

Cultural district and local development : the case of Saale-Unstrut-Triasland area in Eastern Germany

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Summary

In the last months of 2000, a Local Action Group of Anhalt- Saxony (Eastern Germany) asked me to carry out an audit action concerning the “ quality “ management of their main tourism development programmes , both in the philosophy adopted and in the operational activities purposed. The most important hinge of that programme was the realization of a promotional initiative called “ Ottonian Programme “: it consisted of various, manifold events from March to October 2001, celebrating the history and the artistic and architectural heritage of the Region, which was the cradle of the Ottonian dynasty between the IX and X century and origin of the german nation.

It is a clear example of the territorial marketing (area reputation and competitiveness) and its connection with sustainable and local development principles.

This article contains the methodological guide-lines suggested to join the expected results, within the use of an appropriate logical framework .

Introduction :

In the frame of a transnational action concerning a Leader II Program, involving Saale-Unstrut-Triasland and Montefeltro (Italy) areas, an audit action has been realized with the following aims :

- To meet the representative actors of the both partners in Germany, in order to collect information about the feasibility of a cooperative action focused on the Ottonian cultural theme as “**leitbild**” of a global marketing project
- To investigate the capabilities of such an action in tourism promotion and tourist exchanges between the areas concerned
- To evaluate the quality of the tourist resources and attractions related to the expected results of the action
- To point out some suggestions for the improvement of the operational marketing mix

The quantity and quality of the propositions of this report in commensurate with the limitations of the visit duration and documentation available on the spot : the considerations exposed reflect the conclusions of the expert after the visit study and the analysis of some documents and reports, such as :

- 10 Brochures & promotional materials supplied by Naturpark Saale-Unstrut-Triasland and other local promotional bodies

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- 2 historic researches on the Ottonian period and the relations between Ottonian Empire and Italy, specifically focused on the Montefeltro area partnership
- 1 Presentation of the Event “ Kaiserzug “, as “ core action “ of the territorial marketing strategy

Moreover, the visit study included :

1. meetings and discussions with the representative staff of all principal Institutions, both at regional and local level, involved into the Programme,
2. tours and surveys to some exemplary elements of the natural (Park,landscapes, geological shaping...), cultural (Churches, castles,museums, monuments..), rural (villages, farms, vineyards, gastronomy...) resources of the area concerned.

This report needs to be used only as a starting point : all the actors and players of this Programme are requested to modify and improve the present document.

They have to consider it a basic contribution for a more detailed plan to manage an effective promotion of the Saale-Unstrut-Triasland area.

Its main scope is addressed to the “ **rural tourism** “, since the commitment comes from a Leader II program. Nevertheless, there are many implications in **cultural, ecological and urban tourism** as well. This is the reason why we believe this case could be exemplar for both rural and cultural district development scheme.

Principles for an integrated approach

The first requirement of the action is to adopt an integrated approach, both for the Saale-Unstrut-Triasland in itself and for the cooperation with Italian partners. The principles exposed in this report are common for both partners and are applicable to the rural and cultural destinations in general.

Tourist destinations are complex. Many players are involved, including local authorities , tourism enterprises, landowners and farmers, food and craft producers, managers of natural (e.g. Naturpark Saale Unstrut) and cultural (e.g. the Magdebourg cathedral) resources and countryside recreation, as well as transport and tour operators. It is necessary to involve all these interests in an integrated approach.

As far as the rural tourism is concerned, the visitor experience is multi-faceted. Most people come to enjoy fine landscapes, but well preserved local traditions, cultural heritage and gastronomy are important influences. More and more,rural visitors are looking to enjoy countryside sports and recreation. The special qualities of a personal, rural welcome are still sought after, but rural tourists are increasingly concerned about standards of facilities and services. The same complexity is to be considered for cultural tourism.

For these reasons, a truly integrated approach throughout the destination is required.

