

Linking climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in events and tourism: A case study of Bad Essen, Germany

KAI-MICHAEL GRIESE¹, KIM WERNER¹ & LAURA HOTH¹

¹Faculty of Business Management & Social Sciences, Hochschule Osnabrück, University of Applied Sciences

Contacting author: laura.hoth@hs-osnabrueck.de

Keywords | Climate Change, Climate Adaptation, Climate Protection, Events, Destination Management

Objectives | In the tourism and events literature, a distinction is usually made between climate protection and climate adaptation strategies. While climate protection strategies have been studied in the event and tourism industry for many years, the topic of climate adaptation is still a relatively young discipline (e.g. Bae & Nam, 2020; Becken & Clapcott, 2011), particularly in the context of events (Werner et al., 2023). Even less attention has been paid to the simultaneous consideration of climate mitigation and adaptation within the same destination strategy, as well as resulting synergies. This may be due to the fact that the two strategies pursue very different goals and enable different societal benefits (Kirchgeorg, 2014). Due to the different priorities of climate protection versus climate adaptation strategies, obstacles can arise in the establishment of regulatory structures when coordinating objectives. Accordingly, the establishment of transparent as well as clear governance structures is needed to adequately address these obstacles "institutionally and instrumentally" (Baasch et al., 2012, p. 193). In the short to medium term, both strategies thus need to achieve a leap in development or an innovation in the framework. Using the town of Bad Essen in the north of Germany (a member of the "Cittaslow network") as a case, this paper explores the following research question: How can climate protection and climate adaptation strategies be realised in one strategy and what synergies can be created for destinations?

Methodology | The analysis was conducted in the form of a qualitative case study analysis (Creswell, 2012). Three of the six sources of evidence recommended for case studies by Yin (2017) were used: documentation; archival records; and direct observations. The researchers collected and analysed a wide variety of data during the period from June to September in 2023 such as administrative documents, reports, internal records, formal studies, agendas and minutes of meetings, websites, newspaper and online articles, and meeting observations.

Main results and contributions | The local authorities and their stakeholders in Bad Essen seek to pursue climate protection and climate adaptation strategies to the same extent. On the one hand, the town positions itself within the CittaSlow movement, which includes a climate-friendly

orientation that also applies to the event and tourism sector. On the other hand, the town is actively developing a strategic approach for increased climate adaptation. In the following, both areas are briefly explained. Subsequently, the synergies between both efforts are considered.

(1) Climate protection: Bad Essen is strategically positioning itself as a "CittaSlow town" and, thus, as a climate-friendly town where regional and sustainable environmental policies are valued (CittaSlow, 2023). CittaSlow is based on the Slow movement, which has recently gained increasing attention. It implies a fundamental change in the concept of consumption of goods and services as part of a lifestyle characterised by commitment, a strong sense of responsibility, and the search for well-being in both personal and business life (Calzati & Salvo, 2017). A number of researchers see slowness as a promising way to address the problems of contemporary life (Honoré, 2004; Parkins & Craig, 2006). With regard to the Slow movement, the importance of low environmental impact through regional focus is frequently explored in the literature on the Slow movement (e.g., Breakey & Breakey, 2015; Duignan et al., 2018). In this context, Ekinici (2014) refers to reconciling environmental and business aspects, including the interests of local people and tourists.

(2) Climate adaptation: Climate change represents one of the greatest challenges in the 21st century and has a very high social relevance due to its influence on working, living, and the health of people (Pröbstl-Haider et al., 2021). In Bad Essen, water shortages, increased temperatures and heavy rainfall are already posing different challenges. Forecasts from the Climate Service Center Germany (2021) also show that extreme weather events, heat waves, and long dry periods will increase in the region in the future. These aspects caused by climate change also have an impact on the local events held in Bad Essen, some of which have been successful for many years, but whose implementation could be threatened in the future. Due to the high importance of these events for Bad Essen as one of the few Cittaslow communities in Germany, this would have enormous consequences for the town and region (Werner et al., 2021). Climate adaptation measures at the municipal level affect an enormous number of industries, such as the health industry, agriculture and the tourism industry. For actors in the event industry, it is very important to know the possible negative effects of climate change (e.g., heavy rain, heat, drought) and appropriate adaptation strategies to be prepared in the best possible way, to adapt the event portfolio accordingly and to protect citizens and visitors from possible dangers. Previous research has demonstrated that decision-makers in the event industry are confronted with climate change and its possible consequences. Nevertheless, they do not yet consider climate change as a major current threat. While there are a few pioneers, most decision-makers are just beginning to address the impacts of climate change, particularly in the context of local events at a destination (Werner et al., 2023).

