in the island's local governments, which should have defined indicators and regularly use them to monitor the achievement of results. Elements of sustainable development are recognized by local government leaders. Table 1 shows that the most common answers are precisely those related to ecological sustainability.

Table 1. Elements of sustainable tourism development of the island, descriptive statistics (N=35)

Code	Claims - an element of the island's sustainable tourist development	N	Min.	Max.	Arith. middle	Stand. deviation
PR_O1	Preservation of the island's natural environment	35	1	5	3.8	1.12
PR_O2	Preservation, planning and management of the island's space is one of the priority plans	35	1	5	3.7	0.90
PR_O3	Preservation of the island's natural resources	35	2	5	4.1	0.95
K_O1	Preservation of the island's cultural attractiveness	35	2	5	4,1	0.86
KAP_S1	Planning to increase the number of accommodation capacities on the island	35	1	5	3.6	1.35
Q_S1	Planning and implementation of improving the quality of existing accommodation facilities on the island	35	1	5	3.8	0.65
B_O2	Number of organized beaches	35	1	5	4.0	0.89
PR_3	Number of arranged parking lots	35	1	5	3.2	1.15
PI_R1	Development of improvement of transport infrastructure	35	1	5	2.9	1.35
KI_R1	Development and improvement of communal infrastructure	35	1	5	3.1	1.18
W_S2	Selective water collection	35	1	5	3.3	1.22
R_S3	Recycling	35	1	5	3.5	1.08
W_T2	Waste water treatment	35	1	5	3.1	1.19
H_V1	Valorization of the hinterland of the destination for tourism purposes	35	1	5	3.9	0.92

Source: Own research

As the most important element of sustainable development, the particle "Conservation of natural resources of the island" was recognized, which was rated with an average rating of 4.1, where the standard deviation or σ=0.95. Tourist attractions are already valued tourist resources that have particularly attractive, unique features, and with their existence, they influence or increase the overall appeal and attractiveness. The preservation of the island's cultural attractiveness was rated with an average rating of 4.1 and a standard deviation of σ=0.86. High-quality and key valorization of tourist attractions implies their transformation into a tourist product that forms the offer of a certain area, and its attendance depends on the interpretation that captures the attention of tourists and provides them with new knowledge in a modern way that implies different engagements. The attractiveness of the island is extremely important to achieve, given that it reduces seasonality, which means connecting the primary destination (the coast of the island) and the secondary destination (the hinterland of the island) into an integrated tourist product. The importance of the valorization of the hinterland of the destination and its implementation for tourist purposes was rated with an average rating of 3.9 and SD=0.92. The particles received the lowest rating: Development and improvement of transport infrastructure with an

average rating of 2.9 and a standard deviation of 1.35; Development and improvement of communal infrastructure average score of 3.1 and standard deviation of 1.18; Wastewater treatment with an average rating of 3.1 and SD=1.19. The importance of the role and importance of the elements of sustainable development and its application on the island was tested with the ANOVA test, which indicates the importance of the application of sustainability.

Table 2. ANOVA tests elements of sustainable development on the island

Model Summary[0]									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0,620[a]	0,397	0,342	0,59518	0,397	7,234	24	264	0,000
2	0,646[b]	0,444	0,374	0,58045	0,047	2,696	8	256	0,003
a. Predictors: (Constant), PRESERVATION OF THE ISLAND'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT_4 PRESERVATION, PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF ISLAND SPACE IS ONE OF THE PRIORITY PLANS_2 PRESERVATION OF THE ISLAND'S NATURAL RESOURCES_2 PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS OF THE ISLAND_1 PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGHTS_3 PLANNING THE NUMBER OF ACCOMMODATION CAPACITIES ON THE ISLAND _4 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY REGULATION OF EXISTING ACCOMMODATION CAPACITIES_2 ABILITY TO ADVOCATE RIGHTS, ARRANGEMENT OF ISLAND SPACES_3									
b. Predictors: (Constant), DEVELOPMENT OF TRAFFIC INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT_4 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNAL INFRASTRUCTURE_2 SELECTIVE WATER COLLECTION_2 NUMBER OF PLACED PARKING SPOTS_1 RECYCLING_3 SELECTIVE WATER COLLECTION_4 WASTEWATER TREATMENT_2 VALORIZATION OF THE HINLAND OF THE ISLAND FOR TOURIST PURPOSES_3									
c. Dependent Variable: ELEMENTS OF SUSTAINABLE ISLAND DEVELOPMENT									

