An integrated assessment of sustainability in tourist destinations

Requested comment

Fernando Prats Palazuelo¹

Summary: In a world that is increasingly affected by the size and speed of change as well as a growing uncertainty, the issue of “Global Change”, when one takes into account the Integrated Assessment Systems for the Sustainability of Tourist Destinations, means not losing sight of the global nature of this activity and trying to understand how it is affected by these changes. However difficult it may be, not doing so would mean harking back to a past that, in many key aspects, is never going to return.

Thus, we talk about different generations of “cycles and force concepts” that have been relevant to tourism and its assessment systems in recent decades. In the early days, for the first generation, what counted and continues to count most was “unlimited quantitative growth”; in the 1970s the second generation arose, based on “quality”; in the 1980s the third generation took strong hold with “local sustainability”; and now this concept is filled with the question of “global change” and its links to the new economics cycle, energy, climate and ecological footprints, and the challenge of “governance” for change (fourth generation).

From there, it seems that powerful Systems for the Assessment of Sustainability of Tourist Destinations are needed to address the procedures where many of the concepts already mentioned overlap. This means recognising the specific and complex character of the destinations themselves, which require powerful, high added-value information systems, over and above mere quantitative data.

Finally, in the second part of the presentation we summarise some experiences, (third- and fourth-generation), at Spanish coastal resorts: (1) Local Agenda 21 observatory in Calvia (Balearic Islands); (2) SEIS Andalusia; (3) Lanzarote (Canary Islands); and (4) “Tourism Scenarios” in Spain until 2020.

¹ Architect, member of the Spanish Tourism Council and Coordinator of the Report on Sustainability in Spanish Tourism’s Strategic 2020 Horizon Plan Spain, auia@telefonica.net
Index

Global change and assessments systems in tourist destinations
- Tourism in the context of “Global Change”
  - Internal changes combined with external changes
  - A new historic cycle?
- Thoughts on the Integrated Assessment Systems on Sustainability in Tourist Destinations (IASS-TD)
  - Objectives, contents and the IASS-DT's “modus operandi”
  - Some interesting IASS-TD cases in Spain

Some IASS-DT experiences in Spain
- SEIS – Calvia (Balearic Islands)
  - The IASS as an observatory
  - The IASS' assets and limitations
- IASS – Andalusia
  - IASS – Andalusia. SAETA (2004)- Analytical and Statistical System of Tourism in Andalusia (ASSTA)
    - A mixed IASS
    - IASS' assets and limitations
  - IASS – Andalusia. Ecological Footprint
    - An IASS based on the “Ecological Footprint”
    - The relationship between “Ecological Footprint” and “Bio-capacity”
    - IASS' assets and limitations
- IASS – Lanzarote (Canary Islands) (2007)
  - A holistic IASS
  - Development and assessment of the indicators
  - IASS' assets and limitations
- IASS + Scenario of Spanish Tourism in 2020 (2007)
  - An IASS to create scenarios in 2020
  - Trends and alternative scenarios
  - IASS' assets and limitations
An integrated assessment of sustainability in tourist destinations

GLOBAL CHANGE AND ASSESSMENT SYSTEM IN TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Tourism in the context of “Global Change”

In a world that is becoming more and more conditioned each day by a growing uncertainty and by the speed and size of change, in order for us to think about the Integrated Assessment Systems with regards to Tourist Destinations it is important that we do not lose sight of the global nature of this activity at the same time try to remember how said systems are affecting these very changes. As difficult as this may be, and it is, there is no denying that, not doing it would mean basing our work on a past, that will essentially never return.

Internal changes combined with external changes

When we speak of changes taking place within the Tourism Sector, we have to think about the combination of the internal (cultural values, the concept of holidays, leisure and tourism or the options and cost of travel, stay, enjoyment etc.) with the external changes (economic, energetic and environmental). Once combined, they fiercely alter the key concepts that make up the Tourism Chain when it comes to assessing the quality, sustainability and vulnerability of each separate link (destinations amongst them).

