

The Role of Governance in the Sustainability of Roadside Stations in Hokkaido

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Abstract

This paper aims to identify what type of governance makes a Michi-no-Eki, a roadside station, sustainable. The analysis focuses on cases in Hokkaido. The “Governance” index in this paper is defined as: who is involved in each phase of the planning, construction, management, and operation of a roadside station; how are they involved; and to what extent. Since a “sustainability” index and a suitable and sufficient dataset of roadside stations were not found in the existing literature, the Hokkaido Jaran Ranking is used. Using this customer satisfaction ranking created by a local publisher as a reference, the “sustainability” index in this paper is modified by also adding my subjective but relative evaluation of all the roadside stations in Hokkaido that I visited. The study results indicate that in the planning phase, the involvement of more stakeholders from the surrounding areas is beneficial if the local government actively promotes and supports the process. In the management and operation phase, it is helpful to involve private companies that are well-experienced in roadside station management or influential local enterprises. A stable and trustworthy operator also enhances sustainability.

Keywords

Roadside station, governance, sustainability, evaluation, Hokkaido