Source: Own research

In his work, he presents research into the practice of planning local tourist destinations. Plans from the field of tourism in 30 local tourist destinations in Queensland (Australia) were analyzed in order to determine the extent to which sustainability principles, ie strategic planning and stakeholder participation, were integrated into the planning process. It was found that local tourist destinations did not integrate the principles of sustainability into their planning processes. Furthermore, in their works, they analyzed the role of local self-government in promoting the sustainable development of tourism. They concluded that local government can be directly and indirectly involved in sustainable tourism:

- direct involvement: various decisions, regulations, provision of infrastructure, security - safe environment (tourists and local population), crime prevention, anti-terrorism, stability, transport, regulations on the use and restoration of cultural heritage and buildings, etc.
- indirect involvement: providing support to the private sector (eg hotels), providing incentives to the private sector for development (tax and other incentives), encouraging and supporting the proper use and increasing the value of cultural heritage and culture.

The results of the conducted research were further aimed at identifying the main problems, i.e. the main obstacles to the implementation of the sustainability program on the island, and an open-ended question, the respondents answered that the lack of financial resources was the reason for poor implementation, the frequent changes in legal regulations, and the inadequate cooperation of the main stakeholders in the management of the island. Table 3 and Table 4 show the results of descriptive statistics and the Kolmogorov - Smirnov test on the role and significance of strategic documents, as well as missions and visions in the management of stakeholders

for sustainable development on the island and the acceptance of hypothesis H1, and on the feasibility of the sustainability program of local self-government units in practice and on the partial acceptance of hypothesis H2.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test on the role and significance of strategic documents, mission and vision in stakeholder management of sustainable development on the island

Descriptive Statistics							**The -Smirnov „normality“**	**Kolmogorov test for**
Results	**N**	**Min.**	**Max**	**Average**	**Standard deviation**	**Coefficient of variation**	**Statistics**	**P value**
The local self-government of the Adriatic islands bases its mission and vision on the principles of sustainability	35	1	5	4.345	0.938	25.536	0.281	0.000
Most strategic development documents refer to sustainability	35	1	5	3.793	0.957	25.644	0.299	0.000
Local self-government bases its sustainability on strategic sustainability documents adopted at the county level	35	2	5	4.175	0.976	25.721	0.385	0.000
The local self-government in its strategic development documents contains a section related to sustainability	35	1	5	3.754	0.961	25.823	0.352	0.000
Sustainability is a long-term process and it is necessary to set realistic goals for island sustainability for certain periods	35	2	5	4.502	0.963	25.429	0.311	0.000
The implementation of sustainability is a prerequisite for the creation of an island-sustainable tourist destination on three levels: ecological, economic and social	35	1	5	3.903	0.762	25.826	0.321	0.000

Source: Own research

When asked whether cities have formal strategies and action plans that contain sustainability goals, as many as 32 local self-government units or 91.43% answered in the affirmative. Most of them are development strategies, economic development strategies, overall development programs, tourism development strategies and energy sustainable development plans. All these documents to a greater or lesser extent contain sustainability goals and are part of transparent reporting according to the principles of sustainability expected from the Republic of Croatia by the European Union. Development documents mostly contain sustainable development goals, that is, sustainable development as a concept appears in the definition of visions, strategic goals and priority measures. This is logical to expect considering that development strategies at local levels must be aligned with strategies at higher levels (county, state), and all of them contain sustainable development goals. Leaders of local self-government units evaluated the particles as follows: "*Sustainability is a long-term process and it is necessary to set realistic goals of island sustainability for certain periods of time*" average rating 4.5 and SD=0.963; "*The local self-government of the Adriatic islands bases its own mission and vision on the principles of sustainability*" average rating 4.3 I SD=0.928; "Local self-government bases sustainability on strategic

sustainability documents adopted at the county level" average rating 4.1 and SD=0.976; "*Implementation of sustainability is a prerequisite for the creation of an island sustainable tourist destination on three levels*: ecological, economic and social" with an average rating of 3.9 and SD=0.762; "*Most strategic development documents refer to sustainability*" average rating 3.7 I SD=0.957 I "I "Local self-government in the composition of its own strategic development documents contains a part related to sustainability" average rating 3.7 I SD=0.961.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test on the feasibility of sustainability of local self-government units in practice

