

World Tourism Organization UNWTO



Kraków

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

STRATEGIES FOR EXCELLENCE AND QUALITY IN TOURISM

Panel III :

Partnership and Cooperation at Tourism Destinations and Municipalities

By Prof. Romano Toppan - Presenter and Panel leader
Ceo of the Regional Agency for Territorial and Tourism Promotion
Basilicata Regional Government
(Italy)

Cracow 8-10 October 1998

OPENING SESSION

(October 8th 1998) :

I would like to introduce my short speech with three or four flashes about the subject of panel III within the philosophy of this Conference :

- **First** : in my both local, national and international experiences, I find everywhere more or less the same problems, the same difficulties, the same assets in the tourism strategy today (at least where we have the pleasure to find a strategy !). The factors of success in the tourist market are basically 3 : reputation of destinations or places, the global vision and relating management of the products as a whole, the satisfaction of the clients or customers. All these factors are close connected : however the “ actors “ who are responsible of these factors and of their connection, don’t behave very often as expected.
Both private and public actors. Result : if only one ring of this chain or, if you prefer, necklace, fails, everything fails or falls down. Aut simul stant aut cadunt, said the ancient Philosophers. If an actor doesn’t play his own part in harmony and cooperation with the other partners, **the show is over**. The difference between tourist products and industrial products is impressive : industrial products are “ made “ in separate premises, tourist products are “ performed “ at the same place to which customers came. So space, climate, landscape etc take part, at the same moment, to the quality experienced in the product
- **Second** : the reason why we invest on this cooperation as a system, is not yet well focused enough. I tried to focus it on the occasion of a meeting in Rome, between all the Municipalities and Regions’ Tourism Boards. I simply stressed that the 90% of the tourist product is formed by public and common goods like : cultural and environmental heritage. It could seem an obvious thing. But the most part of the participants to this meeting in Rome were not able to reply to the question : Why, dear colleagues of the public institutions in tourism promotion, is it so general and worldwide to entrust to the public agencies and boards the strategy marketing of tourism economy ? Perhaps are the tourist enterprises and businesses not able to face this duty? Tourism is the only economic sector where the promotion and marketing plans, actions and evaluations are made directly by the State or the public bodies. This is a paradoxal situation, specifically right now, when all are speaking about deregulation, liberalism, private sector extension in every corner of the economy. I have some doubts in this optimism about the efficacy of the private and the efficacy of the so called globalization of the markets. At any rate, it could be a very good thing in many economic sectors, but not in tourism. Private behaviors are basically “ particular “ in their interests. Their aims, their expectations are the satisfaction of their own needs, their own dreams, their own break even point etc. The tourist product is composed for 90%, as I said, by common goods. Do you know the tale of Lion and Gazelle ? Every morning the lion wakes up and knows that he has to catch the Gazelle. Every morning the Gazelle wakes up and knows that she has to run more rapidly than the lion. This is the competition, the concurrence in a free market. Sometimes wins the lion, sometimes wins the Gazelle. Nevertheless private people are terribly disposed to be, if it’s possible, always winners. The ideal for a lion is to keep the Gazelle in the cage, so that she cannot to “ train” (to be able) to run and spring. Additionally, many things of our tourist product cannot “ be able to “ and jump away or escape : the mountains, the lakes, the forests, the architectural heritage...How to balance

their exploitation in tourism and their conservation, as basic chance to keep their value not only for today or a short term profit, but also to be enjoyed in the future by the next generations (Brundlandt Report -1987) ? We have to be very careful : the excellence we try to join today, is close connected with this global vision of the factors and the clear perception of the dangers of every “ particular “ strategy. The expedient of present trend to claim private management as necessarily effective, could stimulate our indolent bureaucracy, off course, but in tourism the choice is not so simple.

- **Third** : the market is more and more complicate. A single destination or place, a single small Municipality or town is not so visible and strong to face the challenges of the present market : 700 millions of arrivals in 1998. Only a quality strategy, with common marks at regional level or at least at district level, has the capabilities to overcome and to solve the problems. I apply this model in my experiences : both in Basilicata and in Italy, in Spain, in Brazil...What I am setting up and carrying out everywhere is oriented to this direction. I will explain tomorrow morning, in the Panel III, some actions in progress, just to be in favor of the philosophy already exposed in this introduction. I want to confide you a whispering sentence that a Mayor of a small Municipality in a Valley said to me during a meeting of all the Mayors of the Valley concerned : “ Dear Sir, your opinion about the strategy is perfect, but if I work with the other Municipalities, my reputation must be shared with them, and my benefit is less as expected “. I replied : “ Dear Mayor, the light luckily is not a cake : if you catch the sun in the beach to become bronzed, you have not to kill all the others “ . The visibility of a single Municipality is normally so weak that it is impossible to reflect the sun. And the financial capabilities are so weak too ! Light is visibility in the market : to be together or to cooperate is the same question of Hamlet : to be or not to be.

