

# **The Role Of Service Design on Developing Sustainable Tourism Business in Sri Lanka, An Analysis Based on Nordic Travelers**

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## **DEGREE THESIS**

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### **Abstract**

This thesis employed the Double Diamond methodology to investigate the significance of service layout in fostering sustainable tourism companies in Sri Lanka, with a particular attention on Nordic tourists. As the tourism region faces growing demands to put in force sustainable practices, this study aims to create service solutions which can be in harmony with the sustainability targets of Sri Lankan lodges that serve Nordic travelers. This research conducted a contextual evaluation of the present sustainability practices inside the Sri Lankan tourism industry, drawing insights from interviews performed with motel managers. Finally, it delved into the options and expectations of Nordic tourists regarding sustainable tourism offerings. An operational assessment of inn practices was completed to identify areas for potential development. This assessment resulted in the formulation and implementation of service design interventions. By utilizing the iterative nature of the Double Diamond model, sustainable provider standards were collaboratively developed and refined to meet both environmental and customer satisfaction standards. This study culminated in recommendations for the Sri Lankan tourism area to adopt sustainability into their provider offerings, thereby improving the satisfaction for Nordic travelers and contributing to the wider sustainability initiatives of the enterprise.

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Language: English    Key words: Nordic, travelers, sustainability

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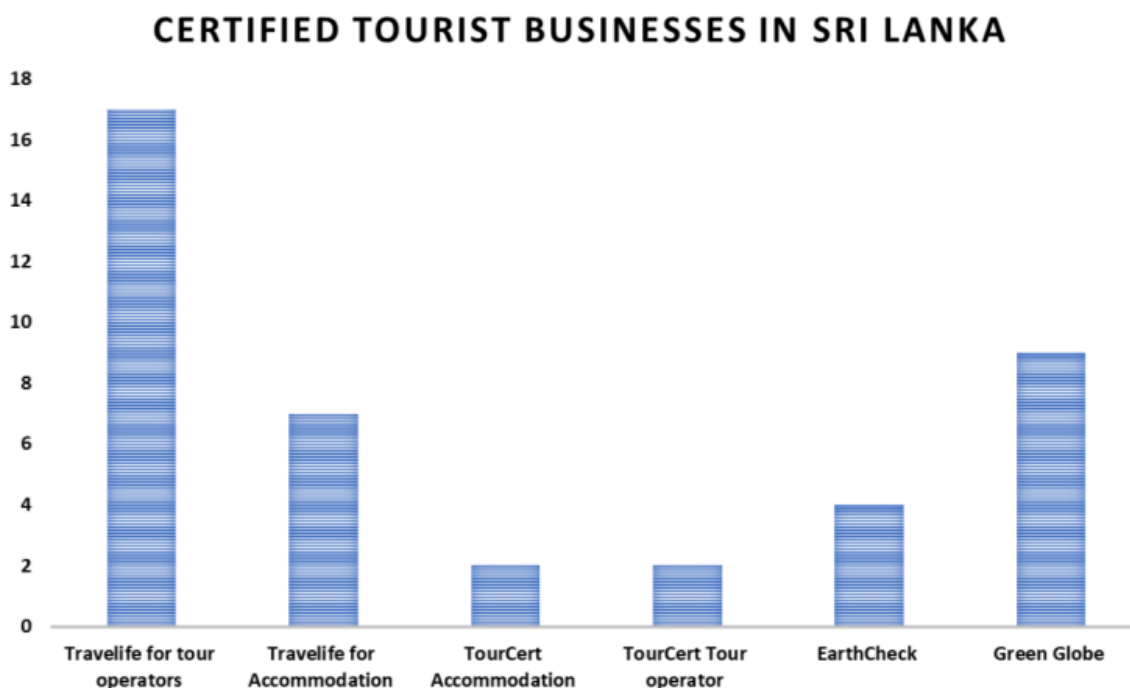
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## 2 Chapter 01 | Introduction

Sri Lanka, renowned for its wealthy cultural historical past, breathtaking landscapes, and numerous ecosystems, has emerged as a popular vacation spot for international tourists, mainly the tourists from Nordic international locations. The tourism enterprise, which performs a critical role in Sri Lanka's economic system, is presently faced with full-size challenges regarding environmental sustainability and social duty. Figure 1 shows the number of certified tourist businesses in Sri Lanka.



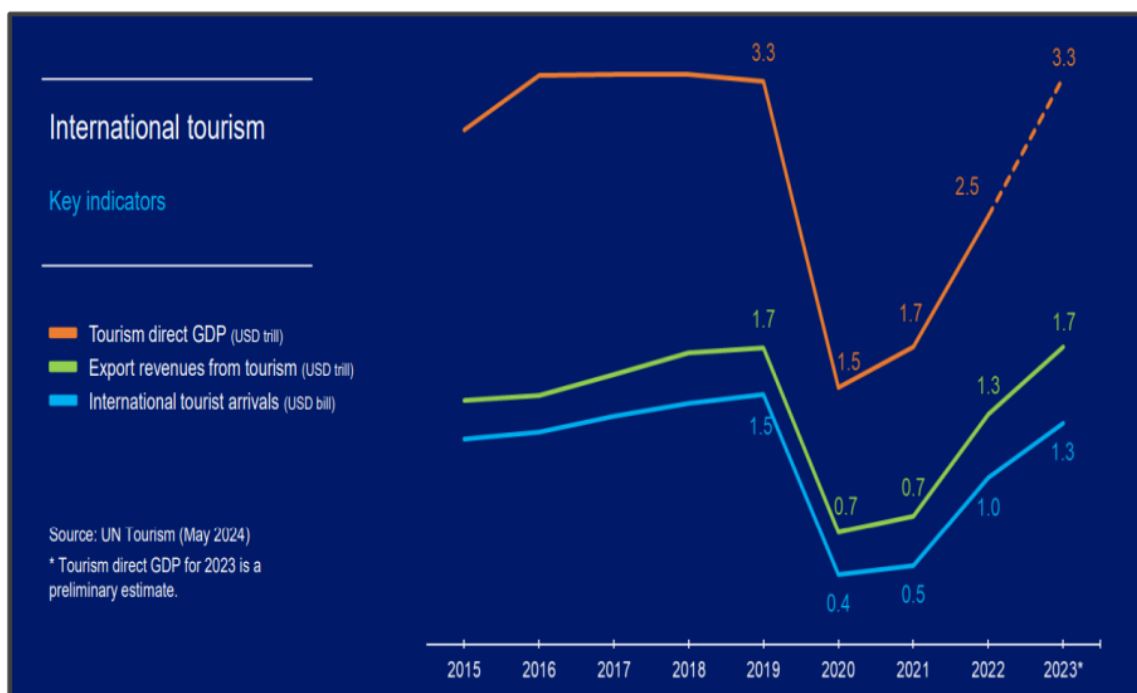
**Figure 1 : Number of tourist businesses in Sri Lanka certified under global sustainable tourism certification**

**Source: (International Development Group LLC, 2023)**

The growing international interest in sustainable tourism underscores the want for the incorporation of powerful sustainability measures within tourism offerings. This research seeks to explore how service design can facilitate the established order of sustainable tourism organizations in Sri Lanka, with a specific emphasis on the options and expectancies of Nordic site visitors. By means of examining current practices and pinpointing areas for enhancement, this study aims to endorse service design techniques that promote sustainability inside the tourism sector, thereby fostering extra responsible and sustainable tourism practices.

### 2.1 1.1 Background of the Study

The tourism region performs a vital position inside the economy of Sri Lanka, making a substantial contribution to both the gross domestic product and employment tiers (Sri Lanka Tourism development Authority, 2020). The Figure 2 below shows the recovery of international tourist arrival percentage levels in regards to Sri Lanka.



**Figure 2 : Recovery of international tourist arrivals Percentage of 2019 levels**

**Source : (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2024)**

Though the industry encounters significant challenges, especially in the areas of environmental sustainability and social responsibility, it continues to strive for improvement. Issues such as over-tourism, insufficient waste control, and the deterioration of natural resources pose considerable obstacles that must be addressed (UNWTO, 2018). Sustainable tourism seeks to mitigate those unfavorable consequences whilst simultaneously enhancing the blessings for nearby communities and ecosystems (Popşa,2023). Nordic travelers, known for his or her environmental consciousness and inclination towards sustainable journey alternatives, constitute an increasing market section (visit Denmark, 2019). Grasping and addressing their possibilities can facilitate the integration of sustainable practices within Sri Lankan tourism. This research investigates the significance of service design in formulating sustainable tourism solutions that align with the expectations of Nordic tourists, making use of the framework that includes the Double Diamond version to foster innovation and beautify provider delivery. (Design Council, 2005).

## 2.2 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study is to explore the ability of service design to improve sustainable tourism organizations in Sri Lanka, with a particular emphasis on the choices of Nordic vacationers. Through an examination of current sustainability practices and the identity of opportunities for enhancement, the study seek to advocate service design techniques that meet the sustainability requirements expected by Nordic travelers.

## **2.3 1.3 Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following research questions :

1. What are the current sustainability practices and challenges faced by tourism businesses in Sri Lanka?
2. How can service design be utilized to develop sustainable tourism solutions that cater to Nordic travelers?
3. What opportunities exist for integrating sustainability into the value chain of tourism businesses in Sri Lanka?

## **2.4 1.4 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is organized in the following manner: Chapter 2 gives an intensive literature review concerning sustainability inside the geographical regions of tourism and service design methodologies, such as an examination of the Double Diamond Model. Chapter 3 delineates the research methodology, providing an intensive account of the records collection and sampling strategies employed in this research. Chapter 4 provides a contextual analysis of the tourism zone in Sri Lanka, emphasizing present sustainability practices and the demanding situations faced. Chapter 5 elaborates on the findings derived from interviews with inn managers, shedding light on sustainability practices and potential regions for enhancement. Chapter 6 introduces service design interventions informed by way of those findings. Chapter 7 outlines the method for imposing these interventions. Chapter 8 assesses the consequences of the proposed interventions, Finally, Chapter 9 concludes with guidelines and guidelines for future research.

# **3 Chapter 02 | Literature Review**

## **3.1 2.1 Sustainability in Tourism**

Sustainable tourism refers to tourism that is not detrimental to the various stakeholders and the environment in the long-run. It therefore works towards environmental conservation, management of cultural and historical sites and supports of local economy (UNWTO, 2018). Based on the literature review by Björk et al. (2020), sustainable tourism is the responsible use of natural resources in connection with tourism activities that should be friendly to the environment, maintain social balance and be economically feasible in current as well as future tourism.

The problem of sustainability in tourism has emerged as a vital global situation, garnering heightened interest because of its large impact on locations around the world, including Sri Lanka. According to Popşa (2023), sustainable tourism is characterized by using efforts to reduce poor environmental and socio-cultural effects

while enhancing the advantages for nearby communities and economies. In Sri Lanka, where the tourism sector is experiencing significant growth, incorporating sustainability standards into its development strategies has become critical (Fennell, 2018).

The following Figure 3 indicates reputed Green Key Certification.