That is why, if we look for a second, beyond a superficial and short-term vision of the current economic crisis, we see the excessive ecological footprint on the planet, the end of the era of cheap and abundant energy and Climate Change all emerging with extraordinary force, each one deeply altering some of the most fragile balances that support tourist activities. This is all especially evident in subjects as sensitive as transport, and in particular air travel and the consequences that arise as a result on those tourism destinations that base all their activities on low cost of budget flights that rely on tax-free fuel. All of this indicates that structural trends correlate with an increase in costs.

A new historic cycle?

What is probably happening is that we are contributing to the birth of a new historic cycle that requires a complete restructuring of the general as well as the specific models of some of the key world activities, tourism being one of them. So for the tourism sector as a whole, but especially for the more developed countries like Spain, this new model demands that ideals such as “long and cheap flights + limited growth” be reconsidered in order to open “a new cycle where we will have to try to optimise the socio-economic variable, whilst also reducing the ecological, climate and energy footprint at both a local and global level.”2 Quite a change, to put it mildly, and one for which we are not yet prepared.

All of this involves shedding light on new commitments (for example, alignment with Kyoto protocols) and principles of action; Systemic Views (economic, social and environmental); Sufficiency (how much is possible or opportunistic?); Coherence (models that are adapted to natural processes and the loads that they can bear); Eco-efficiency (better results with less climactic impact); Caution (prevention in the face of unforeseen risks); and so on.

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2 For Spain, please refer to F. Prats’ report on Sustainability Spanish Tourism’s Strategic 2020 Horizon Plan found in the Spanish Institute of Tourism Studies’ magazine issue 172-173.
There is no doubt that this all involves a conceptual revolution that has barely even begun and one that will completely alter everything that is related to Tourism. Without going any further, one must ask oneself, if for example we shouldn’t have checked even just the quantitative aspect (the number of international travellers) of the top international rankings that the WTO still controls and considered these in light of the new challenges set out.

That is why it is useful to think in terms of pertinent “concepts and cycles” that have shed light on the development of tourism in the last decades. In the beginning, the first generation regarded “unlimited quantitative growth” as a priority, and still does. In the seventies, the second generation appeared around the concept of “quality” and in the eighties, the powerful third generation emerged with the issue of “local sustainability”. This concept is now full to bursting with the subject of “Global Change” (or Global Sustainability”) and its links to the ecological footprint and the fourth generation’s challenge for “Governance towards Change”.

What is most significant is that this current change is far deeper and more structural than all the previous ones and draws from the need to assimilate past sensibilities but at the same time, create new models that question many of the ideals which up until yesterday were still in existence. That is why it is of the greatest importance to know exactly what the challenges are at all times so as not to waste precious time, effort and resources.

The limitations of the existing Integrated Assessment Systems.

All that said, and without underestimating the true worth of the work already realised (a common heritage which makes a valuable and indispensable starting point), we must also acknowledge that the Integrated Assessment Systems on Sustainability in Tourism Destinations that we have been and are working with, have still not been able to adapt consistently, neither in theory nor in practice with the true meaning and reach of the powerful changes that are arising within the new historic cycle.

That is why we can talk about a new generation of indicators (ecological footprint, analysis of metabolic flows etc.) that deal with concepts related to the new cycle and its economics, environmental, local and global challenges, but all of which are still far from being implemented in tourist destinations.

And last of all, to clearly state that we cannot simply depend upon the basic information that would actually allow us to update the contents of this new generation of IASS-TD. That is why, in any approximations that we make to the current Systems we must add an acknowledgement of their contributions but also their limitations; otherwise we would be mistaken.

**Thoughts on the Integrated Assessment Systems on the Sustainability of Tourist Destinations (IASS-TD)**

Asides from the points already set out in the previous section, we will go on to comment on a few points of interest when referring to the production of the IASS-TD.