Abstract about my speech on
“ PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION AT TOURIST DESTINATIONS
AND MUNICIPALITIES “ – Panel III

Introduction of the panel leader : Romano Toppan, Chief Executive Officer of Tourism and
Territorial Promotion Agency of the Regional Government of Basilicata (Italy)

Tourism Destinations needs

Tourism destination needs a global strategy from three points of view :

1. Producer: the tourist product has characteristics of inseparability, perishability, interdependence of tourism components of the product. Moreover, 90% of these elements are composed by “public resources “ (and common goods) of the communities and towns concerned (landscape, territory, cultural and environmental heritage etc.);
2. Marketing : in tourism, marketing strategies include the quality of the areas. All the marketing actions require a “ quality mark “ of the area concerned;
3. Consumer : the quality “perceived “ is global and affects all the components of the tourism product. Customer satisfaction is ensured by a quality policy in every process in tourism, from advertising quality to transport, accessibility, ecological aspects, destination attractions (natural, cultural, social etc.). Tourism product is purchased as a “ whole “.

The main consequence is to plan, to do, to check and to act the tourism production as a “global “ strategy of both Local Authorities (regional institutions. government agencies, municipalities etc.) and Private Tourism Organisations (Tour Operators, Travel Agencies, Hotels, Restaurants, Bus Operators, etc.), and to offer this as a “ whole “ to the market, by means of a suitable marketing mix.

Projects

Some exemplar projects, personally set up and carried out by APT - Basilicata, will be presented :

1. “BORGO - ALBERGO“ PROGRAMME : proposed last year by the Tourist Regional Board of Basilicata, this programme has been recently adopted (2nd July 1998) by the regional government within the frame of the European Structural Funds. The meaning of that programme is : to create a network between 20-30 small Municipalities and Towns of the Basilicata Region (South Italy), completely ignored by the tourist flows, in spite of their historic, artistic, architectural quality. They are placed in the interior, quite far from the usual tourist destinations. Each Municipality is too weak in order to join visibility and effectiveness in its proposals in tourism market. On the other side, tourism is one of the few capabilities of these small “ boroughs “: most are typically rural. well kept, placed on the top of hills, very typical in their traditions, gastronomy, history, folklore, architecture, landscape, climate, special events, way of life of resident population. These real “ strengths “ offer to these little towns and municipalities many opportunities, in the frame of a sustainable development. But, a “ global “ networking of these Municipalities is strictly required : not only to offer a “ exciting path “ through all the region, to taste a fanciful variety of attractions (e.g. gastronomy or folklore or special events), but also to exist (TO BE VISIBLE) in the competitive market.
2. PRESIDIO DI ASSISTENZA TECNICA AL TURISTA CONSUMATORE E ALLE IMPRESE (a translation of this European Programme for the Ob. 1 Regions - South Italy, could be : network of centres for information, reception, assistance both to tourist consumers and to tourist enterprises). This concept has been proposed by the Tourism Ministry of Italy to the EEC, to

introduce a radical change in tourism management in both the public and private organisations : they operate normally in separate forms, without an integration strategies and synergies. Many destinations of the “ same “ area realize their programmes and promotion initiatives competing between each other. Financial means and resources of the single actors are very scarce and their effects are nearly null. The connection between the offer and demand is not well organised and not clear for the consumer. So his needs or requirements (information, reception, guide, assistance, help for claims etc.) are not easily satisfied as expected. This program, at contrary, pushes the area to act as a whole, with a “ nervous system “ of capillary, homogeneous and unified presentation of the product , information on its regional and local varieties, common “ vision “, attitudes, skills and performances of the personnel involved (in each “ centre “). **THE MANAGEMENT OF THESE CENTRES IS ONE.** This scope accelerates very much a change, an integration strategy in the four Ps (Product, Promotion, Price, Place) : wished since many years, but never really concreted. Through these centres, a certain number of very skilled information officers and consultants, with the use of new information technologies (data base, cd-rom, internet etc.), will be at the same time modern tourism development agents, quality auditors of the offer (hotel, campsites, restaurants, museums guides, environmental quality etc.) , information and assistance helpers of the consumer, customer satisfaction investigators. This programme is now easier than in the past, thanks to the new “ on line “ technologies. All the Municipalities of the Basilicata Region will be “ on line “, directly or by means of local associations, cooperatives, agencies etc.