The Green Key (GK) initiative serves as an internationally recounted eco-label, granted to motels and tourism groups that adhere to stringent environmental control and sustainability standards (Green Key Global, 2024). This certification holds global importance because it fosters sustainable practices in the hospitality sector, thereby helping overarching sustainable tourism goals. The GK certification emphasizes essential elements such as power and water performance, waste control, sustainable sourcing, and awareness among visitors and workers concerning the significance of environmental renovation strategies (Green Key Global, 2024). Figure 3 below illustrates the renowned Green Key Certification

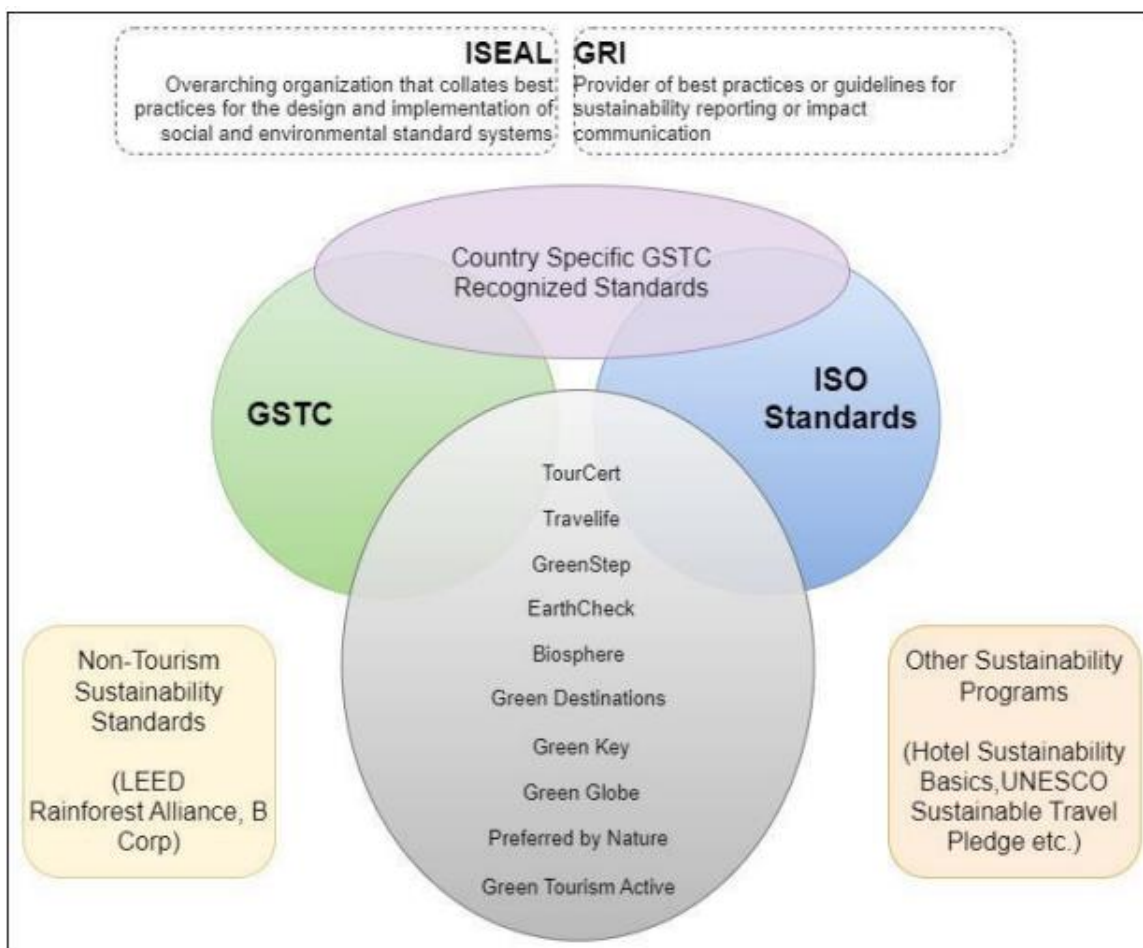


**Figure 3 : Green Key Certifications**

Source : (Wong et al, 2024)

The global implementation of the GK certification has verified an effective impact on the overall environmental performance of hotels, ensuing in a decrease in operational costs and in a superior appeal to environmentally aware tourists (Green Key Global, 2024). Furthermore, accommodations that gain GK certification frequently enjoy a competitive advantage, as a developing segment of tourists emphasizes sustainability in their lodging preferences. This eco-label also enables hotels to align with global sustainability initiatives, including the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those focused on responsible consumption and production, climate action, and the protection of terrestrial ecosystems (United international locations, 2020).

Within the context of Sri Lanka, the possibility for embracing the GK framework offers outstanding enhancement, which would help to integrate sustainable practices to relieve the environmental and socio-cultural repercussions of this expansion (Fennell, 2015). Selling the pursuit of GK certification among hotels and other tourism-associated entities in Sri Lanka should considerably bolster the sustainability of the country's tourism enterprise, thereby assisting within the renovation of its numerous biodiversity and cultural historical past (Green Key Global, 2024). The following Figure 4 represents the Map of tools available for sustainable tourism.



**Figure 4 : Map of tools available for sustainable tourism**

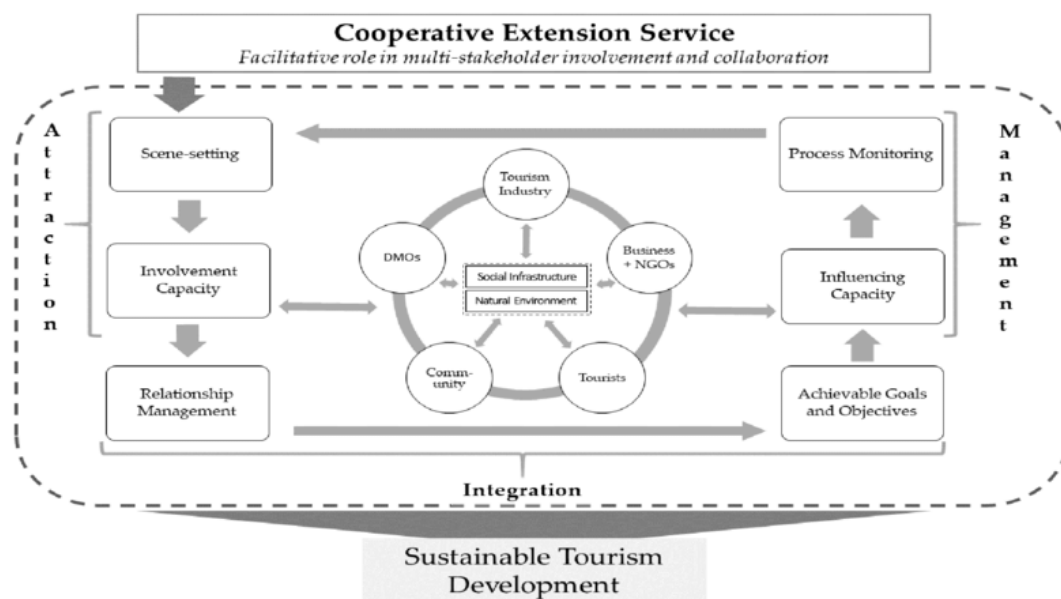
**Source : (International Development Group LLC, 2023)**

The implementation of the GK certification in Sri Lanka can strengthen the nation's environmental and economic objectives in more than one method. To start with, resorts that obtain GK certification would be ready to successfully mitigate their environmental impact through the adoption of techniques aimed at lowering electricity and water usage, enhancing waste management practices, and reducing their normal ecological footprint (Green Key Global, 2024). Moreover, this certification may enhance Sri Lanka's recognition as a responsible tourism destination, attracting the growing quantity of eco-conscious tourists who prioritize environmentally sustainable options (Khatter et al., 2019). Moreover, by means of integrating sustainable practices, resorts in Sri Lanka may want to enhance their operational efficiency and make their monetary resilience stronger over the long term (Khatter et al., 2019).

Through examining successful example from other areas dealing with comparable environmental problems, Sri Lanka ought to effectively put into force the GK certification to sell the enduring sustainability of its tourism industry. The global shift towards sustainable tourism shows that with the aid of adopting tasks inclusive of GK, Sri Lanka can establish itself as a pacesetter in sustainable tourism while making an effective contribution to worldwide environmental efforts (Green Key Global, 2024; Analysis of Hotels' Environmental Sustainable Policies, 2024).

### 3.2 2.2 Service Design Methodology

The technique of service design is critical for the establishment of sustainable tourism establishments, particularly when addressing the precise choices of Nordic vacationers touring Sri Lanka.

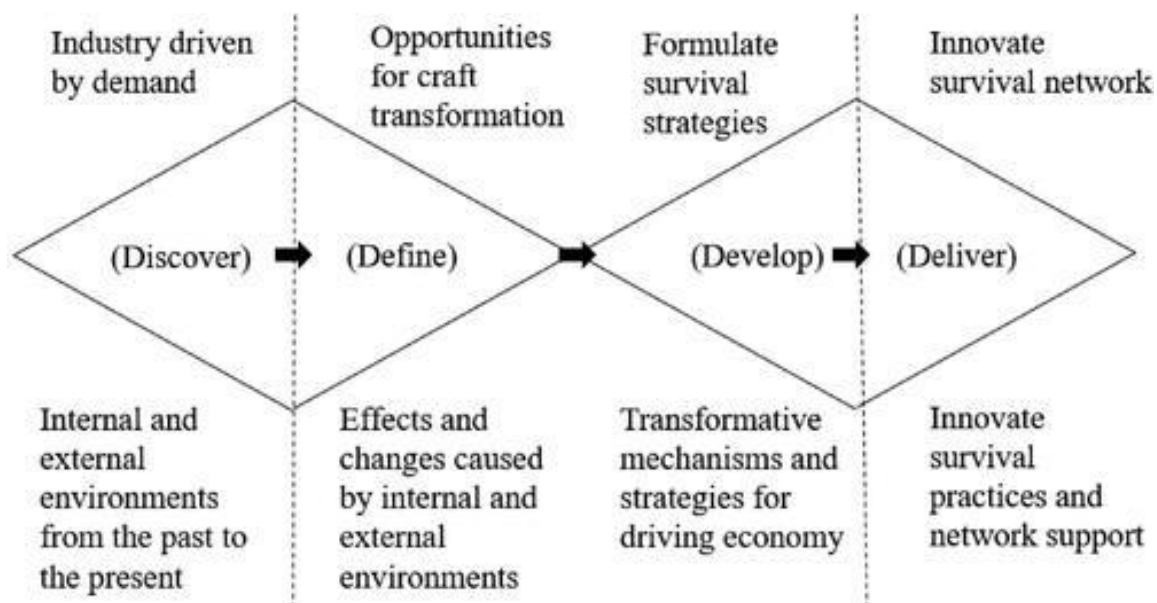


**Figure 5 : Cooperative Extension Service for Sustainable Tourism Development**

Source : (Feyers et al, 2019)

Fundamentally, service design is rooted in human-centered principles, aiming to enhance service experiences through a comprehensive framework that responds to individual needs (Clatworthy, 2017). Among the diverse methodologies available, the Double Diamond model, created by the Design Council, stands out for its organized and methodical approach to problem-solving (Design Council, 2015).

The Double Diamond model encompasses four distinct degrees: Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver. Each phase is crucial in navigating the complexities associated with service design (or a design process). This model is in particular pertinent inside the realm of sustainable tourism, because it gives an established framework for identifying, conceptualizing, and executing solutions that meet both customer expectations and sustainability desires.



**Figure 6 : Double Diamond Model**

Source : (Tsai et al , 2024)

### **Discover Phase**

The Discover phase prioritizes complete research into the needs and possibilities of Nordic vacationers regarding sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka. This system includes the collection of qualitative facts through interviews with motel managers and various stakeholders to gain insights into present practices, demanding situations, and potential opportunities. For the duration of this segment, this researcher's intention is to show the essential issues related to sustainability, consisting of the environmental consequences of tourism operations and the demand for eco-friendly services (Design Council, 2015). By recognizing these demanding situations at an early stage, organizations can successfully align their techniques with sustainable tourism concepts, thereby gratifying the expectations of environmentally aware Nordic tourists. (Booyens, 2023).

### **Define Phase**

After the discover segment, the define stage specializes in synthesizing the insights received to formulate a unique and focused problem definition. This degree is important for defining the study's scope, because it prepares for tackling the challenges that tourism companies encounter in satisfying the sustainability expectations of Nordic travelers. additionally, the outline phase enables the identity of KPIs so that it will be utilized to assess the effectiveness of the sustainability tasks advanced in later stages (Booyens, 2023). through articulating the hassle clearly, tourism groups in Sri Lanka can devise focused techniques that cater to both client requirements and environmental sustainability objectives.

### **Develop Phase**

Through the increase phase, researchers and stakeholders have interaction in collaborative efforts to generate and observe innovative ideas and concepts designed to address the diagnosed challenges. This section is marked by co-creation and lively involvement of stakeholders, in which hotel managers and different massive figures

inside the tourism region be part of forces to formulate sustainable tourism tasks. Such initiatives can also encompass the adoption of environmentally pleasant practices, consisting of the discount of carbon emissions, the promotion of neighborhood lifestyle, and the safeguarding of herbal assets (Sun & Wang, 2022). The co-creation procedure guarantees that the answers produced are not simplest resourceful however additionally viable and in concord with the sustainability principles valued by means of Nordic travelers.