A previous point that does require us to spend too much time over: the acknowledgement of “specificity and complexity” of Tourist Destinations. There is sufficient theory and practice pointing in the direction of what must be accepted as one of the inherent factors involved when forming the IASS.
Objectives, contents and the IASS-DT’s “modus operandi”

- The IASS-DT should provide “intelligent information” to promote “holistic governance” within each Tourist Destination

There are multiple objectives for the IASS-TD, but possibly the most important one of all is providing intelligent information for “Holistic Governance” (economic, social and ecological, including Global Change) suitable for each Tourist Destination by using the “tools” that help tackle at least the following questions: 1) recognise and assess the current situation; 2) plan for different future stages 3) establish Programmes of Action (with monitoring systems) geared towards periods in the medium term; and 4) create periodic assessment procedures.

- The importance of adapting to each Destination’s specific nature and generate Information of High Added Value Information (IHAV)

In order to fully meet these objectives, it is important that every IASS goes beyond being a “mere quantitative indicator” and also have the ability to interpret the specific nature of each Tourist Destination. In this way it can select a reliable series of Key-Topic Indexes that have been adapted to this specific nature, as well as the corresponding IHAV. A few of the basic elements of the IHAV are listed as follows:

- Reference assets linked to every chosen index that enable all data to be assessed as good, ok, bad etc.
- A dynamic approach that allows for knowledge of how every chosen Index is developing in relation to the reference assets: good, bad, ok etc.
- Medium term trend scenarios will drive the evolving trend of the current situation and predict if it is a desirable one or not.
- How certain Key-Topic Index should behave so as to evolve into Desirable Stages.
- Assessment of how the Plan of Action Programmes are behaving: if they are being realised or not, successfully or not, etc.
- Limitations in light of Global Change.
- Etc.

- About the type of IASS

The more demand there is for IHAV, the greater need for a selective design of each IASS that has a “broad spectrum”, that is, it is better to have a little information but well selected and very appropriate, accurate and useful, than too much that is full of errors. Even though there is no doubt that “All roads lead to Rome” (so the saying goes) the fact of working with “complex specificities” requires a “tailor-made” approach to the IASS throughout the appropriate processes.

- “Modus operandi”

In order to customise the IASS to each Destination they must be adapted to the complex specificity, and as a consequence of this, the “modus operandi” becomes a key issue. Again, it must not be forgotten that each Destination has its own proper procedure and so, with that warning, here are some suggestions:
- Start with a qualitative analysis put together with the key players’ data/perceptions.

- Compile, together with the key players, a “selective” IASS with in-depth development (IHAV), that is able to combine the specificity of both the Destination and its positioning within the corresponding life-cycle. Try at the same time to identify a short series of “Systemic Indexes” that are able to express a global vision of the Destination in different stages in the medium term.

- Develop the IASS, together with the key players of at least three types of conclusions: 1) state of the question; 2) desirable scenarios; 3) Plan of Action; 4) design of an Observatory to control the state and development of the Plan of Action Programmes.

Some interesting IASS-TD cases in Spain

Asides from the points already made, the second part of this report deals with a much more sintetic view of five cases from various generations of IASS-TD in Spain.

- **An Observatory of Calvia’s (Balearic Islands) Local Agenda 21** (designed, implemented and contrasted). **Aim:** Local Sustainability and “Governance” towards change.

  Between 1997 and 2000 a system based on 6 Reference Areas and around 75 Indexes was created to support for Calvia’s Local Agenda 21 so as to guide the comprehensive sustainability of local development, provide information about the situation at the end of the nineties and the scope of the desired scenarios until 2015 together with the subsequent Plan of Action. The entire process came about with the constant involvement of a “citizen’s forum” and an innovative interdependence between the town council and the citizens.

- **Andalusia I: SAETA (Analytical and Statistical System of Tourism in Andalusia)** – designed, partially and experimentally implemented. **Aim:** an assessment of its coastal destinations from the regional sphere centred on Quality, Sustainability and Local “Management”.

  Based on 3 Key Areas, 25 Key Topics and one or two indicators per Key Topic. The System was designed in 2004 to test the group of Destinations along the Coast of Andalusia, from a regional point-of-view. It was partially developed (they looked for feasible indicators) and tested in one municipality, but it was not implemented along the coastal development.

