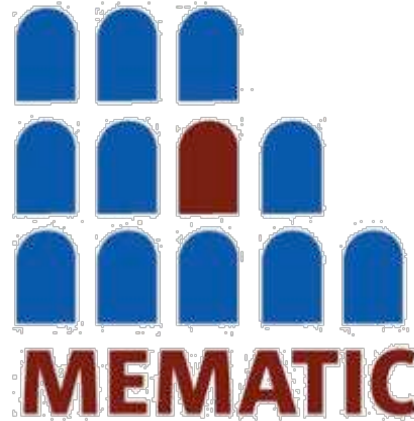




**TOR VERGATA**  
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI ROMA



**MASTER  
IN ECONOMIA  
E MANAGEMENT  
DELLE ATTIVITÀ  
TURISTICHE  
E CULTURALI**

**“Managing Tourism Firms and Destinations as Systems:  
basic concepts and key Management Tools”**

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# Introduction

This lesson presents some of the most consolidated management concepts of tourism firms and destinations, both conceived as **systems**, shedding light on their **mutual functionality**. Special attention is devoted to the key conditions - i.e., **conditions of systemness** (Cafferata, 2016) that need to be verified by tourism firms and destinations to become and remain **competitive systems**.

On this conceptual base, we explain the concepts of **governance and management** of the aforesaid systems, highlighting their protagonists, key decisions, and operations.

In addition, some useful management tools – for tourism firms and destinations that aim to become and remain competitive systems over time – are briefly presented.

Through this lesson, the reader can acquire specific knowledge about the opportunity offered by “systems thinking” to understand the nature of both tourism firms and destinations, their general administration, and the basic conditions of their competitiveness and evolution.

# Agenda

1. Tourism firms and destinations as systems
2. Tourism destination as an eco-system
3. Governance e management of the tourism firm system and destination system
4. Key Management Tools for enhancing Tourism Firms Competitiveness and Destinations Sustainability

# Tourism firms and destinations as systems

## On tourism organisations (I)

- The world of tourism organizations and that tourists have been widely recognized by scholars and practitioners as the engine of progress towards sustainability of countries worldwide. Indeed, over the last half century, tourism has become one of the largest sector of economic activity contributing to 10,3% of global GDP and 10% of employment, mainly thanks to small firms (80% of the sector).
- It is particularly significant that in the face of the current unprecedented emergency caused by Covid-19, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2020) while forecasting the worst results of tourism sector since 1950, states that tourism is uniquely placed to lead future recovery by promoting solidarity and trust. The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development that follows the Encyclical Letter “Laudato si” has already paid great attention to the close link between sustainable tourism and development, emphasizing the role of natural environment.
- Over the years, the multidisciplinary research about sustainable tourism issue has been constantly increasing especially due to the worldwide growing environmental fragility and scarcity of natural resources. The widespread ethical and social implications associated with the change of tourism organizations has been clearly highlighted.