### **Deliver Phase**

The final phase makes a specialty of the execution and enhancement of the suggested solutions. This section is characterized by the aid of an iterative method, where ongoing feedback from stakeholders is applied to optimize the carrier services. The supply phase ensures that the projects evolved are efficaciously addressing the necessities of Nordic vacationers at the same time as selling the long-time period sustainability of tourism organizations in Sri Lanka (Booyens, 2023). The effectiveness of this phase is evaluated primarily based on its beneficial impact on patron delight and environmental sustainability, emphasizing the importance of fostering a long-lasting wonderful effect on the local people and surroundings. (Sun & Wang, 2022).

## **3.3 2.3 Integration of Sustainability and Service Design**

The incorporation of sustainability concepts into service design is a critical strategy for developing sustainable tourism companies, mainly while addressing the choices of Nordic tourists in Sri Lanka. This technique targets to increase beyond easy consumer pleasure to include wider environmental and social factors (Vezzoli et al, 2021). As cited through Vezzoli et al (2021), sustainable service design includes crafting services that satisfy client requirements while also creating a positive impact on environmental conservation and social welfare.

In the methodology lies the principle of co-advent, which underscores the significance of collaboration and stakeholder engagement at some point of the design technique (Pérez Jolles et al., 2022). by related to several members, which include hotel managers, nearby communities, governmental our bodies, and the tourists themselves, provider designers can accumulate a spread of perspectives and insights that manual the introduction of sustainable tourism initiatives. According to Khatter (2023), This inclusive technique no longer most effective guarantees that the offerings developed are aligned with the particular wishes and dreams of Nordic vacationers but also cultivates an experience of ownership and willpower among all stakeholders.

Further, the co-advent manner encourages the development of innovative solutions to sustainability issues inside the tourism industry (Pérez Jolles et al., 2022). by harnessing the collective know-how and creativity of stakeholders, provider designers can inspect new techniques for decreasing environmental impacts, helping cultural maintenance, and improving the overall sustainability of tourism operations in Sri Lanka.

The Double Diamond version is an effective framework for embedding sustainability principles into service design (Duncan et al, 2023). This version, known for its iterative nature and focus on each divergent and convergent thinking, offers a systematic

technique for identifying sustainability challenges, producing thoughts, and executing solutions that reconcile the wishes of various stakeholders.

### **3.4 2.4 Consumer Preferences and Sustainable Tourism**

Grasping consumer conduct is crucial for the improvement of sustainable tourism offerings, when addressing the choices of Nordic travelers traveling places such as Sri Lanka. research shows that Nordic tourists showcase a reported choice for environmentally sustainable and socially accountable tour alternatives (Passafaro, 2020). The examine conducted through Passafaro, (2020) highlights that those tourists prioritize sustainability in their journey choices, favoring studies that resonate with their values of environmental care and social accountability.

Björk et al. (2020) established a fact that Nordic travelers are among the best environmental tourists in as much as they prefer sustainable means of transport. In their study, they found that, “There is increased destination voice regarding expectations of sustainable tourism; Nordic choice prefers eco-tourism, energy-efficient, effective management of waste.” This corresponds well with the growing tendency worldwide of sustainable tourism, in which tourists select places and providers who are friendly to the environment and encourage them to follow the same principles.

Apostolakis et al (2020) specifically points out numerous substantial preferences amongst Nordic travelers which might be important for the design of sustainable tourism. In general, a strong preference for authentic experiences is present, that enable travelers to engage deeply with the local culture and environment. This authenticity additionally extends to their choice of resorts, as Nordic tourists tend to opt for eco-friendly accommodations that reduces their ecological effect (Apostolakis et al., 2020). moreover, there's a splendid hobby in network-primarily based tourism initiatives, which facilitate significant interactions with nearby populations and bolster sustainable improvement efforts (Apostolakis et al, 2020).

The Nordic people also prefer group-based tourism activities and other related tourism development programs. As Passafaro (2020) rightly noted “many tourists from Nordic countries appear to look for real experiences that would provide them with a rich touch-point with local people and culture.” This is in line with the trend of tourist demand towards Southern Sri Lanka which focused more on the communities' involvement, contribution towards upliftment, enhancement of sustainable tourism and establishing instant contact with the inhabitants of destination area. Such preferences support the need to incorporate cultural and environmental aspects of sustainability into tourism products and services, which might well serve to improvements in the attractiveness of Sri Lanka as a tourism destination for the Nordic countries.

These insights highlight the necessity of aligning tourism services with the preferences of Nordic tourists to improve the sustainability of tourism companies in destinations like Sri Lanka. through comprehending and addressing these alternatives, tourism vendors can beautify their services and contribute to sustainable practices.

### **3.5 2.5 Limitations of the Research**

However, some limitations merit the discussion when generalizing trends of sustainable tourism practises and the preferences of the Nordic travellers going to Sri Lanka based on this study. First, the research bases its conclusion on qualitative data collected from a small group of hotel managers and tourism related professionals in Sri Lanka. This may not have given an ample outgoing of the opinions of all the tourism operators or travellers, and therefore, the results may not hold across all the organizations in the tourism sector.

Second, the study is most relevant to Nordic tourists meaning that the results cannot be extended to other international tourists. Although now Nordic visitors are very sensitive to the environmental impact, it is still necessary to research the specific requirements of Asian or North American tourists.

As a limitation, the study is confined to Sri Lankan tourism sector and therefore provides an in-depth view of sustainable tourism only in this context although the external pressures and constraints faced by Sri Lanka might not be exactly similar to other tourism destinations in other developing countries. Thus, the extent that the findings of the study can be generalised to other regions where the societies' socio-cultural and economic endowment is different from Ghana's might pale into insignificance.

Finally, because of the time and resources available the study did not gather panel data for the purpose of evaluating the degree and strength of sustainable tourism practices or measures, nor did it follow change in tourist perceptions and preferences. No research using longitudinal data was considered by the authors, for this reason, future works including such data would contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of sustainable tourism.

## **4 Chapter 03 | Research Method**

This research utilizes a qualitative methodology to explore the importance of carrier layout in fostering sustainable tourism firms in Sri Lanka, with an emphasis on insights obtained from interviews performed with hotel managers. The studies framework is based on the Double Diamond Model, an outstanding framework in service design, which includes four distinct stages: Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver. Each level presents a systematic technique for comprehending user necessities, producing creative standards, prototyping solutions, and executing techniques inside the realm of sustainable tourism advancement.

### **4.1 3.1 Data Collection Methods**

#### **4.1.1 3.1.1 Discover Phase**

This study begins with the discovery phase, which entails undertaking semi-structured interviews with essential stakeholders, particularly resort managers in Sri Lanka. these interviews aim to collect insights regarding their reviews, options, and demanding situations concerning sustainability and carrier excellent within the tourism area.

moreover, observational research will take place at diverse tourism institutions to without delay reveal consumer interactions, service tactics, and environmental practices, thereby presenting sizable contextual facts for the research.

#### **4.1.2 3.1.2 Define Phase**

In this phase, research advances to the creation of personas based on insights acquired from interviews. These personas embody ordinary customers and act as essential components in guiding layout alternatives and prioritizing consumer requirements in the context of sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka.

#### **4.1.3 3.1.3 Develop Phase**

This section encompasses collaborative workshops with stakeholders targeted on concept era, co-introduction of provider concepts, and prototyping answers to improve sustainability practices in tourism establishments. these workshops will facilitate the creation and checking out of both low-fidelity and excessive-fidelity prototypes of carrier design solutions with users, allowing for comments collection and iterative refinement of the designs.

#### **4.1.4 3.1.4 Deliver Phase**

In this phase, a detailed approach will be formulated for the execution of the authorized service design solutions. This method will encompass methods for enticing stakeholders, dispensing assets, and establishing a timeline for execution. additionally, the implementation method will be meticulously discovered, and the effects of the carrier layout projects on sustainability signs, purchaser satisfaction, and operational effectiveness can be thoroughly assessed.

## **4.2 3.2 Sampling Strategy and Participant Selection Criteria**

The sampling strategy involves the intentional selection of individuals who are pertinent to the studies desires. The study targets to conduct interviews with 15 to 20 hotel managers, thereby taking pictures a big range of viewpoints and reviews associated with sustainable tourism practices in Sri Lanka.

The following table contains some of the ID, the date of collecting the data and type of interview carried out. Using the data collected the study got the views of the hotel managers and the sustainability officers.

**Table 1 : Transcript Log**

File ID	Collection Date	Mode	Transcrip t / Notes	File Name	Formatt ed for Importa tion?	Coding complete?	Participant Type
---------	-----------------	------	---------------------	-----------	------------------------------	------------------	------------------

1	10/1/2023	Interview	Full transcript	Arun.txt	Yes	Yes	Hotel Manager
2	10/2/2023	Interview	Full transcript	Ashen.txt	Yes	Yes	Hotel Manager
3	10/3/2023	Interview	Full transcript	Madi.txt	Yes	Yes	Hotel Manager
4	10/4/2023	Interview	Full transcript	Sandani.txt	Yes	Yes	Sustainability Officer
5	10/5/2023	Interview	Full transcript	Thamodh.txt	Yes	Yes	Hotel Manager
6	10/6/2023	Interview	Full transcript	Trevor.txt	Yes	Yes	Hotel Manager
7	10/7/2023	Interview	Full transcript	Yasa.txt	Yes	Yes	Resort Manager
8	10/8/2023	Interview	Full transcript	Yasara.txt	Yes	Yes	Sustainability Executive

Source : Developed by Author

### 4.3 3.3 Methodological Framework and Approach

For the purpose of this study, thematic analysis follows Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase process that includes data familiarisation, generating initial codes, identifying and refining themes. This framework scaffolds an encompassing cum recursive method to the study, gives the researchers the flexibility they need to discover various and fine-grained meanings of sustainability but also provides the necessary thematic consistency and adherence to the research goals. Initial codes were obtained from the interview and analysis was made based on pattern codes focusing on aspects such as sustainability initiatives, customer relationships and barriers to operations. These codes were then progressed through to key themes that denote aspects of sustainability within the context of tourism in the hotel sector.

Thus, according to the structure provided by Braun and Clarke, the process of the analysis implied the initial brainstorming in the course of the open coding to record the main concepts, after which query tracking had been focused in order to combine several similar topics into a single theme. This cyclical process allowed for the

refinement of themes so as to respond to the research points on the hotel sector, thus making certain each theme corresponds to different areas of concern or success.

#### **4.4 3.4 Ethical Considerations and Research Limitations**

Ethical considerations, such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation will be carefully upheld at some point of the research technique. nevertheless, it's far crucial to understand that there can be boundaries, including biases inherent in self-said information and demanding situations in generalizing effects due to the precise context of tourism establishments in Sri Lanka. by following the Double Diamond method and utilising thorough information series techniques, sampling techniques, and ethical standards, this observe targets to systematically discover the effect of provider layout on promoting sustainable tourism development in Sri Lanka.

## **5 Chapter 04 | Implementation and Outcomes**

### **5.1 4.1 Discover**

#### **5.1.1 4.1.1 Tourism in Sri Lanka**

In recent years, Sri Lanka's tourism sector has experienced huge increase, creating an incredible impact on the country's economic system and drawing a big selection of worldwide tourists, consisting of site visitors from Nordic international locations (Cuculeski et al, 2016). however, this expansion has highlighted numerous sustainability problems. The industry grapples with severe challenges associated with environmental degradation, the renovation of cultural history, and the phenomenon of over-tourism. The surge in tourist numbers has intensified the stress on herbal sources, which includes water and strength, ensuing in heightened waste production and pollution degrees (Herath et al., 2023). while projects to put in force eco-friendly practices, including electricity-efficient technology and effective waste management techniques, are underway, their application stays inconsistent throughout various institutions (Fernando & Ratnayake, 2021). furthermore, attaining a stability between tourism boom and the safeguarding of cultural traditions poses a full-size project, as tourism can every so often intervene with local customs and practices (Hemachandra et al., 2021).

#### **5.1.2 4.1.2 Insights from Interviews and Observations**

Discussions with inn managers in Sri Lanka suggest a numerous situation regarding sustainability tasks. a few resorts are starting to undertake eco-friendly practices, such as the set up of strength-green lighting and the release of waste segregation applications (Dilshan et al, 2022). nonetheless, there may be significant disparity in the extent of sustainability implementation, with sure institutions nevertheless at the preliminary phase of embracing comprehensive practices (Rajapaksha, 2023). resort managers renowned the importance of sustainability; but they regularly face demanding situations along with expanded fees and a loss of technical expertise

(Coghlan, 2019). Importantly, Nordic travelers, regarded for his or her heightened environmental awareness, desire resorts that show strong sustainability credentials, thereby increasing the demand for more effective and uniform sustainability practices within the Sri Lankan tourism industry (Björk et al., 2020).