The differences between the expectations of the client concerning “ industrial or material objects “ and “ tourism products “ are very different in the promotional approach.

Industrial objects consumer

Tourist products consumer

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The industrial product is a single item and both its advertising and trading are forcibly managed through its tangible advantages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tourist destination is a global product of the area concerned and both its advertising and trading are managed through tangible and intangible advantages or benefits
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the relation between objects and consumer in the market, the “ place “ where production is made, is normally quite far from every direct contact with the clients or consumers. Objects are moved towards the consumers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the relation between tourist destination and consumer, the place identifies the offer (the place is basic component of the offer). Consumers move towards the product. Product, consumer and place are closely related.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality is connected with specific utility of the object 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality is connected with global enjoyment of the product and the relations involved. A tourism destination is far more complex than a single consumer item such as a car, a dress, a phone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Investment is normally related to the technological innovation (high tech) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important and strategic investment is normally related to the personal experience (“ high touch “)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality evaluation and control is made before the product or the object comes to the consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality evaluation and control is made just in time with the consumers. A visitor is also immediately conscious of quality as provision and consumption occur at the same time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible components are preminent : object becomes unconditioned property of the consumer, who can use it as he likes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Intangibles “ components in the tourist offer are eminent: consumer cannot possess it in inconditioned way, but only for a time and rules foreseen. An excellent example of this concept is the advertising headline of the Tourist Board of Nepal : “ Nepal is here to change you, not you to change Nepal“. Traslated : “ Saale-Unstrut is here to change you, not you to change Saale-Unstrut “
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goods and objects don't claim to satisfy multiple motivations and needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist offer claims to satisfy both physical, psychological and many other motivations : the reasons for satisfaction are complex.

This is the basic reason why ‘Sustainable Tourism’ is a concept already widely accepted in most tourist destinations. It is about keeping a balance between the needs of the visitor, the environment and the host community for current as well as future generations.

Marketing of the territory as a “whole”

The first consequence of the integrated approach is to set up and carry out a marketing plan in accordance with this global vision of the territory concerned. The territory must be considered as a unit.

The second consequence is to value our own territory as a real capital. Its most resources are not renewable.

The third consequence is to manage our own territory as an “ enterprise “: creativity, conservation policies and measures, participation of people, human resources involved, professional profiles , quality of the landscapes, history, recreation facilities etc are components which should be very carefully managed.

The territory of SUT has interesting features and capabilities to be valued. It needs a strategy for an integrated management.

To clear definitely how to conceive and apply such a management style, we propose a comparative list between the “old” style and the new one

OLD TOURIST DESTINATION MANAGEMENT	NEW TOURIST DESTINATION MANAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist destination is “ given “ like a free resource to be exploited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist destination is a “capital “ to be valued and to be taken in care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist destination is used for private profit and shared in distinguished fragments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist destination must be qualified, improved as a whole, not as separable elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the specific interactions of the tourist destination like a system was very low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the multifacet dimension of the tourist experience is increasing : environment, landscapes, cultural heritage, traditions, archeological sites, history, gastronomy etc. are close connected in their quality along the total value chain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprises and tourist organisations of the offer are scattered in the territory without optimization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “ territory marketing “ is the only way to be effective in the globalisation and to be competitive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the return of the investment is an addition of the single parts and staystics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the investment is considered in all the aspects (social, environmental, cultural, economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between public institutions and private players there is no cooperation and partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public institutions and private players are equally concerned

The regions and destinations of the Sachsen-Anhalt (Anhalt-Saxony) areas could avoid the errors and failures of the old “ style “, because of the low exploitation of their resources till now. The citizens, communities, authorities and investors of the SUT have luckily still the opportunity to prevent the errors.

The best practice of such a management style is the AGENDA 21 and the ECOMOST (European Community Model for Sustainable Tourism). Both are suggested for the action.