## On tourism organisations (II)

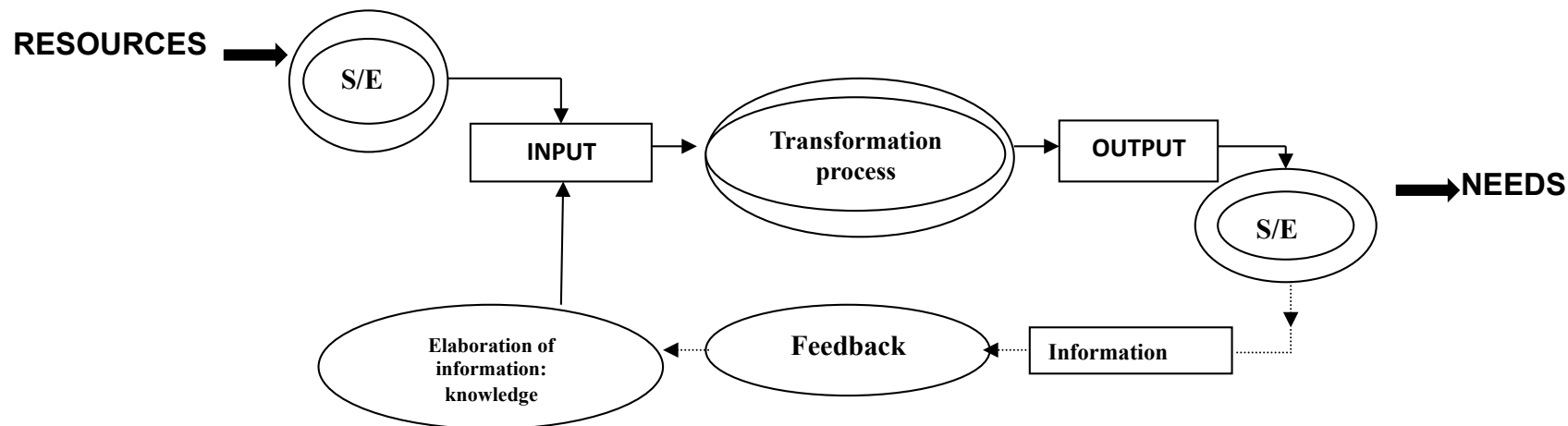
- Within the world of tourism organisation, we focus on tourism firms and destinations.
- A number of scholars from different disciplines (e.g., geography, economics, management, sociology, psychology, anthropology) at international levels have looking at the aforesaid tourism organisations differently, producing a variety of approaches, perspectives and methodologies. In particular, great efforts have been devoted to investigating destinations competitiveness and sustainable development mainly focusing on their structural characteristics and on the role of institutions at local, national and international levels. Also, the tourism demand has been notably investigated. However, much less has been debated about the tourism firms and their role in destinations development and competitiveness (Komppula, 2014; Paniccia & Leoni, 2019). It is significant that the Italian local system offering have been recognized by the law since 2001 as a tool for local tourism development. This confirms the great attention devoted towards destinations rather than firms.
- In sum, the tourism literature is fragmented, challenging the development of a uniform field study and weakening theory development. In particular, a clear and shared definition (at least) of tourism firms and tourism destination is still lacking. We will develop this issue in the following slides providing a definition both of tourism firm and destination as “system”. It is particularly relevant to better understand how tourism organisation, in particular firms and destinations can contribute together to progress toward sustainability.

## What is a tourism firm?

- The tourism firm can be defined as an organization that performs a "function of service "to society - i.e., social organization, that of **production and sale of services to satisfy the tourist demand**, according to **principles of economic rationality**.
- In fact, in each tourism firm—through interdependent structures and human resources reciprocally functional—**operations** that allow something (i.e., production factors, mainly cultural and natural resources, workers, competences) to be **transformed** in something else (i.e., products ) with an **added value**, take place in order to meet **tourists' needs**.
- In sum, **the transformation's economic nature** and the key associated managerial criteria of efficiency and effectiveness as well as the **statutory goal** of each tourism firm (i.e., production of services to satisfy needs) clearly emerges (Paniccia & Baiocco, 2019).
- The following slide provides an elementary representation of the **tourism firm "in action"**, that is, as a transformation process.

## A elementary representation of the tourism firm “in action”

- Production factors (input)
- Transformation (operations)
- Services (output)
- Information
- Feedback



Over time, the transformation of inputs into outputs has increasingly involved information, knowledge factors, and digital technologies.



## Tourism firms as systems

- Stating that “tourism firms are systems” is, to date, substantially consolidated in both management thinking and tourism management literature. However, much less has been debated about what conditions have to occur for this organization to become and remain systems.
- Is it really true that wherever we have tourism firms there is a "system" capable of competing and lasting over time?
- Drawing from the most convincing management conceptualization of the enterprise organisations (Cafferata, 2016), the tourism firm can be conceived as a system “*when it stands as a differentiated, structured and coordinated whole of parts, participants and their interrelationships oriented towards the achievement of a shared statutory goal*”.
- We know that firms do not born as “systems” and not all are capable of becoming systems. The systemness conditions must therefore be verified.
- The systemness conditions are not naturally determined, nor are they included in the firm’s constitutive act. They are built and achieved over time. These conditions will be described later for both tourism firms and destination (see slides n. 21-22).