### 5.1.3 4.1.3 Findings of the Interviews

This chapter presents a critical review of the research questions focusing on the key themes of sustainability practices, challenges, and guest expectations in the Sri Lankan hotel industry adopting thematic analysis as the main data analysis technique. Thematic analysis provides methodology that is orderly for categorizing qualitative data and organize this study to examine how managers and workers in hotels approach and interpret sustainability practices. This research provides clearer insights into sustainability in practise by relying on interview with professionals from various hotels, and hence, highlight common practices as well as challenges experienced by managers and staff towards the effective implementation of sustainable practices that is aligned with the government of Sri Lank's eco-tourism agenda.

The categories that emerged are Current Sustainability Practice, Sustainability Challenges, Nordic Guests' Needs & Wants, Role of Guest Feedback, Service Design Interventions, Future Aims & Support Requirement. All of the themes show how each hotel has tried to promote sustainable tourism both from an operational and strategic viewpoint while also noting constraints when it comes to the financial and human resources and changing patron expectations.

For instance, Current Sustainability Practices include information about the companies' existing sustainable activities like in the hotels' waste and plastic management. On the other hand, Challenges to Sustainability presents information on challenges such as financial, technological and knowledge-based with respect to operations. These themes were consistent with Coghlan (2019)'s study that pointed to resource scarcity in tourism and Bandara et al., (2018)'s study that underlined the importance of systematic enabler for achieving sustainability in hospitality.

The following categorized table brings out major themes and subthemes in relation to the interview findings along with quote supported findings. The following two quotes offer operational experiences in Sri Lankan hotels along with revealing some overarching strategic aims of the industry. Rigorous thematic analysis was conducted for each of the sub-themes and for each quote a brief explanation is presented to provide more information about the certain practices, the challenges, or the guest-oriented strategies found in the data sources.

Theme	Sub-Theme	Quote	Person	Description of the Quote
Current Sustainability Practices	Plastic reduction efforts	"Guest feedback inspired our shift to using glass bottles instead of plastic."	Arun	Demonstrates how guest feedback influences the adoption of eco-friendly practices, like using glass

				instead of plastic bottles, to meet sustainability goals.
	Solar energy utilization	"Solar Power is one of our main projects currently, which is going on."	Sandani	Highlights the focus on renewable energy, specifically solar power, to reduce environmental impact and align with sustainability objectives.
	Local sourcing and community collaboration	"We buy all our vegetables and fruits from the area."	Madi	Reflects commitment to supporting local communities through sourcing produce locally, which also helps reduce carbon footprint.
	Waste management	"We segregate our waste and follow the three-bin system."	Yasara	Describes an organized waste management system, indicating efforts to improve recycling and minimize environmental waste.
Challenges in Implementing Sustainability	High initial costs	"High startup costs for sustainable technologies make implementation difficult."	Arun	Points to financial constraints as a significant barrier, echoing challenges faced by the hospitality industry globally in adopting sustainable technologies.
	Knowledge gaps among staff	"Training staff to understand sustainability	Madi	Indicates that staff education is a challenge, with a need for comprehensive

		holistically is challenging."		sustainability training to ensure effective implementation.
	Limited support for advanced technology	"We lack proper technology for waste management and carbon footprint measurement."	Sandani	Highlights the technological barriers, such as lack of access to advanced waste management tools, that hinder sustainability efforts.
Nordic Travelers' Preferences	Preference for eco-friendly accommodations	"Nordic guests are very happy when we provide eco-friendly accommodations like treehouses."	Thamodh	Shows that Nordic travelers prefer eco-friendly accommodations, indicating demand for sustainable lodging options.
	Desire for authentic cultural experiences	"They love our garden tours and cooking experiences using locally sourced ingredients."	Ashen	Reflects Nordic guests' interest in immersive cultural experiences that connect them with local traditions and sustainable practices.
	Preference for low-impact activities	"Nordic travelers prefer hiking, cycling, and eco-friendly activities."	Yasara	Describes Nordic guests' preference for environmentally low-impact activities, aligning with eco-tourism principles.
Influence of Guest Feedback	Changes made based on feedback	"Feedback led to the introduction of waste segregation practices across all facilities."	Madi	Emphasizes how guest input has directly influenced operational changes, like implementing waste segregation for environmental benefits.

	Water management project	"Suggestions from a Danish group helped us initiate a water management project."	Arun	Highlights guest involvement in initiating water conservation efforts, underlining the value of guest feedback in sustainability initiatives.
Opportunities for Service Design Interventions	Guest engagement in sustainability activities	"We introduced tree-planting activities to engage guests in sustainability."	Thamodh	Illustrates initiatives that involve guests in sustainability, enhancing their connection with environmental conservation efforts.
	Collaborative eco-initiatives	"We organized beach cleanups, which guests enthusiastically participated in."	Ashen	Reflects efforts to involve guests in community-centered eco-initiatives, fostering collaboration in sustainability actions.
Future Goals and Support Needs	Carbon neutrality targets	"Our goal is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, focusing on solar energy."	Trevor	Outlines the organization's long-term vision for sustainability through a commitment to carbon neutrality, primarily via renewable energy adoption.
	Continuous training for staff	"We aim to educate staff on sustainable practices to ensure proper implementation."	Yasa	Shows the focus on staff training as a means to embed sustainability in daily operations, enhancing overall environmental commitment.

	Partnerships with local communities	"We collaborate with local farms to source most of our produce."	Thamodh	Describes partnerships with local farmers to support sustainable sourcing, which helps in community building and reducing carbon footprint.
Sustainable Tourism Promotion	Marketing Sri Lanka as a green destination	"We market our eco-friendly practices to attract green-conscious travelers, especially in Europe."	Arun	Demonstrates efforts to position Sri Lanka as an eco-friendly destination to attract environmentally conscious international travelers.
	Highlighting unique biodiversity	"Our biodiversity research initiative attracts many guests interested in nature."	Ashen	Points to initiatives that promote biodiversity, appealing to tourists interested in conservation and nature-focused experiences.
	Collaboration with international travel media	"We work with travel media to showcase our sustainability efforts to international audiences."	Yasara	Reflects partnerships with global media to promote sustainability efforts, enhancing Sri Lanka's image as a sustainable tourism destination.

Source : Developed by Author

#### 5.1.3.1 4.1.3.1 Theme 1: Current Sustainability Practices

This theme sums up measures taken by the hotels and can include anything from the use of recycle items, the extent of recycling as well as other measures taken in their effort to minimize the negative effects they have on the environment. The issues of

sustainable practices are relevant in relation to the goals of developing local and global tourism, creating the idea of responsible traveling in Sri Lanka. These sub themes again show certain actions that highlight the organisational culture of hotels in Sri Lanka to hold up sustainability expectation (Dilshan & Toko, 2022).

### **Balancing Local Challenges with Global Standards**

The analysis suggests rather mixed picture, demonstrating a desire for achieving a goal of sustainable tourism on one hand, and concrete concerns of Sri Lankan hotels on the other. Nordic travellers demand environmentally sustainable hotels as well as genuine experiences despite the fact that financial constraints and technological development affect the ability of the hotels to meet these expectations to the highest potential. This scenario can be generalised to sum up the bigger picture in the hospitality industry as elucidated by Khatter (2023), where the lack of funding and infrastructure that would enhance top flight environmental stewardship was underlined.

Coghlan (2019) also notes that local constraints override global eco-tourism principles hence a gap that can only be closed by cooperation and support. Therefore, this study not only maps existing sustainability deficiencies but also highlights issues of inter industry collaboration and government interference as crucial for the development of sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka. The growing client expectation indicates that only major shifts in internal adaptation to produce an eco-tourism product and external systemic changes will allow a genuine and credible offering.

### **Plastic Reduction Efforts**

Reducing the use of plastics has become quite an important focus area as hotels discard the use of plastics. This shift was informed by rising guest awareness in environmental degradation due to plastic wastes throughout the industry. According to Madi, the following is true: 'Guest feedback shaped the change which will see us move from using plastic bottles to the glass ones.' This shift, based on visitor concerns, implies that guest preferences are driving operations alterations (Apostolakis et al., 2020). Less use of plastics became appropriate for Sri Lankan context because plastic can affect marine life and tourism activities directly in an island country like Sri Lanka. Such changes point towards the importance of guests especially in directing the measures to pull through organizational sustainably, in the facets that seek to improve on environmental stewardship by considering the value systems of guests and employee in aligning their facets to the similar cause (Bandara et al., 2018). This view is characteristic of increasing numbers of tourists who see sustainability practices as one of the significant criteria affecting their choice of a hotel, according to Wong & Lai (2024).

### **Waste Management**

Waste management is the coordinated activities towards the general realization of a no-harm policy as exemplified by segregation and recycling. Specifically, Thamodh said, "We segregate our wastes, and adhere to the three-bin methods." This means an efficient system to managing waste that can also reduce the cost of doing business. Negative waste management means that waste has to be collected and disposed of, but an efficient waste management system implies that it must involve the staff and guests. Specifically for covering the waste disposal model the findings of this research show

that Sri Lankan hotels experience compatibility difficulties unless the waste disposal infrastructures there are more innovative than they currently seem to be even relative to other touristic destinations. Such practices are a prerequisite to obtain and sustain the green certifications without which Branding Sri Lanka an Eco-tourism destination is not possible, as stated by Bandara et al (2018). This is in line with the global guests' environmental conservation attitude that includes; waste reduction as embraced by the Northern European guests.

### **Renewable Energy Initiatives**

Amongst the renewable energy implementations in these hotels, solar power stands as a major organizational indicator of commitment towards low carbon emission. Trevor explained, "That is one of our major activities;" stressing more on green energy. In the context of the newly emerged sustainable hospitality service operations solar energy is the most suitable solution because Sri Lanka is exposed to sunlight throughout the year. To this, Khatter (2023) posited that investments in renewable energy is not only a conservation effort but also a long-term operational expense cutting method. Although such a strategy requires an initial capital investment in any of these projects, there are chances of cost recovery due to the forecasted reduction in energy costs as well as the favourable guest impression about the use of renewable energy. This corresponds with the overall sustainable development objectives as stated by the United Nations (2020) and attractiveness to guests from 'green' regions of the jineho such as the Nordic countries (Björk et al., 2020).

### **Local Sourcing and Organic Farming**

Purchasing locally, where an hotel obtains food stuffs from surrounding farms, is a clear indication of the green and fiscal sustainability. For instance, Sandani said, "We purchase all our vegetables and fruits directly from the local farmers, meaning we eliminate the transportation costs." It also maintains connections with stakeholders to create a web of relational dependencies wherein resilience in the local context is encouraged by the established partnership (Fathimath, 2015). Therefore, growing of organic gardens also gives the hotels an opportunity to respond to the customer demand for fresh organic foods as well as environmental conservation. As Apostolakis et al. (2020) points out, there is the trend of tourists to look for local food sourcing being incorporated when choosing an accommodation hence promoting cultural sustainability.

Altogether the practices within this theme provide a clear picture of a portfolio that is highly sensitive to sustainable tourism. When it comes to the use of environmentally sound practices such as the reduction of plastics, proper management of wastes, use of renewable energy as well as source local products, then the markets too are in tandem with the global trends in sustainability. Indeed, all of these actions would also satisfy the expectations of the interest group of environmental-conscious travellers while it is also strategic in the long-run risk diversification. , according to Khatter (2023), it is imperative to adopt such practices enable the hotels to key into market standards with the over doing so advances the cause of sustainable development. The effects on operating efficiency, image and community relations serve to reinforce the great potential of these initiatives.

### **5.1.3.2 4.1.3.2 Theme 2: Challenges in Implementing Sustainability**

Nevertheless, hotels are not free from concerns, as these goals imply numerous challenges that also indicate systemic and situational constraints. Challenges including; financial constraints, technology, and limited staff training make working towards sustainability quite challenging. These challenges are not different from what Coghlan (2019) has revealed as key issues in other tourism sectors globally.