- **Andalusia II: The “Ecological Footprint” of the Coastal Municipalities.** (Designed and implemented). **Aim:** the systematic implementation of the “Ecological Footprint” in the Destinations along the Andalusian coast.

  Its origins lie in a study on the “Acute Consumption per Unit of Surface Area” in the Andalusian Municipalities, and displays the “Footprint” (ha/pop) in 2000, the limited disposable bio-capacity in ha and the spatial “requirements” derived from human pressure, also in ha. This then shows that the basic principles of the information focused around the contrast between the “carrying capacity” and instruments such as the “Ecological Footprint” need to be innovated.
An integrated assessment of sustainability in tourist destinations

- Lanzarote (Canary Islands) (designed, implemented and in the social contrast phase). Aim: systematic view with reference assets, limitations in light of Global Change and the development of indicators.

It consists of a System designed in 2007 that is based around 5 Subsystems, 31 Key Topics and 68 Indicators. This system allows you to understand the complete situation (ecological, economic/tourist, social, inclusive of the strategic vulnerabilities in the face of Global Change), the current trends and their assessment through assets premised on the contrast between experts and people.


Through a score of Topics and Indicators a systematic view was portrayed that was realized in 2007 on the sustainability of Spanish tourism and its desirable scenarios until the year 2020 allowing for working guidelines to be noted for the future. In this instance, what they are trying to do is openly contrast the “comprehensive sustainability” model of Spanish tourism (economic optimization with a reduction of impacts) with sufficiency criteriums (no more growth), coherence (comprehensive rehabilitation), eco-efficiency (reduction of impacts per productive unit) etc.

SOME IASS-DT EXPERIENCES IN SPAIN

3. IASS – CALVIA (BALEARIC ISLANDS)
4. IASS - ANDALUSÍA
5. IASS – LANZAROTE (CANARY ISLANDS)
6. IASS + SPANISH TOURISM SCENARIOS OF 2020

SEIS – Calvia³ (Balearic Islands) (1997-2000)

The Calvia Local Agenda 21 has in all probability been an exemplary case with regards to the experiences related to sustainability in mature Tourist Destinations along the Spanish coast.

The focal point of this experiment is based in an IASS that serves as a tool to understanding, assessing and planning a new model of sustainable factors in the short, medium and long term. As a key issue of the work carried out during the Citizen’s Forum on the diverse scenarios designed in the year 2015, the wealth of the debate must be duly noted.

The Local Agenda 21’s Plan of Action, drawn up by the IASS, is structured around 10 Lines of Action: 1) New growth restrictions (declassified from 1.660 ha); 2) Protection of integration, co-existence and quality of life; 3) Maintaining the natural heritage; 4) Recovering the cultural heritage; 5) Boosting the comprehensive rehabilitation of the tourism centres; 6) Improvement for Calvia as a Tourist Destination; 7) Improvement of public and nonmotorized transport; 8) Introduction of a sustainable monitoring of water, energy and waste; 9) Investing in human knowledge resources; 10) Innovating local “governance”

³ The Calvia IASS was led by the Mayoress M. Nájera, designed by F. Prats and implemented under J. Bustamente’s management. Calvia’s experience has been captured in numerous documents and a brief article on the subject can be found in issue No. 172-173 of the Spanish Institute of Tourism Studies’ Magazine of Tourism Studies.
The IASS as an observatory

The Local Agenda’s Observatory is perceived as a comprehensive point-of-view and is formed around 6 Key Areas and 25 fields of reference defined by around 75 Indicators. The Observatory offers two types of information. The first one refers to a simple, periodic summary assessment (the last assessment was carried out in 2003) of the situation (with marks from 1 to 10) and the development of 25 variables that are representative of the subject of the local economy and social and environmental situation. The second one refers to the situation of the 40 initiatives developed by the 10 Points of the Plan of Action.

