

**THE ROLE OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS IN DESTINATION  
DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** This paper highlights the crucial role of individual people, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders in the development of a tourist destination during its lifecycle. The purpose is to increase our understanding of individual actors as contributors to leadership and development of tourism destinations.

**Methodology:** An intrinsic case study of a Finnish ski resort, Ruka, is presented. The primary data consists of sixteen narrative interviews. Secondary sources of information such as a history book and a historical review, reports and webpages, have been utilized as well.

**Findings:** The study suggests that the leadership in a destination is attributed to individuals. It is the charismatic entrepreneurs, business managers, municipality and influential politicians that may take control of the leadership at the destination. Being local enhances the sense of identity with the place and facilitates a cooperative atmosphere between actors. Finally, the roles of stakeholders and aspects of the leadership of a destination may vary along the destination life cycle.

**Research limitations:** As this paper presents a single case study in a Finnish context, the findings cannot be, and are not meant to be, generalized. Rather, the findings present an example of an exception to the mainstream destination management and governance literature.

**Originality:** The paper fills the research gap noted by Kennedy (2014) and presents an in-depth study analysing the role of different stakeholders in destination leadership.

**Keywords:** destination leadership, destination governance, stakeholders, entrepreneur

## **References**

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