## The tourism sector (I)

- To better understand which are the tourism firms, it is important to understand where they work and compete in order to achieve their statutory goal. In other words, this means defining the tourism sector.
- The tourism sector represents the task environment of the tourism firm. In this sector it competes with other tourism firms, and compares itself with various organizations operating in the sector, trying to survive and achieve success.
- The tourism sector includes a variety of tourism firms in terms of activities carried out, dimensions, products offered and other structural characteristics. Moreover, in this sector tourism firms as well as every other enterprise share the **common goal of serving the society** (Paniccia & Baiocco, 2018).
- The Italian Code of Tourism (Art. 4) conceives the tourism firm as an organized economic activity designed to produce, commercialize, intermediate, and manage products, services, and facilities that are part of the Italian tourism offering.
- The studies that deal with the definition of the tourism sector highlight the opportunity to conceive it by adopting a **broad conceptualization** that includes **different sub-sectors** each of them is an independent sector from the others if considered from the point of view of the specific product offered (e.g., the hospitality service).
- In particular, the tourism sector can be viewed as comprising the following five sub-sectors: **accommodation, tourism intermediation, attraction, transport, destination organization.**

(Middleton, 1989; Casarin, 1996; Rispoli and Tamma, 1996; Pencarelli, 2003)

## The tourism sector (II)

- Accordingly, multiple various firms are involved in the production of services to meet tourists' needs, from those offering accommodation facilities and tourism intermediation organizations to those related to attractions, transport and destination organization.
- Moreover, each of these sub-sectors can be further broken down into several **market segments**. Regarding accommodation, for example, it is possible to identify: hotels (and among hotels, luxury, high-end, mid-level, economy, budget, etc.), motels, hostels, lodges, bed and breakfast, agritourism and many other types depending on the country being considered and related regulation.
- A feature mainly highlighted in the literature and practice in relation to the firms of the tourism sector concerns their **organizational dimension**. The small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) but also micro enterprise (i.e., one-person firms) prevail over the large ones (for example, vertically integrated companies in the tourism value chain, hotels in the international chain, airlines) (Pender and Sharpley, 2004; Evans, 2015).
- What clearly emerges from the tourism literature is that, despite their variety in terms of products offered and other structural characteristics, tourism firms share the common goal of serving the multiple different needs of tourists' experiences (e.g., Leiper, 1979; Henderson 1994; Rispoli and Tamma, 1996; Komppula, 2014; Pencarelli, 2003). These evolving needs concern not only tourists but also residents, as widely emphasized in the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

## The tourism sector (III)

- Considering the variety of tourism firms and related specific products, a distinction has been made between firms **contributing directly** to the realization of the tourism offering that would cease existing in the absence of tourism, such as travel agencies, and those **contributing indirectly** that would still exist in the absence of tourism but at a reduced level, such as museums (Smith, 2015).
- In the same view, other scholars conceive the tourism sector both in a **narrow sense**, including firms exclusively involved in tourism activities, such as travel agencies, and in a **wide sense**, encompassing also firms involved in tourism activities in a non-exclusive way (Rispoli and Tamma, 1996; Pencarelli, 2003).
- However, considering the tourism sector in a narrow sense might be arduous and conceptually reductive in that some economic activities that contribute to tourism offering would be excluded (Pencarelli, 2003). This is made clear also by the current COVID-19 emergency, whose effects have severely damaged all the tourism firms, directly and exclusively (e.g., travel agencies), indirectly and non-exclusively (e.g., museums) involved in the tourism sector.

## Connections between tourism sector and destinations

- Within their task environment (i.e., sector) as for each firm of any economic activity, the tourism firm competes with other organizations offering itself to the judgment of tourists and local communities facing their demand and that of local communities including workers of the firm.
- However, **tourism firms by producing, commercializing, intermediating, and managing products, services, and facilities contribute also to the overall tourism offering of the destination** – i.e., the unitary whole of local resources and services produced by single tourism firms (e.g., Middleton, 1989; Smith, 1994; Middleton and Clarke 2001; McKercher, 2016).
- Tourism studies emphasize the concept that within a certain destination each **specific tourist product strengthens its competitiveness through integration with all the other tourist products offered by that destination**. This means that the specialized offer of a single sub-sector contributes only partially to the satisfaction of the tourist.
- Consequently, **there is a close link between the competitiveness of tourism firms and the competitiveness of their destination**. What matters most to the competitiveness of both is the **overall system competitiveness**. This issue has relevant implications for the competitiveness of both tourism firms and destinations (Porter, 1998) and will be discussed in the following slides when we will understand the meaning of tourism destination as a system, in particular **tourism eco-system**.