Working “together” to a strategy

From the concepts above mentioned, the **guidelines** for a new management of the Saale-Unstrut-Triasland territory and its tourist offer must be presented in the following successful factors :

- Leadership and Partnership structures : there should be a strong effort to manage tourism in the destination, with a recognisable **lead agency** providing co-ordination for all the main organisations whose activities influence tourism.

- A clear strategy : there should be a strategy in place, based on **analysis** and consultation, which is widely recognised in the destination. It should include objectives for improving quality.

- Marketing and communication : this is about understanding who the **potential visitors** are, putting across a quality image to them based on accurate messages, making it easy for them to book and maintaining contact with them.

Welcome, orientation and information : this is about providing a **favourable first impression** to visitors, ensuring they understand the area and have the right information to get the most from their stay. A warm welcome is a traditional expectation of rural areas.

- Accommodation : many rural accommodation enterprises are small, often family run businesses with little professional training. Special attention needs to be given to the range of accommodation, the level of facilities and the quality of service, and to how the establishment reflects the special rural qualities of the destination. The **reuse of the existing traditional** or historic buildings must be preferred.

- Local produce and gastronomy : food and local crafts can be a special feature of rural areas. Improving their quality and how they are presented not only provides a special experience for the visitor but can be of direct benefit to the local economy and agricultural landscape.

- Attractions and events : rural areas typically have many **small attractions and events** often reflecting the area's heritage and environment. Quality management involves linking these experiences and promoting them creatively.

- Countryside recreation : a rapid growth in demand for countryside recreation, such as **walking and cycling**, is a common phenomenon across rural Europe, requiring quality management.

- Environment and infrastructure : as well as requiring specific facilities and services, visitors expect the countryside to be a **pleasant place** to relax, easy to reach and to get around, with appropriate shops and other services and an attractive, clean environment.

- Understanding visitor needs and seeing they are met : There should be a system for checking **expectations** and satisfaction levels and of feeding this back to the management process.

- Working with people on improving quality : In most rural destinations a high percentage of tourism facilities are provided by very small enterprises. Public Institutions must work with them and support them, through training, advice and financial assistance. Quality standards or criteria should be set for the different facilities and services in the destination, backed by inspection. These may be identified to visitors through **quality codes and labels**

Capabilities evaluation of the destination “ SUT” and its relation with the Sachsen-Anhalt (Anhalt – Saxony) region

According to the possible conclusions obtained from the survey and the available documentation, the application of each successful factor to the area concerned could be summarized in the following points :

- **Leadership and Partnership structures**

This factor is not yet optimized as needed.

The range of organisations involved in the Ottonian Programme and in the actions promoted by the Leader II partners, is largely meaningful and appropriate, more from the German than the Italian side. The level of the cooperation and the attitudes of the local bodies in Germany is positive.

Particularly visible is the interest of some small Municipalities, where concrete initiatives are set up.

Strategy is coordinated : Land (regional government), Kreis (district government), Park and Municipalities work together for the Ottonian Programme. **It could be a “workshop” to prove their cooperation in all tourist actions.**

Such a cooperation can be easily favoured, because of the strong identity of this area. **The choice of the Ottonian Theme seems well made indeed.**

However, all the institutional levels need more integration, above all for “ economic and financial reasons “. We don’t have a clear leadership.

All the organisations involved are : regional and local authorities, small municipalities and towns, protected area authorities, agricultural and tourism enterprises, development agencies and bodies. Without a leading reference it could be difficult to move rapidly into the competitive market.

Suggestions :

- Full participation by the local authorities, including links to all the relevant departments such as environmental management, planning and transport.
- Secure funding over a reasonable time period.
- Links with regional and national tourist boards to gain support and expertise and avoid duplicating action.
- Strong representation of the local tourism industry.
- Recognition within the wider community.
- A small working team, committed to quality
- Involving tourism businesses and them to work together on quality.
- Maintaining good internal communication

A clear strategy

A clear strategy is a major factor in achieving objectives. It serves to focus attention on priorities, co-ordinate action between the players, raise the profile of tourism issues and political awareness of them and act as a persuasive tool in seeking support and funding.