The IASS’ assets and limitations

The IASS’ main asset is its innovative character with regards to: examining the group of local problems in a comprehensive way, the relationship between the current situation and future scenarios, the creation of an Observatory in charge of monitoring local development and its coordination with new types of social interaction. Its main weakness stems from the fact that strong public action has not been able to draw upon the corresponding private intervention with regards to a full rehabilitation of the tourist installations with the necessary drive.

IASS – Calvia: Scenarios displaying Trends and Complete Reconstruction
An integrated assessment of sustainability in tourist destinations

IASS – Calvia: The Observatory of Local Sustainability

This practice has been tried and tested out in the heart of the Andalusia Tourism Council in order to have a reliable IASS that can assess the Tourist Destinations along the coast. The System that has been designed focused on 3 main areas – Sustainability, Comprehensive Quality and Local Government – with 25 Key Topics, supported by one or two Indicators/Topics.

A mixed IASS

In contrast with other IASS, this, in its architectural subject matter, has a mixed nature on account of it being driven by a regional body of tourism. The Section on Sustainability refers to the municipal group and its relevant topics; the Section on Comprehensive Quality is focused on Tourism itself although it does examine the “urban environment”; and the Section on “Local Government” goes back to being of a more general nature.

IASS – Andalusia

IASS – Andalusia. SAETA (2004)- Analytical and Statistical System of Tourism in Andalusia (ASSTA)

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4 The IASS that has been described, was put together by ASSTA from an initial design by F. Prats. An article compiled by the ASSTA technical team about the System can be found in issue No. 172-173 of the Spanish Institute of Tourism Studies’ Magazine on Tourism Studies.
The System that has been created looks at two different and interesting characteristics, being that: on the one hand it can be implemented at both the municipal level and at the level of tourist areas along the coast; and on the other it allows for the comparison of respective Resources belonging to the provinces of Andalusia. This is something that promotes a comparison and assimilation of the best practices in each one of the 25 Key Topics.

**Work procedure**

Following an initial design that had been edited by internal debates amongst the ASSTA group, we go on to analyse the Indicators’ precise availability and from there try to find alternatives when the original ones proved to be non-viable with the available information.

Subsequently, two of the System’s Key Sections, the ones that refer to Sustainability and Comprehensive Quality Assurance within the Municipality, were successfully tried and tested in one of the Municipalities along the coast of Andalusia. From there on in, the IASS is on “stand-by”.

**IASS’ assets and limitations**

Its main asset can be drawn from the editorial efforts together with the implementation developed by ASSTA, until a viable System can be found that it level with the Coastal and Municipal Regions. Its limitations stem from the difficulties that arise when implementing the System because of the need to be institutionally compatible with the various administrative bodies.

### Identifying Key Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUSTAINABILITY</th>
<th>COMPREHENSIVE TOURISM QUALITY</th>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KEY TOPICS</td>
<td>KEY TOPICS</td>
<td>KEY TOPICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Present Tourist Population</td>
<td>2. Tourist products and services</td>
<td>2. Information and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tourist demand over Cultural heritage</td>
<td>4. Seasonal nature</td>
<td>4. Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Water consumption</td>
<td>5. Innovation</td>
<td>5. Public Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Protection of the land and the Natural/rural systems</td>
<td>8. Tourist Satisfaction</td>
<td>8. Citizen’s Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IASS – Andalusia. Ecological Footprint

Using data collected from 2000, Acute Consumption per Unit of Surface Area for the Municipalities along the coast of Andalusia has been measured. This is a similar but more simplified concept than that of the “Ecological Footprint”.

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5 An article about this topic by A. Cano Orellana, can be found in issue no. 172-173 de Tousim Studies Magazine edited by the Spanish Institute for Tourism Studies.
An integrated assessment of sustainability in tourist destinations

**An IASS based on the “Ecological Footprint”**

What we are talking about is using an innovative tool for Tourist Destinations, called the “Ecological Footprint”, that allows you to assess a particular site’s “holistic sustainability” and also the “footprint” that it makes on the outside in case of “human demands” exceeding the “local bio-capacity”.