## How to compete and maintain tourism organizations competitive systems?

- What is important is **the overall competitiveness of the system** (i.e. entire tourism offering of a destination): many specific tourism products able to generate more tourism products that, in turn, are able to meet the multiple needs related to the tourist experience.
- No longer just individual firms or individual products, but a local tourism offering system (local and multi-local contexts) capable of attracting tourists and residents thanks to the integration of **typical resources** (natural and/or artificial) and **quality tourist services**.
- It is necessary that the individual tourism firms "continuously" vivify the acquired systemness conditions; this is a pre-requisite for the development of competitive capabilities.
- It is vital to "create a system", in the awareness that a specialized offering is able to satisfy only in part the tourist satisfaction (systemic approach).
- Synergic action between policy makers and decision makers is essential to maximize the tourism benefits, limiting the negative impacts (environmental, social and economic) of uncontrolled tourism development (cooperation).

# Tourism destination as an eco-system

## What is a tourism destination?(I)

- Over time, the literature about tourism destination has notably increased identifying a mainstream thought namely Destination management.
- Great efforts have been devoted mainly to investigating the structural characteristics of destinations including tourism offering, governance and management models, such as corporate and community (Pechlaner et al., 2012). However, these studies have analysed mainly the role of the Destination Management Organization (DMO) - an institutional organization aimed at integrating different stakeholders operating in the destination under common goals (UNWTO, 2019) - in the competitiveness and development of destinations while the role of tourism firms and that of entrepreneur is still scarcely investigated.
- To date, many conceptual gaps exist and the result is rather confused. Still, tourism destination is an ambiguous concept.



## What is a tourism destination?(II)

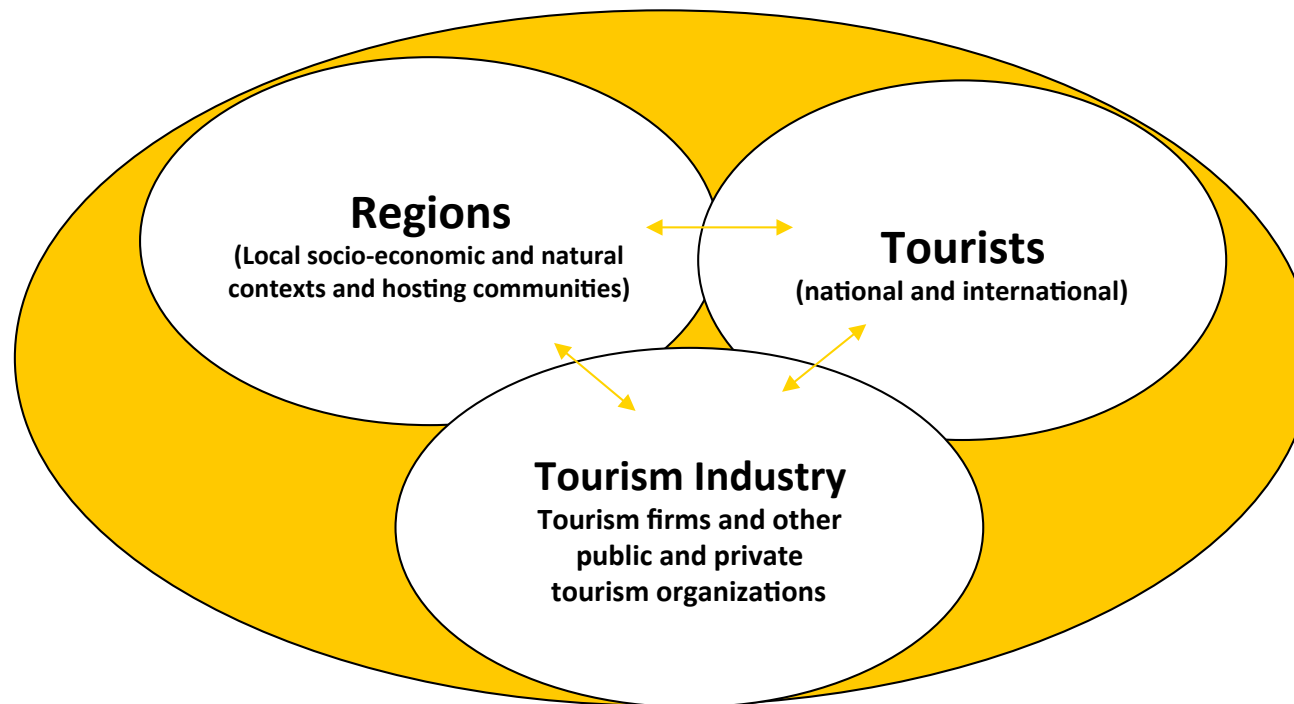
- Some scholars, have identified tourism destination as a **space geographically delimited** and provided with some specific factors - such as physical, natural, locational, environmental, socio-cultural, institutional, and economic (e.g., Keller, 1998; Weaver, 2000). In this respect, various scholars have analysed, with very little cross fertilization between disciplines, rural destinations, mass urban centres and resort destinations producing a variety of approaches, perspectives and methodologies without providing a shared useful synthesis (Paniccia and Leoni, 2019).
- Other scholars (Middleton, 1989; Middleton and Clarke ,2001; Rispoli and Tamma, 1995; Pencarelli, 2003) have conceived the destination as the **overall tourism product**, meaning with that “a bundle or package of tangible and intangible components, based on activity at a destination. The package is perceived by the tourist as an experience, available at a price” (Middleton and Clarke 2001, pp. 124-125).