From this point of view, it seems that a clear strategy is not yet elaborated : the actions promoted don’t have a confident and long term reference to Regional and Local Plan in Tourism Development, Sustainable Tourism Programme like Agenda 21 or Ecomost, and other similar guidelines. Financial perspective are only short term defined. Particularly troubling seems this short term support for the Natural Park , which is the “ hinge “ of all the competitive strategy of the area. The situation doesn’t appear to be better for the other partner in Italy (Montefeltro).

The present report suggests to both partners to study carefully these strategic issues of the programmes and the actions proposed.

An evaluation about the strategic set of the matter, could examine the following criteria :

Basic criteria and practical guide for programs evaluation, according to local and sustainable development principles

Criteria **Self-evaluation answer : yes or not**
?

Pertinence / not contradictory strategy	Yes or not ? Notes of the expert : yes. In SUT is visible this coherence in strategy. Priorities and objectives are clear.
Effectiveness / expected results	Yes or not ? Notes of the expert : yes. Communities and leaders are very conscious that tourism development is up to create job and equity, more through natural and cultural “resources” than financial ones.
Efficiency / reliability of the public and	Yes or not ?

private organizations involved in the action	Notes of the expert : to be improved or better tested
Positive impact / social, economic, ecologic or environmental	Yes or not ? Notes of the expert : yes. Clear, evident, profitable advantages in improving the social, economic and environmental system, according to the expected results & critical long term innovation factors. Waste has nil value: the culture of the area is used to be careful with money, because of the recent (and still present) poverty. Communities and leaders are not willing to sell below cost their identity for a "plate of soup" : they are quite determined to reuse their freedom and dignity according to a new way for development.
Principles and methodologies of the sustainable development (Rio de J. conference-Agenda 21-Ecomost)	Yes or not ? Notes of the expert : no evidence in documentation at our disposal during the mission. These documents of the International Organisations must be taken into consideration.
Actors involved : complementary in the action	Yes or not ? Notes of the expert : yes, but not well implemented
Coordination of the local and international, private and public financial resources	Yes or not ? Notes of the expert : weak and at the short term only

A good set of the Programme should achieve more yeses than noes. The Programme has some weaknesses to be faced.

As far as the methodology or approach are concerned :

Bottom up methodologies	Foreseen <i>In SUT this approach is clear.</i>
Feasibility study for the action profitability (MARKETING PLAN-BUSINESS PLAN)	Foreseen <i>For tourist aspects of the programme, no evidence of a Regional Plan and a consolidated network with national and international levels (e.g. T.O. in the rest of Germany and in the other countries possibly interested in the actions like the Events)</i>
Human , professional resources and available core skills asset	Foreseen <i>Staff of the Naturpark and the managers of the other regional and local tourist institutions seem very good</i>
Project leader evidence	Not foreseen <i>Some doubts about this crucial point.</i>

Project financing evidence	Foreseen, but inadequate and lower than needed <i>There are resources to satisfy the immediate needs which have been detected and included in the program design for 2001. For the next years, there will be resources to be assigned coming from : E.U., Regional Government, Private businesses, but they have to be composed in progress and for the moment they are only promised</i>
Both governmental and Local Authorities agreement and support	Ensured at all levels, specifically excellent in the small towns and little municipalities <i>Area concerned tries to be out as soon as possible from the underdevelopment and population perceives as positive to be outlisted from the underrated targets (start up & self-development)</i>
Measures or steps for results evaluation and quality auditing (monitoring)	Not foreseen : to be introduced with more evidence

In the development and implementation of the tourism strategy , the respect of these criteria is particularly constraining.