The “Ecological Footprint” works as a Summary Indicator of Sustainability in that it established an ecologically productive area that is required to provide all the resources/energy and absorb all the waste produced by a settled population in a region, inclusive of tourists. The human impact is then translated into a measure of land that is superficially quantifiable, namely in Hectares.

**The relationship between “Ecological Footprint” and “Bio-capacity”**

Once the “Ecological Footprint” that a group of people have on a particular region has been established, it is then possible to also measure its “carrying capacity” (its bio-capacity) in the equivalent Hectares. From there you can estimate the quotient between the “human demands” and the “carrying capacity”, thus establishing the corresponding level of sustainability or unsustainability. When the quotient is equal or less than 1, we can calculate that there is no overflow of the local carrying capacity and as such it will not affect the natural balance in other regions. However, if the quotient is more than 1, it clearly states the overflow of the local carrying capacity and as such the corresponding impact upon other regions. The ideal situation of course, is for the Tourist Destinations that aspire to a level of “excellence”, not to overflow these carrying capacities and have subsequent effects upon other regions.

The results gathered from the municipalities state that on average, each inhabitant of the coastal municipalities of Almeria, Granada and Malaga, each require 4.37, 6.94 and 4.65 ha. However, the bio-productive surface area necessary to absorb that burden would have to be 5.25 times the surface area of the municipalities of Almeria, 14.38 times the surface area of the municipalities of the Granada coastline and 24.16 times that of the municipalities of the Costa del Sol.

**IASS’ assets and limitations**

The IASS’ main value is its innovative nature when it comes to implementing a new “tool” such as the “Ecological Footprint” on Tourist Destinations; the benefits its results and the information used are self-evident. Its limitations are based on the relative complexity of producing this type of study every so often, on account of it being difficult to rely upon basic systematic information.
The “Ecological Footprint” of the Andalusian Municipalities in 2000

Source: Author’s own production.

IASS – Lanzarote⁶ (Canary Island) (2007)

The island of Lanzarote, a Biosphere Reserve, has one of the longest records of containment of “unlimited” tourist growth in a Destination. Since 1991, the island has undertaken the tourist/land strategy discussed by César Manrique in his lecture in the 1970s entitled “Insular Town Council”, using 5 points of reference: 1 regarding the island as a fundamentally fragile regional system; 2 containing the expansion of unlimited urbanisation; 3 driving forward the quality of its tourist areas and installations; 4 protecting the fragile state of the rest of the insular region, 5 incorporating the debate on the island’s systems of development and their limitations into society.

A holistic IASS

Currently, the island is developing a new IASS, with a main objective of improving the basic image of insular development, its present and its future by examining the challenges set out by Global Change. Lanzarote’s own characteristics have driven it to structure the IASS around 5 sub-systems: 1 Human demand and region; 2 Tourism and the Economy; 3 Society; 4 Ecology; 5 Strategic limitations. These five sub-systems are developed around the 36 Key Topics and 68 Indicators⁷.

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⁶ Lanzarote’s IASS-TD is being developed by Lanzarote’s Town Council Data Centre based on an initial design created by F. Prats.
⁷ It has not been possible to develop all of the indicators according to the initial design. The ones that have been replaced with more viable ones are still regarded as “pending” as they are still considered important sources of information about insular development and as such should not disappear altogether.
Development and assessment of the indicators

Asides from its definition, methodology and sources, each indicator carries data about its own development from 2000 – 2006 as well as its behaviour in relation to a reference asset, which is in itself the most suggestive matter. This asset is based upon the following criteria: 1 socially settled assets (growth capping); 2 improvements to the average level in the Canary Islands; 3 the results that arise from its contrast with the members of the Council of Biosphere Reserve.

