

Annex 9. The experience of the “Osservatorio del Distretto Turistico delle Province di Venezia, Rovigo, Treviso e Vicenza”

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The Tourist District of the Provinces of Venezia, Rovigo, Treviso e Vicenza (Veneto Region – Italy) was instituted in 2005, thanks to the alliance of the four Provinces and Chamber of Commerce of Venice, Rovigo, Vicenza and Treviso and of other local public authorities, private associations and operators.

Starting from the definition of ISTAT, the Italian national statistic institute, the main inspirational concept of a Tourist District is the tourism production chain based on the territorial analysis of the development degree of some economic sectors and activities directly or indirectly connected to tourism. A Tourist District includes municipalities with a high level of specialization in the following four relevant tourism activities: a) accommodation (hotels); b) outdoor accommodation and b&b; c) restoration, pub, night clubs; d) services for tourists (travel agencies, tourist guides). Other conditions indicated by the Italian law n. 317 are entrepreneurship density of the area (ratio between the number of specialized industries and the number of inhabitants) and concentration (ratio between employees of a specific activity and total employees of the district).

One of the main goals of the Tourist District of the Provinces of Venice, Rovigo, Vicenza and Treviso is to share data and provide all the stakeholders with useful information to support common decision making process and effective tools to assess the success of tourism policies. Therefore, District Agreement subscribers planned to create the Observatory of the Tourism District, whose main topics to be investigated are:

- tourist demand;
- tourist supply;
- tourist production chains and integration;
- human resources;
- environmental sustainability;
- building area and real property (for example hotels, camping sites);
- Public Administration (laws, projects and economic incentives for tourism activities, infrastructures, environment, etc.).

The Partners commissioned a third party (CISET – University of Venice) to implement the Observatory which should guarantee a scientific approach, mediate different points of view, provide tools to support common decision by the Partners, finding out innovative solutions acceptable for all the Partners.

It has been clear that a huge quantity of information is available from several data sources about different aspects connected with tourism (for example tourist arrivals and overnights, number of accommodation establishments and beds, tourist spending, etc), even though some difficulties have to be faced. Actually existing data sources are not always updated at the same date and are not always referred to same geographical subdivisions; data availability is also very limited, since each subject knows its own data but cannot access other data sources easily; classifications and denomination used might be different from a source to another, and so on.

Therefore in this case the point is not to have information but to select and to organize the exiting information produced by several offices in a tourism-oriented coherent and affordable system. The first condition to start with the implementation of such activity is that each subject agrees to share data with other operators, following as a consequence a collaborative approach.

In order to meet the defined goals, the Observatory Staff needed to implement and manage an information system, named DIST (District Information System for Tourism), composed by a proper Information System (data base) and by a web site. The process started from the identification and collection of different data sets. Then follow data selection, data integration, data processing, analysis and preparation.

On the supply side, a database (RVT) produced by the Provinces contains information about all the accommodation establishments (capacity, prices, services) and a data warehouse (STOCKVIEW) produced by the Chambers of Commerce summarizes the whole company supply of the Tourism District.

Employment is described by a data warehouse (EXCELSIOR) derived from a yearly sample survey held by the Chambers of Commerce Union.

On the demand side, a database (TURISTAT) produced by the Provinces allows to count arrivals and nights spent by tourists in the accommodation establishments and a database (UIC) produced by a sample survey held by Italian Foreign Exchange Office provides information on tourists' characteristics.

Comparing data from the different sources or data from the same source along time by means of appropriate indicators allows the final evaluation. The following table summarises and explains the results and the documents (summary sheet with descriptive analysis, crosstabs, maps and graphs) developed by the Observatory for each area of interest (demand, supply, employment, tourism and environment) and for each province and municipality of the district.

Table 1 - Results and the documents developed by the Observatory for each area of interest

	Database / Data warehouse	Results and documents
Tourist Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TURISTAT (data from the four Provinces); - UIC (data from Italian Foreign Exchange Office) 	<p>Summary sheet with crosstabs, maps and graphs about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tourist arrivals and overnights in each area and accommodation and for region/country of origin; - accommodation occupancy rate; - seasonality; - foreigner tourists' spending; - itineraries followed by tourists in the different areas of the district; - Etc. <p>N.B. Particular attention was given to business/MICE tourism.</p>
Tourist Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RVT (data from the four Provinces); - STOCKVIEW (data from Chambers of Commerce) 	<p>Summary sheet with crosstabs, maps and graphs about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - spatial distribution of accommodations facilities; - accommodation capacity; - official and implicit quality of accommodations on the basis of the services offered, - price; - seasonality; - role of all tourism businesses in the district: ratio between number of tourism businesses and total number of businesses in the District; - spatial distribution of tourism businesses; - role of women in management position: ratio between number of tourism businesses managed by women and the total number of tourism businesses. - etc. <p>N.B. Particular attention was given to business/MICE tourism.</p>

Labour market and Employment	- EXCELSIOR (yearly sample survey held by the Chambers of Commerce Union)	Summary sheet with crosstabs, maps and graphs about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of employees in tourism businesses in the district; - number of new jobs planned in the future in tourism businesses; - seasonality of tourism jobs; - typology of contracts in tourism businesses; - socio-demographic characteristics, skills and knowledge of employees in tourism businesses; - etc.
Tourism and environment		- A first preliminary set of indicators monitoring the impact of tourism activities on the environment in the district

It is evident that the District Information System for Tourism focuses not only on traditional and official statistics as tourist arrivals/overnights and accommodation capacity but also on other data about the tourism demand (spending, itineraries, etc.), the tourism industry, the labour market and the impacts of tourism on the environment in the district. In this way it is possible to measure and monitor tourism with a more comprehensive vision and also to analyse the performance of certain subsectors or area of interest, such as business/MICE tourism, tourist characteristics, tourism employment, etc.

FURTHER LINKS

<http://virgo.unive.it/ciset/website/>

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