Marketing and communication

The tourism strategy should be based on a careful assessment of resources and markets. There have been some debates in the field of sustainable tourism about whether the approach should be to decide what kind of tourism is best suited to the resources and environment of the area and then seek markets that will respond to them, or whether to start with identifying potential markets and then develop or modify resources to meet their needs. In most cases a combined approach is required, matching both resources and realistic potential markets together to meet strategic objectives.

MARKETING PLAN should satisfy the following objectives :

- who the visitors are and might be, and their needs;
- the current tourism resources and how they might be improved;
- to break existing and potential markets down into segments
- to consider their particular requirements and how to communicate with them.

For the communication :

- ***Being visionary, clear and stimulating***

The question of style is very important. A strategy which places an emphasis on quality management should set a clear vision for what the destination is expected to be like in the future. The style of expression should also be confident, direct and speak for all participants that the strategy represents.

- ***Including measurable targets***

Quality management is a cyclical process. Objectives set in the strategy should be able to be implemented and should relate to output targets that can be measured. These could be qualitative as well as quantitative targets. This appears to be weakness of some of the strategies in SUT.

- ***Developing linked action plans***

A strategy should be about setting strategic objectives. These can then be linked to action plans, but this may be best undertaken as a separate process, to enable flexibility and to avoid the strategy itself becoming swamped by detail. For example, the “ **winning** “ **theme of the Ottonian Event** must be considered as a “ part “ or “ detail “ of a global strategy : the success of the Event will be very probable, but without indulging in the illusion that it could resolve all the marketing and promotional problems.

Welcome, orientation and information

Making visitors feel at home in a destination and ensuring that they are aware of all the opportunities on offer, is a major factor in ensuring they have a quality experience. It is central to meeting strategic objectives such as increasing length of stay, spending per head and the likelihood of a return visit, and can be important in getting over environmental messages and in visitor management.

The right information must be provided where and when it is needed. It's important to ensure that all the information delivered is mutually reinforcing and not conflicting.

A visitor's first impression of a destination is critical to his subsequent response.

Hosts in accommodation establishments have a major role to play here. Warmth of welcome is clearly important. Hosts are also in an excellent position to advise visitors on what to do, getting a feel from them of their needs and interests. They can supply packs of literature for use and reference :

1. Providing effective print, well distributed
2. Having a family of literature, extensively displayed in all the main sites
3. Having a focal piece of print, map based and showing all main facilities, as a key orientation tool which is well used and recognised by everyone in the destination
4. Having a very simple news sheet, changed weekly, listing events on during the week, and handed to visitors for immediate impact
5. Getting feedback from visitors as well as from the people handling print, about its practical value.
6. Improving the impact of information centres
7. Developing a signposting system
8. Using Web information opportunities

In general, SUT appears to be well organised on these points.

Accommodation

Market trends and the evidence from the case studies suggest that visitors to rural areas are looking for:

- a wide range of types of accommodation, from country house hotels to camp sites, within broad price ranges;
- within each type, a degree of comfort and level of facilities expected which has been steadily increasing;
- by preference, accommodation in an attractive setting and buildings which reflect the authentic rural heritage of the area in design and decor.

A commercial return to the restoration of old buildings is more and more increasing. In SUT area, there are three main types of accommodation to be favoured :

Castles and manors: many of them have a structure well kept and widely spread in all the territory. They represent a real capital or resource to be valued. Additionally, most of them have the lay out of a “ fortified village “, with several buildings and manors connected both in style and in functions. Some experiences are already going to be proved : their success will be quite sure.

Rural hotels. There are various examples of rural hotels with an attractive environment, traditional architecture and local gastronomy. This type of investment programmes seems to be effective and profitable.

Village hotels. The concept of clusters of accommodation within villages, offering common standards and sometimes run as a co-operative, has been pursued in SUT and supported by the use of the European Structural Funds. The social impact of such an accomodation is very interesting.

Local produce and gastronomy

This point could be a real strenght for SUT area. Food and drinks are becoming a very crucial test of quality nowadays.