IASS’ assets and limitations

The main virtue of the IASS is that it is operating and incorporating the periodic system of insular information which: allows for an efficient understanding of the island’s situation and envisages trends from 2000-2006 (this enables the creation of certain scenarios in the medium term), contributes assessment criteria (which can always be modified) and opens the way for an evaluation of the challenges set out by Global Change. Its main limitations stem from an inability to cover the key aspects of necessary information, particularly with regards to the tourism offer and its fragmentation as well as the insular “Ecological Footprint”.

Indicator 1. Human Demands (de facto population + daily presence of tourists)
Reference: they should not go beyond an annual increase of 2%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Año</th>
<th>Población de derecho</th>
<th>Promedio de turistas</th>
<th>Población real*</th>
<th>Densidad de población real</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nº</td>
<td>Base 100</td>
<td>Nº</td>
<td>Base 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>96.310</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>49.969</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>103.044</td>
<td>107,0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>109.942</td>
<td>114,2</td>
<td>49.819</td>
<td>99,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>114.715</td>
<td>119,1</td>
<td>48.796</td>
<td>97,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>116.762</td>
<td>121,3</td>
<td>51.201</td>
<td>102,5</td>
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<td>123.039</td>
<td>127,8</td>
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<td>127.457</td>
<td>132,3</td>
<td>49.182</td>
<td>98,4</td>
</tr>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>132.366</td>
<td>137,4</td>
<td>48.013</td>
<td>96,1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variación anual</td>
<td>5.151</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>-279</td>
<td>- 0,6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evolución demográfica 2000-07
(Base 2000=100)
Indicator 15. Daily expenditure of tourist in the destination.
Reference: growing above and not below the Canarian mean.

Indicator 58: Co2 Emissions per person.
Reference: growing above and below the Canarian mean.
An integrated assessment of sustainability in tourist destinations

Indicator 66: Percentage of imported energy.
Reference: decreasing and below the Canarian mean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Año</th>
<th>Lanzarote</th>
<th>Canarias</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importada (TEP)</td>
<td>No importada (TEP)</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>231.720,2</td>
<td>1.530,9</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>253.318,0</td>
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<td>278.956,9</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>309.430,3</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>% variación anual</td>
<td>18,001</td>
<td>70,5</td>
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</table>

IASS + Scenarios of Spanish Tourism in 2020 (2007)

To mark Spanish Tourism’s Strategic 2020 Horizon Plan, a report has been compiled about Sustainability and a mini-IASS developed. This is able to project desirable scenarios and basic alternatives and was used as a reference when the General Aims were set out for the following plan of: “optimising socio-economic assets per unit of sustainable carrying capacity and investment, with guarantees for the quality of the natural and cultural environment of each society and production of decreased impacts upon the local and global environments.

An IASS to create scenarios in 2020

This mini-IASS was developed to measure the need to change the model of Spanish Tourism by replacing the ideals of “unlimited growth” with those of “holistic revaluation” within the sustainable elements of Tourist Destinations.

In order to do so, and asides from the data from the last 5 years, they predicted the behaviour of nine different indicators added together until the year 2020 which were considered key to both national and international Spanish tourism.

Trends and alternative scenarios

3 types of undesirable behaviour were detected in the “Trends Scenario” based upon predictions of development from 2001-2006:

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8 The System has been produced by F. Prats as Coordinator of the Report on Sustainability of Spanish Tourism’s 2020 Horizon Plan
- Revenue standstill at country level
- Excess of accommodation supply but low level of beds occupied by tourists.
- Increased travel and environmental burden

The “Alternative Scenario” which is based upon the pledge for a holistic revaluation of destinations in elements of sustainability, creates more positive general outcomes:

- Capping urban growth
- Reducing the environmental burden
- Increase revenue at country level
- Improvements in tourist activity areas

IASS’ assets and limitations

The IASS’ main asset is its ability to play a “didactic game” which is easily done with medium term tourism models. Its limitations stems from a difficulty when it comes down to refining certain environmental indexes (the impact on the environment is obtained in three parts from construction, overnight stays and journeys).

“Trend Scenario”: the behaviour of key indicator (2001-2006-2020)

Source: Report on Sustainability for Spanish Tourism’s 2020 Strategic Horizon Plan

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