#### **High Initial Costs**

Lack of funding is regarded as a major impediment to the implementation of sustainable practices. Sandani said, “High cost sustainability projects can at times be difficult to secure management approval for,” which also refers to the level of concern regarding the part of funding resources for green projects. The initial cost of implementing renewable energy sources and waste management can be expensive and might be expecting more from hotel’s that are small or locally owned. According to Khatter (2023), it may not be possible for hotels to invest on such analyses let alone even afford it unless they source for subsidies or incentives. However, in the case of Sri Lanka whose tourism industry was relatively small and only regaining its strength after disruptions that started from the emergence of COVID-19, high initial investment costs act as a major barrier to sustainability.

#### **Limited Technological Resources**

Lack of availability to advanced technology is even more challenging, as this hinders hotel resource management even more. Thamodh said, “We lack proper technology for a proper effective waste management” which gives an indication of improper or inadequate systems. According to Bandara et al. (2018), while technology is essential in the implementation of sustainable certification, the acquisition costs and availability of advanced technology continue to be prohibitive. For example, the efficient use of waste, though increasing the performances of a specific hotel owner may entail higher capital investment and technical manpower than some may afford. This barrier supports the assertions made by Hemachandra & De Silva (2021) who suggested that tourism gaps could be reduced if there was increased technological support as well as policies in support of the sector.

#### **Knowledge and Training Gaps**

Lack of training restrictions leads to an inconsistency in the enmity of sustainability. Trevor added, “It is not easy to train the staff on sustainable practices” which mean that organizations should come up with effective training sessions. According to Wong & Lai (2024), organizational culture in relation to sustainability concerns may be harmed by a general lack of knowledge and inadequate preparation of employees. Sri Lanka in particular may not offer sufficient formal learning about sustainability, and thus staff development is a strong necessity in this country. According to Khatter (2023), sustainability involves a widespread appreciation of sustainable practices in an organization and; this can only be maintained through constant staff training.

olving these challenges will entail a multi-level approach, which includes financial investment, investment in IT solutions and improvement in the training curriculums.

This is so even as Bandara et al. (2018) placed emphasis on the policy intervention that would ease the financial and technical pressures of hotels that otherwise are interested in sustainability standards. Also, creating a culture of staff development may create sustainability which plays an important role in the achievement of the organizational objectives. These changes could be implemented in a way to help Sri Lanka's hotel sector become a model for sustainable tourism – using these efforts to attract premium, sustainability-conscious guests.

#### **5.1.3.3 4.1.3.3 Theme 3: Nordic Travelers' Preferences**

Nordic guests are environmentally sensitive people who might have certain expectations as for the kind of tourism that will meet their expectations. To satisfy such preferences, hotels will thus position themselves in market needs, thus improving eco-tourism brand in Sri Lanka (Björk et al., 2020).

#### **Eco-Friendly Accommodations**

Most of the tourists in the Nordic countries embrace green technologies including plastic-free building and energy-efficient designs. This was supported by Trevor who said, “Nordic guests value everything that we do to minimise plastic and wastes around our establishment” on concerns to environmental effects. This coincides with the study done by Apostolakis et al. (2020) that also underlines the need to adopt clearly observable sustainable practices in the improvement of the guest experience. Such travelers choose their lodgings considering environmental factors, thus such facilities are preferred..

#### **Cultural Experiences**

Foreign travellers, especially from the Nordic countries note novelty and genuine cultural interactions as important factors when selecting hotel. Sandani added that the people from the Nordic countries wanted to see local sights and experience facets of the Sri Lankan culture. This aligns with the research conducted by Cuculeski et al. (2016) that revealed that sustainable tourism is anchored on the conservation of culture assets. For that purpose, experiences do not only satisfy the clients' demand for cultural interaction but also help communities to thrive, which are aligned with the concept of sustainable development goals (United Nations, 2020).

#### **Low-Impact Activities**

Thus, leisure activities, including hiking, cycling, bird-watching, fully correspond to the values of Nordic people, who try to remain eco-friendly even during the holiday. As Thamodh said “The activities that the Nordic travellers like are those that allow them to enjoy the nature without exploiting it.” This preference draws on a general appreciation of nature as a resource, which Björk et al. (2020) note, that Nordic tourists are more likely to seek environmentally sustainable tourism experiences. Such activities also involve the conservation of specific ecosystems that can support local people, as well as meet the goals of sustainable development as defined by the United Nations and the goals of most current tourism policies in different countries (United Nations, 2020). To meet the expectations of Nordic traveller regarding sustainable tourism products, localised and organic environment, cultural IMM identity, and non-

harm nativeness promote Sri Lanka as a economically sustainable tourism country for environmentally conscious tourists. This trend of love for sustainability in Nordic market supports the importance of the use of environmentally friendly practices as well as cultural experiences. According to Björk et al. (2020), the consumers from the Nordic countries who care much about the environment tend to visit those destinations and book environmentally friendly accommodations. In this regard, the hotels in Sri Lank have an opportunity to attract a new flow of tourists aware of the importance of preserving natural resources, while the state will encourage the sustainable development of tourism.

#### **5.1.3.4 4.1.3.4 Theme 4: Influence of Guest Feedback**

To increase the efficiency of their actions many hotels address the problem of guest participation in the sustainable development process. Trevor said what follows: “Guest feedback to a more efficient way of managing waste was initiated.” This sync-up with customer values improves guests’ satisfaction and loyalty meaning there is a nice virtuous cycle for enhancing customer satisfaction. Analysis of prior work, like that of Palacios-Florencio et al. (2021), points out that integrating the guest feedback process into the service design process improves trust, which can enhance the organisation’s brand image towards an environmentally conscious one.

#### **Adaptation to Feedback**

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#### **Environmental Improvements Based on Suggestions**

In this case, some guests have specific suggestions on where changes can be made and is for instance, enhance the use of water or even of resources. Ashen also points out that it was initiated based on the guests’ recommendations and Tops of the Nordic countries pressed the institution to embark on the Water Management Project. This flexibility is especially important in today’s world because more and more guests care about how environmentally friendly the hotels they choose are. The inclusion of such feedback ensures that the culture of continuous improvement is maintained, and the hotels are ready to meet new market demands comprehensively (Gao et al., 2022). It might be very useful for hotels in Sri Lanka to gather and analyse the comments of the guests as it allows the organisational changes to satisfy the clients’ expectations concerning sustainable practices. It can be compared with the strategy called co-design in the sphere of service development, wherein the clients are engaged in the work processes. An approach that hotels can undertake as they implement the principles would align with the global sustainability standards and customer expectations hence improving on a positive brand exposure and customer loyalty (Clatworthy, 2017 Wong & Lai, 2024). This theme illustrates that while consumer opinion is significant to consumer for satisfying their need, it is equally vital for organisational responsiveness for flexibility and environment respect.

### **5.1.3.5 4.1.3.5 Theme 5: Opportunities for Service Design Interventions**

Service design interventions continues to be a useful approach for implementing blueprints that provide mechanisms for managing sustainable initiatives to create guests' engagement in practicing sustainable practices in hotels. These interventions create common harmonious memorable proximal experiences that are ethical and coincide with the niche customer values of eco-tourism to augment the firms' hotel sustainable brand image.

#### **Guest Engagement in Sustainability**

Conventionally, the sustainable tourism service design of the socially responsible beaches lease, together with the local communities within the context of the environment protection projects, including the cleaning of the coastal territories from the waste. Regarding the project impact, Sandani mentioned "Beach cleanups are among our frequent activities and many guests join the activity enthusiastically which is done in tandem with the locals" The positive implication on the improvement of relation between beneficiaries and guests as well as the positive impact on the environment were also observed. All these have support Fathimath (2015) who opined that through constant enhancement of the cooperation partnership a way of expanding the longevity of tourism and provide for the framework for the local populace and their environment to also support the natural endowment of tourism the hospitality industry. I invite the guests to engage in such cases as for such practices those are not only the crucial demand for the necessity in the support of the community, but also the proofs of the active role that the hotel industry contributes to providing responsible and positively impactful tourism.

#### **Collaborative Environmental Projects**

Engaging local people in environmental issues like cleaning the beaches of debris and other waste is another good example of the service design of sustainable tourism. Sandani said that "our beach cleanups are famous, and the guests join the local community with a lot of zeal to clean the beaches' thus showing the positive aspects of the impact that would help to build a bond between the tourist and the community a plus since guests will be occupied in cleaning the beaches. Sustainable tourism advancements in the context of stakeholders augment the power of local communities and impose a support system to the tourism and hospitality business as observed by Fathimath (2015). Including guest in these initiatives is not only advantageous to the community but also triumphs hotels as enizens of meaningful and responsible tourist experiences.

Sustainability engagement practices where the guest is actively involved into the sustaianability goal and process is a part of a transformative tourism that stewards the environment for the guests. This strategy correlates with the Double Diamond model of co-design and build from the bottom up as a cyclical problem solving model, thus enabling the hotels to improve their services by reacting to the engagement and input of its guests. Such interventions offer guests the opportunities to practice sustainability proactively further strengthening their connection with the hotel brand as well as boosting the hotel's image as more responsible and sustainable tourism actor (Gao et al., 2022). It is noteworthy that such opportunities also fit into the international trends in eco-tourism and will also beneficial for Sri Lankan sustainable tourism initiatives by promoting hotels' participation in community-friendly environmental causes.

### 5.1.3.6 4.1.3.6 Theme 6: Future Goals and Support Needs

The theme of Future Goals and Support Needs is an amalgamation of Sri Lankan hotels' visions in the future which are to be more sustainable. The goals that include attaining carbon neutrality, carrying out staff development and embracing community relations are strategic since they show a progressive goal. Still, realization of these objectives is possible only through restructuring and collaboration at the industry level.

#### **Carbon Neutrality Goals**

Carbon neutrality is amongst the most important long-term management priorities within the hotel industry. Refocusing the organization for sustainability, Arun said, "The organization aims for carbon neutrality by the year 2030 with concentration towards energy efficiency and resource management." Carbon neutrality is also compatible with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals as it gained a positive response among tourists. Based on Khatter (2023), carbon neutral is a useful tool to improve the brand image of hotels and consequently attracts environment-conscious guests and nurturing Sri Lanka's aspiration for being a green nation.

#### **Ongoing Staff Training**

Carbon neutrality is amongst the most important long-term management priorities within the hotel industry. Refocusing the organization for sustainability, Arun said, "The organization aims for carbon neutrality by the year 2030 with concentration towards energy efficiency and resource management." Carbon neutrality is also compatible with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals as it gained a positive response among tourists. Based on Khatter (2023), carbon neutral is a useful tool to improve the brand image of hotels and consequently attracts environment-conscious guests and nurturing Sri Lanka's aspiration for being a green nation.

#### **Community Partnerships**

Stakeholder engagement is a central factor of sustainability and a key driver to improving guests' experiences. Trevor echoed that, "Some of our food suppliers are local farmers, an environment friendly strategy' 'All our suppliers are local farmers which play the double role of creating employment for the locals and reducing our carbon footprint in sourcing products". In the analysis made by Hemachandra & De Silva (2021) community collaboration being the key integral part of sustainable tourism having impact on economic stability and on relations with the communities. Local purchasing will also help in the reduction of transport-related emissions and benefit the growth of local businesses which continue to put Sri Lanka as a green destination at the forefront.

By laying down the long-term objectives specified under this theme, organization has shown that it is willing and ready to transform and maintain sustainability with regard to the natural surroundings. Carbon neutrality, staff development, and community outreach comprise both challenging yet achievable goals that are also relevant to the country's strategic plan and international sustainable development objectives for Sri Lanka. These goals will need to be addressed through cooperation among the government agencies, local suppliers and the global partners. It is for this reason that Khatter (2023) and Fathimath (2015) posit that there is a need for integration for one to have an effective and sustainable improvement in the ability to address the question

of sustainability, hence the need to incorporate resources, knowledge and support from different sectors. All these partnerships may formulate a solid foundation that would enhance the endurance of these hotels and hence of the tourism sector and the societies in which these hotels are located..

## 5.2 4.2 Define

### 5.2.1 4.2.1 Personas

The empirical evidence drawn from the interviews with the hotel managers and sustainability officers, and other stakeholders in tourism showed two broad categories of Nordic tourists who may travel to Sri Lanka. These personas depict the attitudes and behaviours of Nordic sustainable tourists and can be used to understand how Sri Lankan tourism looks at its sustainability. The following personas, Emma and Lars are the archetypical of these traveler forms and depict the larger trends as observed from the interviews.