(3) Synergies: With the help of our case study of Bad Essen, this paper demonstrates how a (smaller) tourism and events destination can pursue climate protection and climate adaptation strategies in parallel which then also leads to synergies at the same time. For example, a focus on

regional products and offers makes it possible to act in a more climate-friendly way (e.g., less CO₂ emissions due to shorter transport routes) on the one hand. On the other hand, regionalisation can also help value chains become more climate-adapted, as fewer global risks can arise during the exchange.

Limitations | This study uses a qualitative case study approach to explore social real-life phenomena. The qualitative approach has been subject to criticism due to its subjectivity and lack of replicability and generalisability (e.g., Bryman, 2015). However, while the qualitative findings of this study may not be widely generalised, they can be applied to other situations and scenarios and can be used to inform future research (Patton, 2015).

Conclusions | This paper demonstrates how climate protection and climate adaptation strategies can be achieved in parallel and also points to the synergies that are created in doing so. Based on our literature review and our case study of Bad Essen, we point to valuable starting points for other tourism and event destinations in order to future-proof their destinations.

References

- Baasch, S., Bauriedl, S., Hafner, S., & Weidlich, S. (2012). Klimaanpassung auf regionaler Ebene: Herausforderungen einer regionalen Klimawandel-Governance. *Raumforschung Und Raumordnung / Spatial Research and Planning*, 70(3). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13147-012-0155-1>
- Bae, J., & Nam, S. (2020). An analysis of the effect of climate indicators on tourism demand: a case study of Jeju Island. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism Leisure and Events*, 12(2), 185–196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19407963.2019.1585363>
- Becken, S., & Clapcott, R. (2011). National tourism policy for climate change. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure & Events*, 3(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19407963.2011.539378>
- Breakey, N.M. & Breakey, H.E. (2014). Tourism and Aldo Leopold's "cultural harvest": creating virtuous tourists as agents of sustainability. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 23(1), pp. 85–103. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2014.924954>
- Bryman, A. (2015). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Calzati, V., & Salvo, P. d. (2017). Slow tourism: A theoretical framework. In M. Clancy (Ed.), *Routledge advances in tourism. Slow Tourism, Food and Cities: Pace and the search for the good life* (1st ed., 33–48). Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315686714>
- Cittaslow.org. (2023). *International network of cities where living is good*. Retrieved from <https://www.cittaslow.org/>

- Duignan, M.B., Kirby, S.I., O'Brien, D., & Everett, S. (2018). From "clone towns" to "slow towns": examining festival legacies. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 11(3), 350–366. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-07-2017-0071>
- Ekinci, M.B. (2014). The Cittaslow philosophy in the context of sustainable tourism development; the case of Turkey. *Tourism Management*, 41, 178–189. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.08.013>
- Honoré, C. (2004). *In praise of slow: How a worldwide movement is challenging the cult of speed* (Paperback edition). Orion Books.
- Kirchgeorg, M. (2014). Sustainable Marketing bei zunehmenden ökologischen Diskontinuitäten. *Sustainable Marketing Management: Grundlagen und Cases*, 37-54. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-02437-6>
- Parkins, W., & Craig, G. (2006). *Slow living*. Oxford: Berg.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pfeifer, S., Bathiany, S., Rechid, D. (2021). Klimaausblick Osnabrück. Climate Service Center Germany (GERICS). Retrieved from <https://www.gerics.de/klimaausblick-landkreise>
- Pröbstl-Haider, U., Lund-Durlacher, D., Olefs, M., & Prettenthaler, F. (2021). *Tourismus und Klimawandel*. SpringerSpektrum.
- Werner, K., Griesse, K. M., & Hoth, L. (2023, in press). The Acceptance of Climate Adaptation Measures in the Event Industry: A Conceptual and Empirical Overview. *Event Management*, 28(1), 105–127. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599523X16896548396770>
- Werner, K., Griesse, K-M., & Bosse, C. (2021). The role of slow events for sustainable destination development: A conceptual and empirical review. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29 (11-12), 1913-1931. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1800021>
- Yin, R. (2017). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. 6th edition. Sage.