

## Proposing a Sustainable Destination Image Marketing Framework: An Analysis of Destination Marketing Organizations in the United States

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# **Proposing a Sustainable Destination Image Marketing Framework: An Analysis of Destination Marketing Organizations in the United States**

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines sustainable tourism marketing efforts within the context of destination promotion. Mission statements, marketing plans and online advertising employed by signature website of fifty-one state tourism offices are content analyzed using a 'Sustainable Marketing' framework. The three marketing sources representing destination image marketing strategies are joined in a forward linkage fashion. Based on literature review, a list of tentative sustainable indicators is prepared. These include cultural/social, economic and ecological measures. Additionally, general/institutional indicators, not belonging to any of the aforementioned categories, are used. Selected indicators are matched with the core themes in the documents and the signature websites. Findings indicate that the state tourism offices are far from implementing sustainable messages in their promotional materials at the grass roots level. Mission Statements are mostly vague and predominant focus on sustainable development is remiss. Marketing plans receive the lowest score in terms of emphasis on sustainable development and responsible behavior. Surprisingly, most of the websites surpass the mission statements and marketing plans in their visible commitment towards promoting sustainability. However, it is observed that in several websites, sustainability indicators are not prominently placed to advocate their importance. By taking a supply-side perspective and moving beyond tourists' needs to incorporate the concept of sustainable marketing, this paper makes an important academic and practitioner contribution towards responsible development of tourism with minimum externalities.