#### 5.2.1.1 Persona 1: Emma, the Eco-Conscious Explorer



Figure 7 : Persona 1

Source: Developed by Author

Emma is 35 years old, currently working as a marketing specialist and hails from Sweden, but she tends to consider the sustainable aspects of traveling a lot. She is an environmentalist who looks for green places to stay and who enjoys immersive offbeat travel that is sustainable. Emma like to travel and do some sports; she loves hiking and cycling; she prefers to buy relatively eco-friendly and ethically produced products. Her environmental attitude makes her go for green-certified accommodation and travel as she prefers.

### 5.2.1.2 Persona 2: Lars, the Adventure Enthusiast



Figure 8 : Persona 2

Source : Developed by Author

Lars is a 45 years old architect by profession and origin from Norway, he love nature and adventurous. He prefers those that have viable tourism attractions such as trekking, cycling as well as wildlife watching. Lars cherishes nature and seeks guestrooms that are as environmental-friendly as possible, and that bring benefits to locals. He is an adventurer, at the same time, he is proactive in the preservation of the environment and socially responsible.

## 5.2.2 4.2.2 The Role of Guest Feedback and International Standards

The second valuable finding of this thematic analysis is that the role of guests' feedback, especially those belonging to the Nordic countries. Eco-tourism and cultural tourism are other customer preferences that dictate operation revisions, as well as challenge hoteliers to improve sustainable products. This is in line with Wong and Lai (2024) discovery of the need to acknowledge guests' expectations as a way of enhancing sustainability. Further, Spadaro et al. (2023) argue towards a well- co- ordinated approach towards local tourism industry which embraces global parameters of eco-tourism and states that guest expectation can be a positive force for operational change.

Customers feedback comes out as a profile that represents an element of change in this place, showing how the simplification of guest calculated expectations can lead to increasing the efficiency of the hotels' practices. This process strengthens a rather proactive/active approach towards sustainability with the focus on guests, helping the hotels to stay competitive in the international context of the eco-tourism market. The hotels' active engagement with feedback addresses the current needs of the Nordic guests while also achieving broader improvements for the entire hotel that would

relate to the global standards and brand image of the hotel as well as appeal to other guests who are interested in the conservation of the environment.

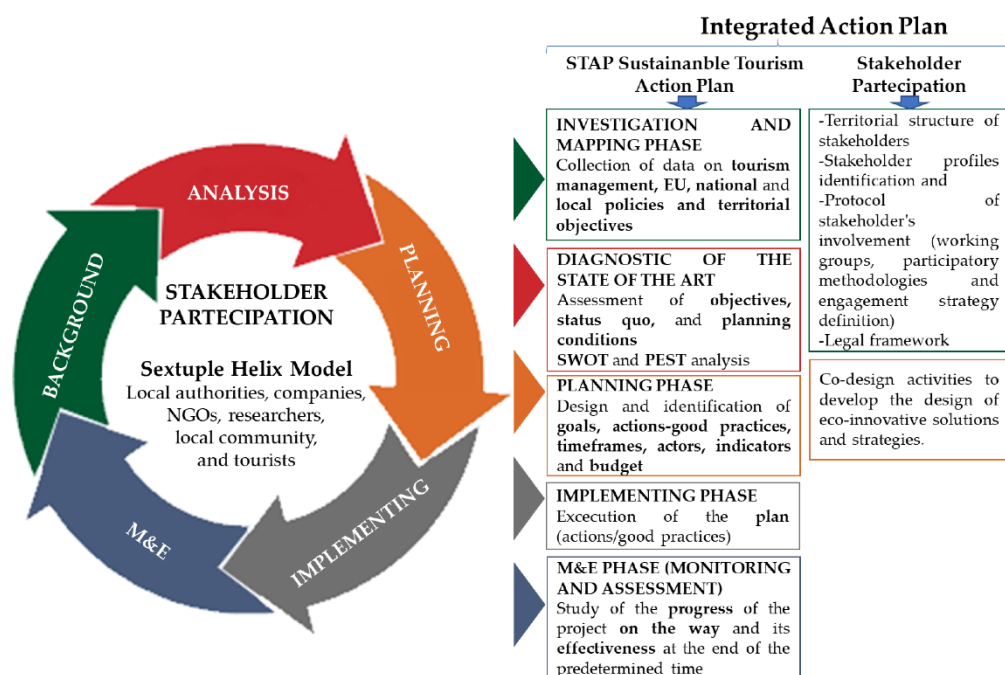
### 5.3 4.3 Develop

#### 5.3.1 4.3.1 Service Design Intervention

The phase of provider layout intervention will make use of insights gained from prior research to formulate sustainability solutions which are customized for the tourism sector in Sri Lanka. engaging in co-creation workshops with lodge managers and other applicable stakeholders will play a vital role within the development of realistic and revolutionary sustainability measures (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021). The prototyping and trying out of those measures—including more suitable waste control systems or strength-green technology—will be crucial for refining the solutions and confirming their viability (Gao et al., 2022). it's miles vital that those measures are in concord with the sustainability targets of the tourism industry and the choices of Nordic travelers, incorporating stakeholder remarks to enhance their effectiveness and relevance.

#### 5.3.2 4.3.2 Opportunities for Improvement

Several promising avenues exist to promote sustainability within Sri Lanka's tourism industry. Increasing the uptake of set up eco-certifications, together with the inexperienced Key certification, can stimulate broader adoption of sustainable practices (Bandara et al., 2018). Furthermore, the emergence of innovative solutions, including state-of-the-art waste management systems and environmentally friendly



construction technology, give viable strategies to tackle the world's environmental problems effectively (Dewi et al., 2023).

**Figure 9 : Stakeholder Involvement in Tourism**

Source : (Spadaro et al, 2023)

Furthermore, improving collaboration amongst diverse stakeholders—consisting of governmental bodies, tourism operators, and local groups—can contribute to the formulation and execution of more effective sustainability techniques (Fathimath, 2015). This cooperative method can also promote the alternate of fine practices and resources, thereby amplifying the general effectiveness of sustainability efforts.

**5.3.3 4.3.3 Implementation Strategy**

A successful strategy for the mixing of sustainability answers necessitates meticulous planning and effective aid control. proper allocation of resources—consisting of finances, personnel, and era—is essential for a success execution of sustainability projects (Baloch et al., 2022). setting up a viable timeline with awesome milestones and closing dates will facilitate the green management of the implementation technique (Dilshan et al., 2022). involving stakeholders at some stage in the implementation segment will promote alignment with sustainability goals and tackle any demanding situations that can emerge, thereby encouraging a cooperative attempt toward reaching sustainable tourism effects (Perera, 2017).

**5.3.4 4.3.4 Evaluation and Impact Assessment**

Assessing the effectiveness of sustainability tasks requires the tracking of vital performance indicators that pertain to environmental outcomes and patron pride (Khan et al., 2021). Key metrics, along with energy and water intake, waste reduction chances, and remarks from tourists inside the Nordic vicinity, will yield vast insights into the results of the solutions that have been implemented (Cuculeski et al., 2016). This assessment will facilitate the evaluation of the concrete blessings of sustainability efforts and pinpoint areas that necessitate similarly enhancement, thereby supporting ongoing tasks aimed at enhancing sustainability practices within the tourism zone of Sri Lanka (Wu et al., 2021). Reflecting at the insights received from this evaluation technique will manual future sustainability efforts, making sure that there is non-stop development and edition to new challenges.

**5.4 4.4 Deliver**

The final phase of double diamond theory is to provide recommendations for sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka. The assessment made in Current Sustainability Practices showed that despite the current challenges, hotels are practicing on sustainability principles to embrace international standards and satisfy guests with sustainability consciousness. Nonetheless, the Challenges in Implementing Sustainability theme pinpoint major inhibitions, such as very high implementation costs coupled with technological lags that hinder the sectors' progress in consistent

sustainability engagements. Such issues resonate well with the literature informing the need for tailored support and resources for the sustainable development agenda (Khatteer, 2023; Bandara et al., 2018).

The theme on Nordic Travelers’ Preferences aptly highlighted the call of those environmentally sustainable tourists seeking cultural experiences that were both efficient and imposing minimal effects to the environment as observed in the markets of Scandinavia (Björk et al., 2020). Furthermore, the Influence of Guest Feedback outlined how guest feedback plays a large role in determining sustainability measures in hotels; many implementing changes based on this expectation.

The realization of Service Design Interventions appeared as a direction for consideration and revealed the possibility of activities such as guest participation in environmental projects. Lastly, under Future Goals and Support Needs, there were plans on transition to carbon neutrality, more firmly woven communities as a hint of the sustainability vision. Nonetheless, this chapter affords a 360-degree perspective of the antecedents to Sri Lanka’s sustainable tourism to help the subsequent recommendations meet intended objectives using business model canvas.

### 5.4.1 4.4.1 Business Model Canvas

A Business Model Canvas is a tool used by companies to identify factors that affect business processes (see Figure 10).

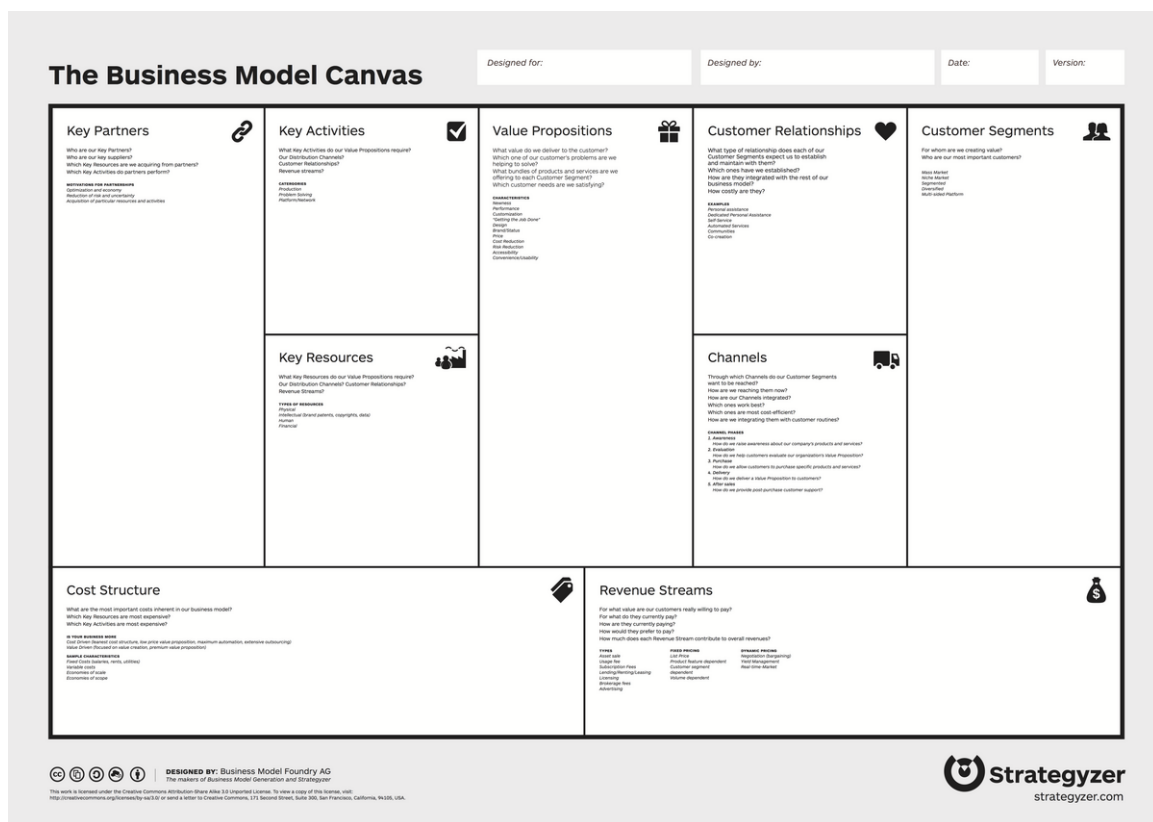


Figure 10: Business Model Canvas

Source: Business modelsInc.com

The Business Model Canvas has nine elements, which are key activities, key resources, partner network, value proposition, customer relationship, channels, customer segments, cost structure and revenue streams, that describe the influencing parties of a business decision. The recommendations will be evaluated by using the business model too.