3. **EVENTS STRATEGY** : this action has been proposed last year, and its first test has been realized last summer. What does “ **EVENTS STRATEGY** “ mean ? More or less, it is the same meaning of the other programmes above mentioned. As a matter of fact, it is difficult or even impossible to join an integrated strategy between the different Municipalities, through good ideas, sermons or speeches. Every political leader or institution officer is focused on his local interests : this is the reason why our APT moves only through a “ bottom up “ strategy. First : we have recognized their “ expectations “ (to be more visible in the local communities, to make known their municipalities, to draw the attention of the media on their places and tourist attractions etc.). Second: we have explored the existence of one or some “ specific “ events, which could be a special “ mark “ of the community, municipality, town or district. Third : we have proposed to bind all the events in a “ unified “ programme (“ pacchetto “) for three years, with a unified project financing (private sponsoring and public contributions, together !) and marketing strategy (media planning, advertising etc.).

Conclusions and questions to participants

I prefer to “ unify “ conclusions and points submitted to the audience :

- what do you think about the “ bottom up “ strategy ?
- do you believe that a networking policy is easier right now, because of the new information technologies support ?
- which are the consequences of the “ borgo-albergo “ programme in destination quality ? Which could be the “ indicators “ for a “ borgo-albergo “ programme ?
- which are now or will be in the next years the “ costs “ of the events programme, compared to the past experiences ?
- what is the meaning of “ area mark “ in the tourist sector ? How many could the contents or components be inside ?

Speech as Panel Leader (Panel III)

October 9th

The basic approach : a new mentality for the Mayors and local leaders

Partnership and Cooperation at tourism destinations and Municipalities requires a completely new mentality in the local leaders.

I try to draw your attention to the “ new profile “ to be shaped in the Mayors and local leaders, by a clear distinction between the “ new and modern skills or behaviours “ and the “ traditional ones“: tourism in particular imposes such an approach as an obligation, if the municipalities wish to be effective and successful in their tourism and economic development plans :

TOURISM AS OMEOSTASIS OF THE MUNICIPALITY AND TOWNS FOR A NEW MARKETING APPROACH	
<i>Traditional municipality</i> Municipality as a bureaucracy	<i>Modern municipality</i> Municipality as an enterprise
blow up and metastasis	development and omeostasis
local government : to control the development	local government : to promote the development
expanding strategy	urban renovation
citizens as dependents	citizens as clients (tourists included)
productive vocations: not selected	productive vocations : selected
urban planning : rigid	urban planning : work in progress (plan, do, check, action)
private promoter and administration : conflict (without bep)	private promoter and developer : cooperation (with bep)
industrial plants with hard impacts : municipality leadership very weak in its strategy	industrial plants for a sustainable development : municipality leadership with very strong strategy
citizens participation as formal act	citizens participation as demand discovery

A case study: the “ BORGIO-ALBERGO “

It is the most appropriate exemplary program for our subject.

I prepared a draft outline for a quality indicators and community or municipality behaviour to be adopted: I use this in our panel, like a “ case study “ to be discussed, improved and tested on the field.

QUALITY INDICATORS FOR TOURIST DESTINATIONS : “BORGIO-ALBERGO“ (SMALL MUNICIPALITIES & TOWNS AS “HOTELS FOR FAMILIES”)

1. QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT & LANDSCAPE :

- *is it there a suitable town planning ?*
- *is the rehabilitation of old houses & traditional buildings preferred ?*
- *is it there a specific mural layer and painting of houses required?*
- *is the bio-architecture 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 well disposed ?*
- *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 ?*
- *is it foreseen a strategy for specific guests like : aged people, children etc. ?*
- *is it possible to have car parking , specially out of the historic centres ?*

3. QUALITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES :

- *is it there a health service ?*
- *are there meeting & groups sitting rooms and halls ?*
- *are there groups, associations, committees etc. which organise activities for the leisure time ?*
- *is it possible to find crafts workshops ?*
- *are there shopping opportunities ?*
- *how are the public services like : bank, post office, telephone, newspaper kiosk etc.?*
- *is there a library ?*
- *is the municipalities police effective and available for the visitors ?*

RESULTS (INPUT-OUTPUT) OF THE “ BORGIO-ALBERGO “ STRATEGY AND MARKETING :

- *it is a bottom up strategy*
- *it defines a strong perception of “ similarity “ & affinity between municipalities and towns 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 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*

PLENARY SESSION

October 10th

Final Report of the Panel III : Partnership and cooperation at tourist Destinations and Municipalities

Our Report is focused on two aspects :

- **How have we worked in the Panel ?**
- **What have we discussed and concluded ?**

How

As far as the first aspect is concerned, we divided our group (proxy. 50 people) in 5 small sections, in logical order or sequence :

