

3. FROM REGION BANSKÁ ŠTIAVNICA TO SUPERVOLCANO. DESTINATION TIRED OF BEING SOLELY UNESCO SITE

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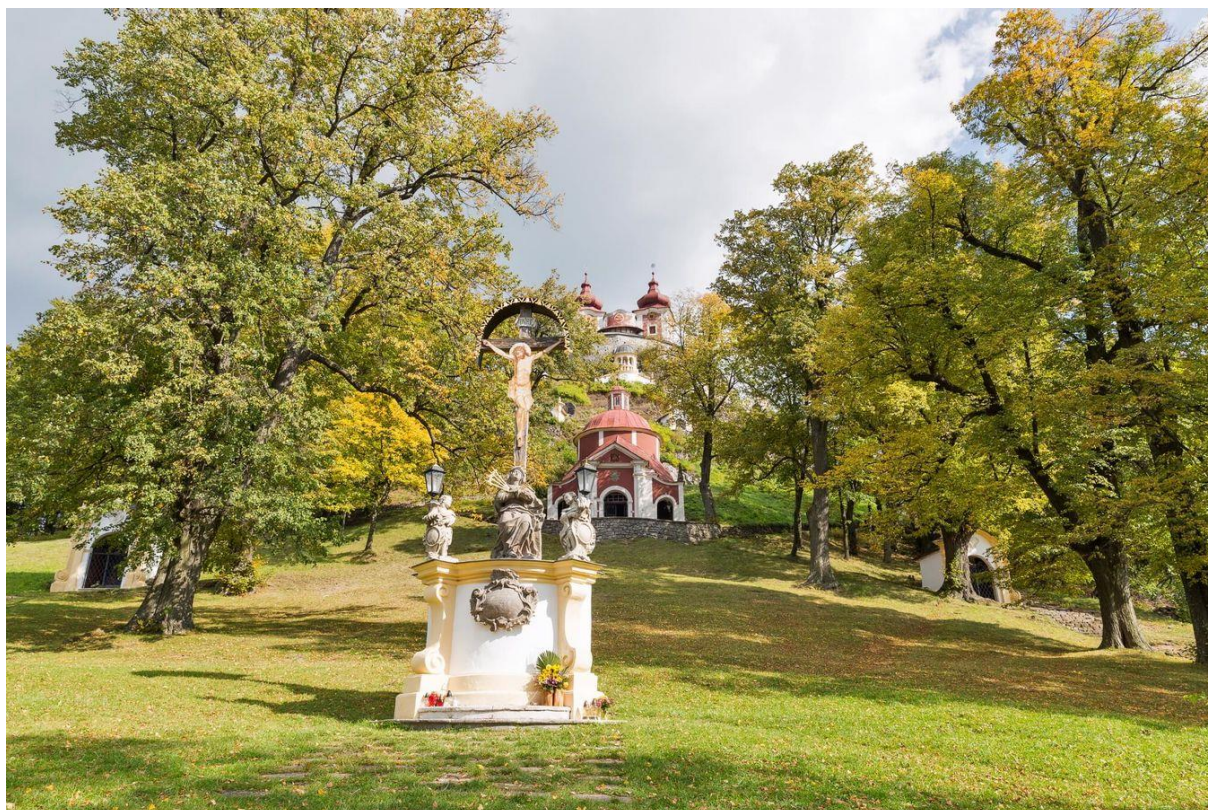
INTRODUCTION

December 1993, Banská Štiavnica, the city, together with the technical monuments in the vicinity, was entered into the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List based on two criteria:

criterion (iv): The urban and industrial complex of Banská Štiavnica and the Technical Monuments in its Vicinity is an outstanding example of a medieval mining centre of great economic importance that continued into the modern period and assumed a characteristic and distinctive form.

criterion (v): Banská Štiavnica and its surrounding area are an outstanding example of mining area which has become vulnerable to the potential erosion of its character and urban fabric, following the cessation of mining activities as well as the removal of the Mining Academy (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/618/> , 2022).