It is one of the most important elements of distinctiveness in the global Market. Act local, think global is well represented in this type of service.

Suggestions for SUT area :

1. To pursue a strategy of local labels and production codes
2. To support people by training and auditing
3. To create cooperatives and show rooms, possibly near to infopoints places
4. To plan a programme of events connected with gastronomy, wine etc.

A specific role in the “ reputation “ of SUT area has the wine production (e.g Rotkaeppchen mark) : a strategy of “ business to business “ actions should be promoted . **Ottonian Programme is an “ excellent action “ from this point of view.**

Attractions and events

In the marketing mix there are many operations and means to be used : TV and other media, advertising, tourist fairs etc. But one of the most effective investment is the realization of the “ events “. Kaiserzug initiative is an excellent example.

The reason why this promotional mean should be preferrend depends on its more evident advantages as regards the relation between cost/benefit analysis.

The main effects of the investments in Events are :

- Effects on the “ reputation “ of the area concerned: events are very effective in increasing the “ visibility “ of the area both at local and regional, national and sometimes international level.
- Effects on “ specific target groups “ of clients and visitors
- Effects on the arrivals and overnight stays

Additionally, the clients of the events are usually more disposed to “ purchase “ than all the others , especially in the “ cultural tourism “.

The conditions to be respected in Events are :

1. Quality (originality, creativity, historic memory , not imitability etc.)
2. Cooperation with mass media system

A comparative analysis of the promotional effects of the Events as regards the Tourist Fairs, like ITB or similar is clear:

<p>FAIRS :</p> <p>CONSTRAINTS & WEAKNESSES :</p> <p>1. Promotional action of destination is “general “</p> <p>2. All competitors (or a great part of them)</p>	<p>EVENTS (e.g. Kaiserzug) :</p> <p>ADVANTAGES AND STRENGHTS :</p> <p>1. Promotional action is “ specific “</p> <p>2. Our destination and offers are the only player and actor</p>
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<p>are present at the same time and place</p> <p>3. Target groups are not selected</p> <p>4. T.O. have a too rapid and only trading oriented approach</p> <p>5. Date and place are decided by others, and could find our level of preparation not at the best</p> <p>6. Fairs, workshops etc. involve only a small group of experts or officials</p>	<p>3. Target groups are selected by themselves because of the themes, attractions and offers proposed</p> <p>4. Visitors and T.O. have an approach more focused and interested</p> <p>5. Dates and places of the events (or chain of the events) are decided by our own strategy and we are up to do everything at the best</p> <p>6. Events involve local populations (urban or rural as well)</p>
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Kaiserzug is an Event with all the features we put in the advantages & strengths.

A possibility to be taken into consideration is : **to keep the Event and transform it in “ Cultural Park “ for ever.**

It is very rare in Europe such a concentration of Romanic style, prestigious castles and churches, german history memories, cultural interest sites, creative personalities etc. It seems quite difficult to imitate all these references.

Regarding the partnership with LAG Montefeltro, Ottonian theme is the best practice of the relation between Italy and Germany in the past centuries. Before and after this period, until the fifties of the present century (Rome Treaty for the European Integration) , we cannot find similar positive relations and integration of the two countries.

The same suggestion is for :

1. Combining small attractions and events, for quality and impact
2. Combining similar attractions together. Creating a complete programme or festival out of a series of individual *local events*. These may be traditional village carnivals, guided walks or other interpretative events. Often they will be provided by village communities, heritage societies or local enthusiasts. Helping to co-ordinate dates and providing advice on content, arrangements and publicity can strengthen the overall quality.
3. Developing trails. Heritage trails and themed routes provide a useful way of combining small sites and events
4. Promoting packages, by incorporating events programmes in saleable packages

Countryside recreation

In setting standards for sport and recreation in the countryside, priority should be given to visitor safety. The expanding market for activity holidays means that many consumers are inexperienced; they need to be given assurance and confidence.

