

Terminology within Destination Management and Quality

Since its establishment, in 2015, the CTC has focused its work mainly on assessing the state of knowledge on the basic concept of “tourism competitiveness” and identifying its key factors. This process has also included identifying, developing and harmonizing concepts, models and operational definitions used in the tourism value chain within a hierarchical structure, from general to the specific. This should lead to a validation process which will reinforce the normative role of the Organization while the technical outputs and recommendations can be used by the UNWTO Members for different purposes such as measuring, labelling and/or benchmarking.

In that regard, the CTC proposed the following definitions (developed by consensus) to the 103rd session of the Executive Council that later during this same session were **endorsed**. These definitions were already presented to the 100th session of the Council for information.

1. Tourism Destination: *A local tourism destination is a physical space in which a visitor spends at least one overnight. It includes tourism products such as support services and attractions, and tourism resources within one day’s return travel time. It has physical and administrative boundaries defining its management, images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness. Local tourism destinations incorporate various stakeholders often including a host community, and can nest and network to form larger destinations.*

The definition is based on the initial definition of “Tourism Destination” which dates back to 2002 as a result of the work of the WTO Think Tank on Destination Management (Madrid, Spain)

2. Destination Management/Marketing Organization (DMO): *The leading organizational entity which may encompass the various authorities, stakeholders and professionals and facilitates tourism sector partnerships towards a collective destination vision. The governance structures of DMOs vary from a single public authority to a public/private partnership model with the key role of initiating, coordinating and managing certain activities such as implementation of tourism policies, strategic planning, product development, promotion and marketing and convention bureau activities.*

The functions of the DMOs may vary from national to regional and local levels depending on the current and potential needs as well as on the decentralization level of public administration. Not every tourism destination has a DMO.

3. Tourism Product: *A combination of tangible and intangible elements, such as natural, cultural and man-made resources, attractions, facilities, services and activities around a specific center of interest which represents the core of the destination marketing mix and creates an overall visitor experience including emotional aspects for the potential customers. A tourism product is priced and sold through distribution channels and it has a life-cycle.*

4. Tourism Value Chain: *The sequence of primary and support activities which are strategically fundamental for the performance of the tourism sector. Linked processes such as policy making and integrated planning, product development and packaging, promotion and marketing, distribution and sales and destination operations and services are the key primary activities of the tourism value chain.*

Support activities involve transport and infrastructure, human resource development, technology and systems development and other complementary goods and services which may not be related to core tourism businesses but have a high impact on the value of tourism.

5. Competitiveness of a Tourism Destination: *The ability of the destination to use its natural, cultural, human, man-made and capital resources efficiently to develop and deliver quality, innovative, ethical and attractive tourism products and services in order to achieve a sustainable growth within its overall vision and strategic goals, increase the added value of the tourism sector, improve and diversify its market components and optimize its attractiveness and benefits both for visitors and the local community in a sustainable perspective .*

6. Quality of a Tourism Destination: *The result of a process which implies the satisfaction of all tourism product and service needs, requirements and expectations of the consumer at an acceptable price, in conformity with mutually accepted contractual conditions and the implicit underlying factors such as safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, communication, infrastructure and public amenities and services. It also involves aspects of ethics, transparency and respect towards the human, natural and cultural environment.*

Quality, as one of the key drivers of tourism competitiveness, is also a professional tool for organizational, operational and perception purposes for tourism suppliers.

The definition of Quality of a Tourism Destination represents a combination of the definition proposed by the former UNWTO Quality Support Committee at its sixth meeting (Varadero, Cuba, 9-10 May 2003) and the inputs of the CTC.

7. Innovation in Tourism: *The introduction of a new or improved component which intends to bring tangible and intangible benefits to tourism stakeholders and the local community, improve the value of the tourism experience and the core competencies of the tourism sector and hence enhance tourism competitiveness and/or sustainability. Innovation in tourism may cover potential areas, such as tourism destinations, tourism products, technology, processes, organizations and business models, skills, architecture, services, tools and/or practices for management, marketing, communication, operation, quality assurance and pricing.*