



OBJECTIVE

This study aims to lay down the basis for an Internal and External Strategic Actions Plan to boost a sustainable tourism model in the Med area, focused on cultural assets.



APPROACH

The study develops a sustainability tourism management approach integrating the Socio-Economic Approach to Management (SEAM) into the sustainability framework. The resulting holistic model is useful for assuring the ex-ante coherence, pertinence and relevance of an asset exploitation plan, therefore ensuring its implementation.

The Socio-Economic Approach to Management (Savall and Zardet, 2003) offers an alternative understanding about economic, social and environmental inefficiencies of the current Med touristic development model that obstructs sustainability, and offers tools for management and touristic planning.

MAIN FINDINGS



Two quantitative estimates have been done –one on attractiveness and another focusing on growth– to integrate the assets and levers into the plan. The estimated models have shown the important role of cultural and environmental assets in the attractiveness and GDP generation of MED tourism.



The qualitative diagnosis has given evidences of the dysfunctions that threaten the sustainability of coastal tourism in the MED area. It revealed that the prevalent business model based on a short-sighted ‘sun and beach’ low cost (low prices and bad working conditions) is inefficient because it generates important hidden costs and limits the capacity to produce value in a territory.



In summary, the analysis revealed that in the prevalent business model, tourism does not appear as a clear alternative for the sustainable development of many non-industrialised Med areas, as it does not create sufficient added value to counter this sub-development, if we take into account hidden costs.

THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The Internal-External Strategic Action Plan (IESAP) tool proposed by SEAM has been used to ensure the connection between the objectives and the prospective actions. In consequence, the study proposes a true internal metamorphosis - a change to an innovative and sustainable model, based on the development of the human and organisational capital of tourism - in order to create more complex products, anchored in culture.

Five axes have been set up to laid down the bases for a coherent, pertinent and relevant plan:

- a) promoting continuous dynamics of improvement of the offer of cultural tourism products;
- b) enriching the tourist offer using local resources;
- c) marketing an integrated brand for Med cultural destinations;
- d) creating smart destinations;
- e) and improving internal organization and governance in the public and private institutions of destinations.

Each axis is in turn articulated into priority objectives and actions through the lens of governance, for which sustainable development must be assimilated not as a short-term change to reduce the social and environmental impact of tourism, but as a long-term metamorphosis. This would imply a model that creates added value by improving the social and environmental conditions in which tourism is developed (in contrast to the competition on prices, the overexploitation of territorial resources and the deterioration of work conditions to reduce visible costs).



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The model of strategic plan developed by the study addresses directly the need of policy makers, helping them to shape tourism in a more sustainable way. Sustainable development should not be considered as a short-term change to reduce the social and environmental impact of tourism but on the contrary as a long-term metamorphosis of the overall sector toward sustainability. Modifications of organizational structures and behaviours must take place inside the destination, inside its enterprises and public administrations, so that they are no more dictated by external influencers. In this way, destination problems are addressed according to an overall, holistic and long-term process.

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