#### 5.4.1.1 4.4.1.2 *Strengthening Current Sustainability Practices and Overcoming Challenges*

This section develops a structured system for collecting guest feedback on sustainability and address practical challenges, such as high costs and technology limitations, through *targeted resource allocation*.

The thematic analysis revealed that although Sri Lankan hotels have implemented various measures regarding sustainable practices within the organization, such as managing plastics and waste, they have failed to achieve international standards mainly due to the *cost structure* and technology aspects. For instance, high startup cost was cited by the participants as a factor discouraging the use of sustainable technology in the industry, which is in agreement with Khatter's (2023) view that the overall cost is more of a concern in hospitality industry. For this reason, constructive guest feedback could be a lowly cost way of generating a structured system to address where sustainable practices match guest requirements and prioritize interventions with the greatest potential.

Gathering and making sense of a *customer relationship* enables hotel stakeholders to capture consumer preferences to appeal to green customers. Bandara et al. (2018) state that use of feedback-based modifications may therefore be useful to enhance the understanding of the areas where the hotel successfully engages its guests in sustainable practices leading to efficiency in resource management. Moreover, practicing cheap, resource-friendly behaviours, including sourcing of food locally, is sustainable from the environmental perspective and guests' expectation, as has been as evidenced from thematic analysis. This way hotels are able to strengthen their claims of being environmentally friendly without having to spend exorbitant amounts of money.

Hotel managers suggested that there should be an increase in the formalised process for the collection of guest feedback related to sustainability stating, "We do not have a well-coordinated and systematic way of receiving sustainability feedback". This we believe would improve the company's ability to meet guests expectations. All the sustainability officers called for subsidisation given the high initial costs as one officer stated, "The major challenge though is the high initial costs of implementing green technologies". The field of operations is one of the more vocal supporters of guest feedback, with one operation manager explaining: "Guest input helped us cut down on plastic and replace it with glass bottles." That is why such feedback mechanisms are cost efficient ways to drive those sustainability enhancements.

Academic evidence from special context of Denmark shows that information acquire from guests can precipitate the enhancement of worthwhile changes in sustainability strategies; this has been illustrated in the views from hotels such as the Hotel d'Angleterre and Crowne Plaza Copenhagen Towers, where the structured method of feedback collection made guest experience and business functioning better by standing the general satisfaction rate by 15%, Visit Denmark, 2019). This approach

complements Khatter (2023) who asserted that success in management of guest feedback can minimise financial challenges by directing the organisation's efforts at areas that are most relevant to the guests. Following the same format, Sri Lankan hotels could overcome resource issues and create a positive image of hotels as establishments that are sensitive to the environment to suit the growing trend of environmentally conscious tourist.

This recommendation is indeed useful for operational enhancement but also creates better guest rapport. Through feedback structures, hotels get an active engagement of the guests in the processes towards sustainability thus making them feel that they are part of the change. As a result, this approach also strengthens guest loyalty and simultaneously offers the hotels the necessary data regarding the improvement of their sustainable operations for increasing efficiency and revenue and customer satisfaction.

#### **5.4.1.2 4.4.1.2 Utilizing Service Design to Cater to Nordic Travelers**

This section leverages service design to create culturally immersive, eco-friendly experiences tailored for Nordic travelers, prioritizing sustainable accommodations and community-based tourism which is the value proposition expected by tourists.

In order to fulfill the requirements of the Nordic people, guest relations managers proposed that the company should provide cultural services that are environment friendly. One said, "The Nordic guests want cultural experience and sustainability and that's what the sentiments reflect." Sustainability coordinators insisted on the further increase in local organic food because "Nordic travelers expect sustainable dining". Operations managers also stressed low impact activities such Northern trails, one said, "Nordic guest want sustainable outdoor activities like hiking." These strategies would assist Sri Lankan hotels to address the problem of attracting the Nordic eco-tourists.

This recommendation is indeed useful for operational enhancement but also creates better *customer relationship*. Through feedback structures, hotels get an active engagement of the guests in the processes towards sustainability thus making them feel that they are part of the change. As a result, this approach also strengthens guest loyalty and simultaneously offers the hotels the necessary data regarding the improvement of their sustainable operations for increasing efficiency and revenue and customer satisfaction.

#### **5.4.1.3 4.1.1.3 Integrating Sustainability Throughout the Tourism Value Chain**

Embed sustainability across all stages of the tourism value chain by fostering *partnerships* with local suppliers, conservation groups, and community organizations.

Locus of analysis results showed their positive orientation towards supporting the local communities and keeping negative environmental impact at bay; more often the

participants mentioned use of local produce and involving local farmers for consuming products. This recommendation extends that understanding by suggesting that Sri Lankan hotels deepen sustainability integration into their value chain which is now pursuing by many countries in line with sustainable tourism practices (Herath et al., 2023). This indicates that there is an opportunity for hotel industries to cut on transport emission by partnering with local suppliers in order to cut on cost and also be an added advantage to the local supplies since there will be a showcasing of their goods.

Such a recommendation is evident in the studies by Spadaro et al. (2023) to advance that community-based partnerships, not only create sustainable practice, but also build social responsibility, thus, building the favourable image of the hotels in the targeted local market. Especially when food and craft products are bought from local producers rather than imported, hotels would have less impact on the environment as runaway guests prefer low-carbon solutions. Additionally, building these partnerships improves community relations, providing a basis for an overall network of support which can assist in overcoming the challenges posed by an absence of resources to facilitate growth on both sides of the partnership.

For example, the case of community-based tourism partnerships in New Zealand involved in the Biological Heritage National Science Challenge has demonstrated that integrating sustainability across the downstream tourism value chain enhances social purpose and assists local economies (Duncan & Robson-Williams, 2023). Spadaro et al. (2023) confirm that sourcing from local suppliers decreases guests' carbon impacts compared to sourcing from global suppliers. For Sri Lanka, establishment of these partnerships will enable hotels to tap into the two key niche markets of sustainability and local sourcing of products hence leading to increase the appeal in the market.

To extend sustainable practice among the hotels, managers suggested the need to work directly with local producers as a means of cutting down transport-related greenhouse gas emissions as well as enhancing the realities of place identity. An example of a local purchasing advantage was given by one of the interviewed hotel managers who said that buying locally reduces transport-related emissions and enriches guest experiences. Also, the interviewed sustainability officers pointed to better sourcing locally to improve sustainability across the tiers. In the same interview, one sustainability officer noted that 'it reduces the environmental footprint and boosts the local economy' for this reasons it calls for the creation and sustaining of local sourcing as a sustainable tourism measure.

Applying sustainability to the value chain also increases customers with a focus on sustainability as more guests choose accommodations that meet the same standards. This comprehensive approach offers a dual benefit: it proves its practicality for operation and adds value to the concept of branding by making Sri Lankan hotels pioneers of sustainable tourism.

#### ***5.4.1.4 4.1.1.4 Training Staff as Ambassadors of Sustainability***

Establish a training program that empowers staff as sustainability ambassadors, equipping them to communicate eco-friendly practices effectively to guests.

Key themes include the strong preference for supporting local communities and reducing negative effects on the environment though most participants mentioned sourcing from local suppliers and partnering with community farmers. This recommendation extends this view by suggesting that Sri Lankan hotels deepen sustainability across the supply chain, as is done in sustainable tourism (Herath et al., 2023). This paper argues that through supply chain management, hotels can decrease emissions that are associated with transportation, obtain goods at cheaper prices, and boost the local economy.

Such recommendation is well backed by authors Spadaro et al., 2023 who postulated that community-based partnerships foster sustainability while improving the social responsibility hence improving the brand image of the hotels in the particular community. This way hotels buy less from outside which is less environmentally friendly and meet the demand of the environmentally conscious consumer. Moreover, such partnerships develop the communities' connections, which provide a strong support system over the resource constraints and promote the partners' economic relations.

A good example of community-based tourism partnerships is the Biological Heritage National Science Challenge in New Zealand; he all established that entrenching sustainable tourism along the value chain enhances social responsiveness and helps boost local economies (Duncan & Robson-Williams, 2023). The study by Spadaro et al. (2023) also establishes business relationships with local suppliers decrease the carbon footprint whereas the guests get the message of sustainable sourcing. To Sri Lanka, forging these partnerships may assist hotels to attain the twin benefits of energy efficiency and local emancipation while making them fashionable amongst environmentally sensitive travellers seeking to engage the community.

To help hotels in the proper implementation of sustainability initiatives, sustainability coordinators said that training is necessary to talk about sustainable practices to the customers. A sustainability coordinator said: "Sometimes one must teach others about sustainability in order to spread the message to the guests." This training would transform the staff into promoters of sustainability, leading fruitful discussions with guests about the sustainable actions of the hotel and continuously reminding guests about the hotel's commitment to the sustainable practices. Moreover, some of operations managers recommended offering incentives to encourage employees implement sustainable strategies in their work. According to one manager, incentives would increase staff activity and establish realistic practices: This underlines the rationale for rewarding staff involvement in sustainability endeavors.

Besides, incorporating sustainability into the value chain helps the hotel respond to stakeholders' demand for green products from guests who are conscious of the hotels' environmental impact and the materials used to produce them. This comprehensive approach offers a dual benefit: it is beneficial for operations and improves the image of Sri Lankan hotels, in their promoting sustainable tourism.

#### **5.4.1.5 4.1.1.5 Promoting Sri Lanka as a Sustainable Tourism Destination**

Develop a targeted marketing strategy to position Sri Lanka as a leading destination for sustainable tourism, leveraging international media *partnerships* to boost visibility.

Suggesting to promote Sri Lanka as an opportunity for an eco-tourism meets with the results of the thematic analysis according to which the majority of hotels in Sri Lanka are committed to sustainable practices. This raises the idea that hotels should target the overall branding strategy to highlight the country's diverse ecosystem, particularly the conservation programs, and the greening drive, to de-cluster within the global competition. This recommendation has bases on advocacy of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018) on sustainable tourism marketing because it has the potential of influencing the travelers' decisions and improving the country's image on the international market.

Because of the strategic alliance between eco-tourism media and hotel industries in Sri Lanka the hotels can be in a better position to market themselves to the green conscious tourists. For instance, Wong & Lai (2024) show that if promotional activities are targeted and linked with the green certification logos and sustainability messages, this would enhance the tourists' awareness and create demand for sustainable accommodation. Effective implementation of branding and cooperation with the tourism board is to strengthen the image of the country as the leader in sustainable tourism, which will attract those tourists who care about the environment.

Both Norway and Sweden best illustrate what can be done to increase the awareness of eco-tourism using the media. In Norway's campaigns, which promote both nature protection and environmentally friendly lodgings, one can see that the number of conscientious tourists has grown by 40% (Björk et al., 2020). Wong & Lai (2024) suggest that linking marketing to green certifications enhances the awareness of the environment. Applying the same mechanism to Sri Lanka, linking with international media can bring in the desired eco-tourism and strengthen the country's brand commitment to sustainable tourism in front of the global arena.

For the Sri Lankan hotel marketing managers, it was suggested that to further enhance sustainable tourism promotion, a specific focus should be given to promote the greener tourism attractions, the natural beauty and the cultural sites in Sri Lanka. Some examples are, one marketing manager said, "biodiversity will be a marketing tool on tourist awareness on the island will create a niche for Sri Lanka as one of the best eco tourisms in the world." Sustainability officers also endorsed this approach with Sri Lanka being encouraged to champion community based eco-tourism. In the same way, an officer opined that, 'developing an image marketing campaign based on community-based eco-tourism could make Sri Lanka unique'; this supports the argument of the integration of communities in sustainability marketing.

This recommendation of placing Sri Lanka as a sustainable tourism destination is good for individual hotels as it is also good for the country's economic activities and therefore for the fulfillment of the country's sustainability goals.

#### ***5.4.1.6 4.1.1.6 Setting Long-Term Goals and Securing Support for Sustainability Initiatives***

Establish a structured framework for long-term sustainability goals, including carbon neutrality, partnerships with local communities, and regular assessments to monitor progress.

Analysis based on themes kept on bringing sustainability objectives with revolutionary ideas on issues such as carbon neutralization and community involvement on the long-

term. Creating such a structure for these goals is crucial to keep the process going and guarantee that Sri Lankan hotels can fulfill and prolong their environmental mission. Milestones like carbon neutrality by 2030 deliver with them specific objectives, with regard to the idea of structured objective-setting within sustainable tourism advanced by Khan et al., (2021).