Picture 5: Banska Štiavnica



Source: <https://slovakia.travel/en/banska-stiavnica-town-monument-reserve>

Banská Štiavnica, the oldest mining town in Slovakia, was founded in the 13th century, although evidence of mining dates back to the late Bronze Age. The current appearance of the historical core was formed during the 16th century and the town itself was one of the richest cities in Europe. In 1762, Štiavnica Mining and Forestry Academy was founded (first in Europe,) and this step confirmed Banská Štiavnica as a centre of technical education.

Problem description

Banská Štiavnica has been considered a showcase of the UNESCO list in Slovakia. However, today this UNESCO site struggles in critical aspects of developing sustainable tourism: to manage visitor movements and to influence visitor behaviour. First, based on interviews carried out with the representatives of regional destination management organization Region Banská Štiavnica, the lack of systematic measurement was revealed. According to UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Online Toolkit (UNESCO, 2022, p. 4): To manage visitor flows the DMO needs to be able to anticipate tourism demand based on past experiences. There is no need recognized of the added value of sustainable development indicators. Besides, lack of resources (human, financial, technological) hinders good governance of the destination. The overall number of visitors is estimated by the destination managers to be around 100,000 (based on accommodation tax income), but the statistical data show number of overnight stays before COVID-19 to be around 50,000 (Statistical office of Slovak republic). This number is comparable to the era prior 2012 when it reached 53,287 overnight stays. The number of one day visitors is not included in this data; during COVID-19 there were 22 281 visitors coming to Tourist Information Centre (may this be the average number of one day visitors?) in 2020.

Picture 6: Banska Štiavnica



Source: <https://slovakia.travel/en/banska-stiavnica-town-monument-reserve>

Second, the increasing number of tourists coming seasonally to the city centre annoys constantly residents of this historic town, which ceases to serve the inhabitants. Locals are not motivated to enter, walk, shop in the town centre. Other deteriorations cover insufficient parking places, stuck roads and increasing prices of real estates. Frustration of locals results

into missing dialogue with municipality representatives and prevents meaningful partnership with wider range of stakeholders.

As a result of DMO (established in 2012 as the first DMO in Slovakia having sufficient experiences in marketing of the destination) attempts to channel visitors across a wider area of the destination, new umbrella brand *Supervulkán Štiavnica holiday destination* (supervulcano) was introduced.

Picture 7: Supervulcano Štiavnica



Source: <https://supervulkanstiavnica.sk/>

This new brand points out geographic aspect and geological connotations and represents hills surrounding Banská Štiavnica Štiavnické hills as remnant of the gigantic Supervulcano.

OBJECTIVE OF THE CASE STUDY

The aim is to examine challenges of sustainable destination management, and the self-presentation (projected image) of UNESCO site Banská Štiavnica.

GUIDANCE QUESTIONS, TASKS

1. Please, identify the key stakeholders engaged into sustainable tourism development in smaller UNESCO sites.
2. What would you as a destination manager of a smaller UNESCO site propose to overcome traits of overtourism in case of historic towns such as Banská Štiavnica? What tools and steps may be introduced to ameliorate the perception of locals?
3. Explain the importance of systematic data collection for sustainable development of smaller UNESCO sites.
4. Propose possible advantages of newly introduced umbrella brand Supervulcano to sustainable development of historic town Banská Štiavnica.

TEACHERS' NOTES

The advantages of systematic data collection have to be constantly explained to the UNESCO site representatives. In this case we did so during the workshops carried out in the UNESCO site, when we addressed the municipality representatives and as a result a questionnaire survey through municipality webpage was introduced. This may be considered as a beginning of focus to the importance of data collection.

To prevent unsustainable development of a tourism destination, it is necessary to overturn decreasing visitors' overall experience influenced by their increasing number, but also the deteriorating situation of residents. There are various possibilities how to channel visitors across a wider area of the destination, consider restricted access to sensitive areas and raised prices for some areas of concern or timed tickets.

Remember that the historic centres of UNESCO sites have to be lived by their residents with no threat of high cost of living and inflation.

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