1. **Two speeches concerning a “ global vision “ of the policies on quality, as basic approach of the communities and municipalities : Roger Withers and Jean Pierre Chenu**
2. **Four speeches concerning “ ecotourism and environmental strategies “ of the local communities : Gerardo Budowski, Linda Richter, Esteban Bardolet, Alicja Gotwot**
3. **Three speeches concerning the “ relationship between tourism & local development programs“: Romano Toppan, Janusz Grell, Jan Owskiak**
4. **Four speeches concerning quality in specific products, services, activities and events proposed by the local or regional communities : Lezlek Strzembicki, Stefan Sacha, Grzegorz Golebski, Jolanta Kamieniecka**
5. **Three speeches concerning quality of the “ cultural, religious and architectural heritage “ of the local or regional communities : Antoni Jacowski, Elzbieta Szalewska, Kalmiera Orzechowska**

All the sections had to ensure in every part of these subjects the scope of the Conference and of the Panel, that is: excellence in quality - partnership and cooperation between local Communities and municipalities as the best way to join effectiveness in the action purposed. Just to involve everyone in every process of our work , we asked participants to choose a specific section and play the role of observer or tutor. Two of them were very stimulating like as Mrs. Sonmass from Turkey and Mr. Selim from Egypt.

After the exposition of the official keynote speakers , participants put some questions or implemented the content of the speeches with their point of view.

Additionally, we had the pleasure to have two important guests :

- **the representative of the Holy See, Mons. Piero Monni**
- **the representative of the European Union, M. Pierre Godin, assisted by M. François Burhin**

Both addressed a communication to the panel, with the aim concepts of their relevant Institutions about the Conference scope.

What

As far as the second aspect is concerned, we concluded our work with a final report : it includes some statements or declarations.

1. **Quality policies of the local communities and municipalities** : the prime objective of quality must be sustainable tourism, that fulfils the expectations of the tourist as well as those of the local community. It is founded at first on quality of experiences rather than specific standards of facility, and leads to the enrichment of the life of both the visitor and the host or resident population. **Awareness raising, education and training are essential to reach these objectives : it concerns the tourism industry, the local population and the tourists themselves.** Strategies, guidelines, standards and quality systems control should be decided at the appropriate level, and in partnership between all the key players concerned by quality in tourism.
2. **Ecotourism & environmental strategies of the local communities and regions** : the role of establishing quality criteria should be emphasized. This purpose depends on factors of general dimension, which include : favourable climate and other positive natural factors, connected with the tourist offer, political decisions expressly oriented to protect these factors, strategies and action plans at both local and regional or national level in a logical system and interdependence, so to have unified rules, above all in favour of the environment. Ecological quality standards should be introduced in tourism and its social and economic impacts. A point of reference for such a policy, should be the European Community, for a continental integration and vision.
3. **Local development and tourism** : local communities and municipalities should change their attitudes, if they really wish to conform their behaviours, decisions, strategies to the positive relationship between tourism and local development as expected. For that reason, an outline concerning the “ new “ approach of the municipalities and their relating leaders, mayors etc was presented. The case study of the so called “ BORGIO - ALBERGO “ suggested that a partnership between local communities, destinations and municipalities can be successful at the following conditions : a bottom up strategy should be adopted, a strong perception of similarity or affinity between them should be created, an image of prestige or exclusivity should interest all the partners involved (club, area mark etc.), the “ selling in “ technique should be used by each partner on every occasion he has (event, tourist fair, expositions, press and media planning, etc.), the partners should present themselves as a group to claim something from regional or national governments, or to present projects or propositions, etc. to the EU and other international organisations (OMT, UNIDO, ILO, COUNCIL OF EUROPE etc.).
4. **Quality in specific products, services, facilities, events etc. proposed by local communities, destinations and municipalities** : ecotourism is not necessarily a sustainable development program in itself. It needs to be implemented by an economic, structural , facilities and services approach, just to be : competitive, well managed in space, territory and natural resources, oriented to an adequate growth on quality more

than quantity of the investments used. Local community must be involved in planning tourism and in sharing its benefits. A certificate of sustainable tourism should include standards procedures at another, different level from “ star “ classification , which is the “ minimum “ required, and doesn’t include the continuing improvement principle (Deming).

- 5. Quality of the cultural, religious and architectural heritage of the local communities and municipalities :** quality of tourist services must be ensured for cultural tourism as well. Cultural heritage is an inseparable part of the tourist not replaceable “ capital “. Municipalities should involve local population in the respect, safeguard and value of the cultural heritage. Many cultural and religious centres or destinations should be function as meeting, convention, social activities centres, to extend the seasonality. Routes of cultural and religious tourism should be identified with a common “ mark “ and promoted. **Cultural tourism will be one of the best assets for the European integration of the local communities and regions.**

In a small country, Nepal, where natural and cultural heritage are particularly connected with the quality of destination, a poster announced : “ **Nepal is here to change you , not you to change Nepal “**