The SUT area seems to have good possibilities in

1. walking and cycling opportunities
2. Using heritage themes creatively (e.g “ treasure hunting games “)
3. Boats
4. Historic games and plays (e.g. for students)

Three words include this concept : roads, roots and routes.

Environment and infrastructure

A quality of the environment and landscapes is surely high : however the right level of transport and other local services (roads, trains etc.) need an urgent improvement, even if some local , traditional roads could be kept as they are now.

A common objective and challenge is to improve the quality of accessibility by public transport, more than by car, because of the negative impact on the environmental quality and conservation.

The Naturpark plays an important role in this point. Staff and strategy of the Naturpark seem to be excellent : a priority of the regional and local authorities is to support this institution, which is the “ hinge “ of the SUT tourist offer.

Suggestions :

- Publishing visitor codes
- Practical involvement in conservation work. Creating “ workshop sites “ and summer schools for young people could be an interesting programme

As far as the last two points above mentioned are concerned (understanding visitor needs and working with people on improving quality),they are already dealt with along the former points of the report. They are closely connected with the introductive principles : quality systems adoption and award, labels and marks in environmental quality and in services quality as well.

Positioning of SUT and conclusions :

We distinguish in Marketing strategies 9 types of positioning in the competitive system, perfectly applicable to tourist sector : strong, middle, weak potential market & demand, combined with strong,middle ,weak destination offer.

We can have strong demand, but weak potential market (obsolescence) : e.g. Adria & Spanish beaches.

Or weak demand, but strong potential market & demand : in my opinion Sachsen – Anhalt in general, and SUT in particular, could be considered in this second type of positioning.

As already explained, the features of the region and the potential of SUT tourist destination, have undoubtedly a strong potential not expressed and not yet valued. This situation depends upon the relative isolation until now : but it could be a strength, not a weakness at all.

In the report we have suggested some actions to improve this positioning and measures to prevent errors and failures.

We point out without hesitation the principles of a sustainable tourism : conservation of the resources, originality of the landscapes, heritage, traditions,gastronomy, monuments etc.

A global and integrated approach is necessary both in creating offer packages and in managing destination as a whole.

Partnership between all the players is needed and quality systems in the organisation and in the processes are today the only way to the success in competition.

SUT is up to compete and to improve its offer at regional, national and international level. Along the report, we draw the attention on strengths and weaknesses of the SUT destination and the present marketing initiatives, like the Ottonian Project.

As far as this initiative and its cooperation programme with italian partner is concerned, we stress very clearly that it is a “ mean “ (intelligent, creative and well conceived) for the “ reputation “ and visibility of the area and its image : the cooperation with italian LAG Montefeltro is a good key for the success of the initiative and an excellent test to prove the effectiveness of the management (benchmarking).

But the cooperation with Lag Montefeltro cannot supply all the aspects of a strategy. Therefore we suggested to go “beyond” and prospect a more complex creation of a “**Cultural Park**” like global product to be made and offered in the future.

ANNEX 1 -

A short summary of some key success factors in tourist market concludes this report as operational guidelines in action :

Key success factors applied to SUT strategy

- Actively targeting the group market.
- Effective use of the internet
- Central booking office
- Securing strong press coverage
- Strong involvement of the local community in initiatives
- Visitor centres as a tangible focus for visitor and business services
- Co-ordination between diverse local authorities and communities
- Creation of quality criteria and labels for produce and activity tourism
- Special quality initiatives linked to food and gastronomy
- Creative link between cultural heritage sites and neighbouring villages
- Involving visitors in conservation (summer workshop sites & restoration techniques & crafts)
- Strong leadership by Naturpark, involving all relevant organisations & bodies

ANNEX 2 -

Criteria for quality in the evaluation of host village or hotel-village

QUALITY INDICATORS FOR SMALL MUNICIPALITIES & VILLAGES AS “HOTEL”(NETWORK) :

1. QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT & LANDSCAPE :

- *IS THERE A SUITABLE TOWN PLANNING ?*
- *IS THE REHABILITATION OF OLD HOUSES & TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS PREFERRED ?*
- *IS THERE A SPECIFIC REQUIREMENT FOR HOUSES WALLS TO BE PALSTERED AND PAINTED ?*
- *IS THE BIOARCHITECTURE PROMOTED ?*
- *IS THE URBAN DECORATION WELL KEPT ?*
- *ARE THE PUBLIC PARKS & GARDENS DEVELOPED AND INCREASED ?*
- *IS THE WASTE SELECTED ?*
- *ARE THE ROADS AND SQUARES REGULARLY CLEANED?*
- *HOW IS THE TREATMENT OF THE WATERS ?*
- *DOES MUNICIPALITY FOLLOW THE NORMS OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE AUTHORITIES ?*
- *ARE THE ROAD SIGNS PEOPERLY PLACED ?*

- ARE THE LIGHTING, PHONE, TELEVISION ETC. INSTALLATIONS AND LINES WITHOUT VISUAL IMPACT ?
- IS THE TRAFFIC INTENSITY REGULATED AND THE CARRYING CAPACITY CONSIDERED ?
- ARE THE EMISSIONS INTO THE ATMOSPHERE CONTROLLED?

2. QUALITY OF SERVICES TO TOURISTS & VISITORS :

- ARE THERE INFORMATION OFFICES ?
- ARE THERE TOURIST GUIDES OR INFORMATION MATERIALS ?
- HOW IS THE HOSPITALITY FOR BOARD & LODGING ?
- HOW ARE THE TRANSPORT OPPORTUNITIES FACILITIES ?
- IS IT FORESEEN A STRATEGY FOR SPECIFIC GUESTS LIKE : AGED PEOPLE, CHILDREN ETC. ?
- IS IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE CAR PARKING , ESPECIALLY OUT OF THE HISTORIC CENTRES ?

3. QUALITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES :

- IS THERE A HEALTH SERVICE/FACILITIES ?
- ARE THERE MEETING & GROUPS SITTING ROOMS AND HALLS ?
- ARE THERE GROUPS, ASSOCIATIONS, COMMITTEES ETC. WHICH ORGANISE ACTIVITIES FOR THE LEISURE TIME OR RECREATION ACTIVITIES ?
- IS IT POSSIBLE TO FIND CRAFTS WORKSHOPS ?
- ARE THERE LOCAL PRODUCE SHOPPING OPPORTUNITIES ?
- IS THERE A LIBRARY FOR DOCUMENTATION OF THE HISTORY OR TRADITIONS OR OTHER TYPICAL ELEMENTS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY ?
- IS THE MUNICIPALITIES POLICE EFFECTIVE AND AVAILABLE FOR THE VISITORS ?

RESULTS (INPUT-OUTPUT) OF THE “ HOST VILLAGE “ STRATEGY AND MARKETING :

- IT IS A BOTTOM UP STRATEGY
- IT DEFINES A STRONG PERCEPTION OF “ SIMILARITY “ & AFFINITY BETWEEN MUNICIPALITIES AND VILLAGES CONCERNED
- THEY TAKE PART OF AN “ EXCLUSIVE “ CLUB
- THEY ARE PROUD TO BUILD A MARKETING PLAN “ TOGETHER “
- THEY USE THE “ SELLING IN “ TECHNIQUE ON EVERY OCCASION (EVENT, SPORTS, FAIRS...) THEY HAVE : THEY SELL EACH OTHER EVERY TIME.
- THEY GO TO THE REGIONAL OR EVEN NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN AUTHORITIES TO “ CLAIM “ THEIR OWN “ RIGHTS “ OR TO PRESENT THEIR “ OWN “ PROJECTS “ AS A GROUP
- THEY ARE A “ NETWORK “ NOW