Such objectives call for partnership with other community based organizations and other conservation agencies. Fathimath (2015) emphasizes the understanding of collaboration with the community for sustainable tourism where the author points out that stakeholder partnership is mutually beneficial and enhances the existence of sustainability plan. Compliance is also achieved by constant supervision and archiving to allow hotels ascertain their performance, redesign their approaches and be answerable to the consumers and shareholders.

The GNH policy of Bhutan that emphasizes on sustainability objectives together with tourism policy gives a great idea to Sri Lanka. Having set ambitious goals and maintaining collaboration with communities, which has led to the country's carbon neutrality and attracting tourists interested in the field of ecology (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021). Another general goal-setting framework outlined by Khan et al. (2021) can point to the fact that Sri Lanka can follow this pattern and contribute to its funding for conservation while positioning itself as an elite eco-tourism destination. With such set environmental objectives, Sri Lanka can keep up with the global competency whilst accommodating the new breed of tourists who are after sustainable tourism products.

Speaking to sustainability officers and executives from various firms and industries, the need to engage the local NGOs is imperative toward long-term sustainability initiatives such as carbon neutral initiatives and conservation. One officer was keen to point out: "The collaboration with NGOs may contribute to achieving general environmental goals" co-opting the language of collaboration for high impact goals that may be largely sustainability in nature. The managers also added that each project should have timelines pointing toward the achievement of carbon neutrality: "I think that the goals we should set are measurable in that they will help us not forget what we are doing in terms of sustainability and help track progress toward becoming carbon neutral." These suggestions suggest that the structural planning of long term sustainability is needed.

This recommendation appeals to the formulation of long-term goals and objectives within the construction of a framework to provide hotels with sustained competitiveness and compliance with worldwide tourism benchmarks while putting good and sustainable tourism practices within Sri Lanka on the world stage. Besides, we introduced the values for transparency and timely reporting that strengthen trust with the environmentally concerned consumers, who select brands with proved sustainability responsibility.

The thematic approach has enabled a critical examination of the various facets of sustainability in the Sri Lankan hotels and the current practice, practical difficulties encountered, guests' expectations, and the visionary directions being established. All established themes encapsulate key knowledge on the industry's identity of sustainable tourism suggesting virtue as well as vice. Initiatives related to sustainability that are implemented in the hotels at the time of the study include reduction of plastics and waste management as evidence of sustainable performance.

Nevertheless, the investigation identifies several challenges to the achievement of broader sustainability, which include; high implementation costs and restricted access to technology, there is a combination of institutional support and resource grant as highlighted by Bandara et al. (2018). This distinction between aspiration and capacity raises a crucial question for the sustainability transformation of the sector, in which more backing from the government and the industry may be required.

The key operational changes mentioned with regard to Nordic travelers included their choice of environment-friendly accommodations and want to engage in responsible tourism. The present study echoes the work by Björk et al. (2020) to stress that a hotel service must meet and respond to the customer's expectations concerning night services to consolidate guest loyalty. Furthermore, feedback from and interaction with guests may also be used to foster durative improvement, as evidenced by accommodations changing the practices they incorporate based on the advice of their guests to reduce the use of water and improper disposal of wastes. This responsiveness situates hotels as flexible actors in the sustainable tourism milieu; however, it also creates the problem of accommodating present-day guest needs with future environmental imperatives.

Purposes including goal of the hotels to become carbon neutral or increase in community engagement present time zone/ shy of the hotels towards the future, sustainable destinations. However, achieving of these goals is not easy and often presupposes permanent training, proper financial investment, and cooperation between sectors, as pointed out by UNWTO (2018). It therefore offers not only a quantitatively and qualitatively informed critique of current sustainability processes, but is also able to point to a developmental possibility indicating that with appropriate encouragement, Sri Lankan hotels can increase their sustainability factor. These findings will be followed by the recommendations chapter in the subsequent chapter, whereby concrete measures to eradicate these challenges and exploit the realized benefits towards the achievement of a sustainable improvement will be outlined.

This chapter synthesized findings from the interviews conducted with Sri Lankan hotel managers and staff whereby a number of themes in relation to sustainability practices, sustainability challenges, guest perceptions of sustainability and participants' future sustainability intentions in the sustainable tourism industry were presented. The thematic analysis, based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, illuminated six central themes: Current Measures in Sustainability, Barriers to Sustainability Implementation, Nordic Travelers' Choices, Role of Feedback in Sustainability, Potential for Service Design Interventions, and Desired Outcomes and Assistance Required in the Future. All themes gave a perspective on the technical, cost and competitive concerns associated with sustainability in the Sri Lankan tourism sector.

Current Sustainability Practices assessment pointed out that all hotels are taking sustainable initiatives in the form of waste and energy minimization such as the usage of plastic, solar energy among others. However, while the opus Challenges in Implementing Sustainability indicated that there have always been barriers such as high costs, limited technology, and lack of sustainability training for staff. They speak to the need for more focused approaches, especially in the area of funding and technology needs as discussed in the literature (Khatter, 2023; Bandara et al., 2018).

The Preferences of Nordic Travelers became the fourth vital theme where it was revealed that environmentally conscious guests want not only cultural experiences but

also those that are sustainable, which is in line with current trends in the tourism industry based on the Nordic countries (Björk et al., 2020). Such realizations can serve as the basis for service touchpoints revealing those services that meet the needs of the eco-demanding tourists and improve the market position of hotels in the sphere of international tourism. The findings of the Influence of Guest Feedback on sustainably practices also support this argument by showing how guests help to define the nature of hotel business. For instance, the variations in waste management practices for example were actually dictated by the guests' feedback which show how beneficial guest feedback mechanisms are in the fine tuning of operations.

The theme Breaking the Ice: Opportunities for Service Design Interventions showcased such a concept by presenting ideas, like guest participation in tree-planting activities, as ideas that are friendly to both environmental and experience kind of strategies. From Clatworthy (2017), there are general principles of services, which, when adopted, will improve the hospitality experience of guests and at the same time encourage sustainability. Finally, Future Goals and Support Needs revealed colorful visions of long-term goals, such as carbon neutralization and more extended collaboration with the community, which proved sustainable values orientation.

In conclusion, this chapter underlined an interaction between sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka and numerous problems and demands that are faced by hotels. The research indicates that an integrated approach involving feedback from guests, onsite service customization, improvement of value chain, workforce training, and co-operations with stakeholder communities is the way forward for sustainability. Through the comparison of thematic findings and relevant literature, this chapter provides a complex vision of the state of sustainability in the Sri Lankan tourism sector and provides the basis for moving on to recommendations outlined in the subsequent chapter.

## 5.4.2 4.4.2 Blog Post

### 5.4.2.1 4.4.2.1 *Addressing Sustainability Challenges in Sri Lanka's Tourism Sector*

Lush landscapes, rich cultural heritage and beautiful women, with all these, it really is no surprise that global travelers have always been attracted to Sri Lanka. But the fast growth in tourism has its share of sustainability challenges. Eco friendly practices are difficult to implement in many hotels because of high initial cost, lack of access to advanced equipment and knowledge gaps among hotel staff. Problems ranging from inadequate waste management to overexposure of natural resources and inadequate participation of the community underscore the urgency of shifting to the systemic sustainable tourism perspective. With travelers from Nordic countries who are famous for their environmental awareness demanding green accommodations, low impact activities and authentic cultural experiences, the industry must respond at speed.

### 5.4.2.2 4.4.2.2 *Recommendations for Hotels*

In line with global sustainability trends and eco conscious Nordic travelers, Sri Lankan hotels can follow few adapted techniques to achieve that potential. Renewable energy like solar power can be a great option for Nordic guests who put a high priority on lowering carbon footprints, as it not only helps to reduce long term operational costs. With Sri Lanka blessed with abundant sunlight and existing payback rates of under five years, solar power is particularly feasible, but upfront installation costs are high. In terms of food and materials, hotels should also source from their local supply chains, a strategy preferred by the locally conscious, environmentally responsible, Nordic traveler. Today a guest can develop guest engagement initiatives – e.g. tree planting activity, zero plastic zones, a guided tour of a sustainability practices – in support of being elevated into an experience that reflects their passion towards environmental stewardship. Also, hotels can benefit by implementing structured feedback systems that attend directly to sustainability preferences of Nordic travelers in order to fine tune their practices towards meeting global Eco-tourism standards.

### 5.4.2.3 4.4.2.3 *Recommendations for Public Decision-Makers*

Nordic markets have important pioneering roles to play in the fostering of sustainable tourism, and the role of government bodies is central to that. Subsidies or tax breaks for hotels that opt for green technologies (solar panels, sophisticated waste management systems, etc.) can overcome financial hurdles for them. By setting up recycling programs and making zero-plastic zones in tourist hotspots like beaches and nature reserves, plastic waste will be reduced and a push will be given to eco-friendly culture. Renewable energy solutions such as wind and sea wave energy are heavy investment areas, but Sri Lanka has the potential to be a leader in green innovation. Training programs will be strengthened with collaborating academic institutions in order to provide the required skills to strengthen workforce for implementation and maintenance of sustainable practices. Less importantly, targeted marketing campaigns in Nordic countries focusing on Sri Lanka's eco-tourism initiatives and unique biodiversity will effectively increase Sri Lanka's positioning as a foremost sustainable destination.

Sri Lanka can become the global leader in sustainable tourism through achievable action points like zero plastic zones, optimal use of resources and adoption of solar

energy, while taking up the challenges of nationwide recycling and high cost of renewable projects.

## **6 Chapter 05 | Conclusion**

In summary, this thesis has explored the role of service design in promoting sustainability within the tourism sector in Sri Lanka, specifically focusing on the experiences of Nordic travelers. Through a detailed analysis of current sustainability practices, stakeholder insights, and the application of service design interventions, several critical findings have emerged.

### **6.1 5.1 Summary of Key Findings and Contributions to Theory and Practice**

The contextual evaluation underscored the sustainability challenges presently faced by the Sri Lankan tourism sector, indicating both improvements made and crucial areas that necessitate sizable enhancement. Discussions with motel managers provided valuable insights into the operational challenges and opportunities for adopting sustainable practices, especially in view of the increasing demands from environmentally aware Nordic travelers. The application of service design methodologies has shown significant promise in enhancing sustainability efforts throughout the tourism industry, providing actionable solutions that resonate with the possibilities of Nordic tourists and the overarching targets of sustainable tourism.

### **6.2 5.2 Implications for Sri Lanka's Tourism Sector and the Broader Industry**

The results of this study will carry significant implications for the tourism industry in Sri Lanka in addition to the worldwide tourism panorama. By tackling the recognized sustainability issues and adopting revolutionary service design strategies, resorts and hotels in Sri Lanka can enhance their overall environmental performance, cater to the changing choices of global travelers, and bolster their competitive edge in the market. Furthermore, the understanding acquired from this observation can be a beneficial asset for different tourism destinations aiming to improve their sustainability responsibilities, in accordance with supporting the global movement toward responsible and sustainable tourism practices.

### **6.3 5.3 Recommendations for Future Research and Practical Implications**

Future studies could increase at the outcomes of this research by exploring further dimensions of sustainability inside the tourism sector, which include the impact of promoting sustainable practices and the effects of sustainability initiatives on local populations. The practical implications derived from this research suggest the need for the application of the service design solutions proposed herein. In addition, these solutions should be accompanied by ongoing tracking and assessment to evaluate their enduring impact on sustainability indicators and visitor satisfaction. Moreover, it will be important to encourage partnerships among government entities, tourism operators, and nearby groups to ensure the sustainability and increase of these initiatives.

## 6.4 5.4 Final Remarks and Conclusion

In summary, this thesis has offered significant insights into the convergence of service design and sustainability within the tourism area, particularly concerning Sri Lanka's attraction to Nordic travelers. By employing a holistic methodology that integrates stakeholder perspectives, operational insights, and service design techniques, this research has demonstrated the potential to enhance sustainable tourism practices while ensuring exceptional experiences for international visitors. As Sri Lanka and other visitor destinations navigate the complexities of sustainable development, the findings from this thesis can serve as a roadmap for the industry to adopt greater responsible and sustainable approaches. This thesis concludes by urging stakeholders in the tourism industry to make sustainability a center guideline of their operations. Collaborative tasks and a willpower to be innovative can be crucial in tackling international sustainability issues and fostering a beneficial effect on each the environment and society.

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