Descriptive Statistics							**The -Smirnov „normality"**	**Kolmogorov test for**
Results	**N**	**Min.**	**Max**	**Average**	**Standard deviation**	**Coefficient of variation**	**Statistics**	**P value**
Sustainability strategic documents are just a "dead letter on paper."	35	1	5	3.113	1.138	45.536	0.237	0.009
All stakeholders on the island (tourist agencies, tourist houses, OPGs, tourist board, NGO organizations, residents and tourists) must be aware of the need for sustainability and participation in achieving the island's sustainability	35	1	5	3,842	0.964	25.734	0.389	0.000
Quality communication among all stakeholders is good for achieving island sustainability	35	1	5	2.273	0.774	25.425	0.316	0.019
Sustainability is the basis for obtaining funds from EU funds	35	1	5	3.155	0.922	25.817	0.348	0.000
Sustainability based on strategic documents is implemented on the island	35	1	5	3.724	0.862	25.518	0.328	0.000
There is a lack of specific knowledge about the sustainability of the island, for example, nisology	35	1	5	4.222	0.772	25.574	0.319	0.000

Source: Own research

By analyzing the strategic documents of the selected departments, it can be noticed that rarely any strategy has defined indicators that will be used to measure progress toward the achievement of the set goals, including goals in the field of sustainable development. This is a negative characteristic and points to an existing problem in Croatian local governments, which should have defined indicators and regularly use them to monitor the achievement of results, which is supported by the results of the research: "*Sustainability strategic documents are just a "dead letter on paper*" of average grades 3.1 and SD=1.138, "*Quality communication of all stakeholders is good in achieving island sustainability*" average rating 2.2 and SD=0.774; while the particle "All stakeholders on the island (tourist agencies, tourist houses, OPGs, tourist board, NGO organizations, residents and tourists) must be aware of the need for sustainability and participation in achieving the sustainability of the island" has an average of 3.8 and SD =0.964; "*Sustainability based on strategic documents is implemented on the island*" with an average value of 3.7 and SD=0.862.

When using the results of the conducted research, it is necessary to take into account its limitations. It is primarily about the impossibility of obtaining adequate statistical indicators on the sustainability of tourism development in Croatia, so the data available on the Internet were

used. A possible limitation of the research is that the questionnaire was filled out by one person in the local self-government unit on the island and gave his opinion on behalf of the entire city administration. One of the limitations of the research is its implementation of the analysis of strategic documents on a sample of five island local government units.

7. CONCLUSION

The realization that economic development is at the same time a threat to sustainability and the most important weapon in the fight against unsustainability places development at the very top of the list of priority strategies in this contemporary worldview. Between idyll and reality, there is always a lurking fear that the island's natural balance will not be disturbed by something between ecology - population, population - economy and economy - nature. In thinking about and implementing sustainable development, the Croatian, island, and local self-governments face numerous challenges, which can be reduced to three categories: the increase in the importance of local government, ecological multiple compatibility in financing, and the depoliticization of sustainable development. In contrast to economically developed countries, in Croatia, in many tourist, island destinations, there is a lack of strategic thinking, decisions are made without adequate prior analysis and in a way that favors certain interest groups. As a result, excessive and "wild" construction of buildings, "concreting" of the coast, short duration of the tourist season, insufficiently good business results of the entrepreneurial sector, but also constant tensions between the three key groups of destination development stakeholders - private entrepreneurs, public authorities and local population.

Local governments on Croatian islands mostly have adopted strategic planning documents that contain goals and measures to promote sustainable development. However, the actual development of awareness about the meaning of this term and the challenge it carries is questionable. Namely, the concept of sustainable development has become a popular rhetoric of politicians around the world, with simultaneous misunderstanding and failure to translate the concept into concrete action. It is not uncommon for strategic plans to be drawn up and adopted inappropriately, they are of questionable quality and do not allow monitoring of the achieved progress. Planning at the local level is characterized by the conflict of interests of the most important interest groups and the main stakeholders in the planning and promotion of the sustainable development of the tourist island destination. The most common conflicts are local self-government with polluters and various businesses and other entities that aim to generate profits in the short term.

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