## What is a tourism destination? (III)

- In accordance with the above stated concepts and drawing on the system thinking in tourism and general management literature, we can conceive the tourism destination as a **“socio-ecological system”** constituted by a plurality of interconnected sub-systems reciprocally functional (i.e., region and its local contexts), in order to realize the tourism offering of the destination through the economic transformation process that characterizes each tourism destination organization.
- In fact, in each tourism destination – through interdependent structures and human resources reciprocally functional – **operations** that allow something (i.e., production factors, mainly cultural and natural resources, services of individual tourism firms and other organizations, people, competences) to be **transformed** in something else (i.e., tourism experiences) with an **added value**, take place in order to meet **tourists’ needs**.
- In sum, a tourism destination is a **socio-ecological system** that performs a “function of service” to society, that of **production and sale tourism experiences to satisfy the tourist demand**, according to **principles of economic rationality**.
- The following slide provides an elementary representation of the **tourism destination in action**”, that is, as a transformation process.

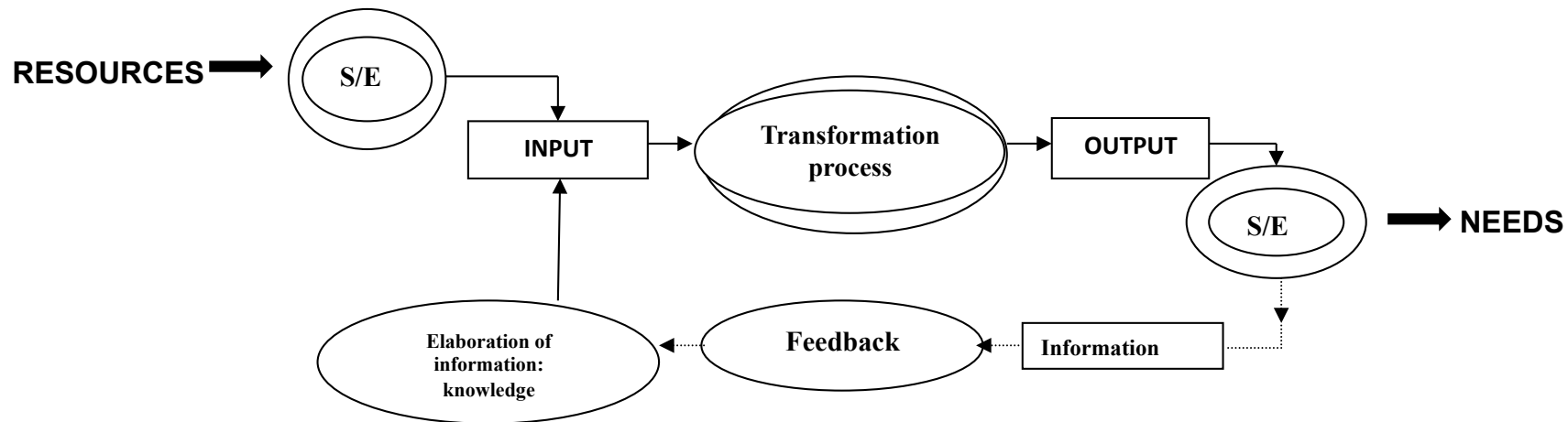
# The components of a tourism destination as an eco-system

*Interdependences and relationships inter and intra-systemic*



## A elementary representation of the tourism destination “in action”

- **S/E**: wider socio-economic and natural system
- **Production factors (input)**: natural and cultural resources, services of tourism firms and other organizations that contribute to the tourism offering, knowledge and people (such as administrative authorities, personnel of municipalities and firms, firms’ owners, managers, communities, tourists)
- **Transformation (operations)**
- **Services (output)**: tourist experience (tourists and residents)
- **Information**
- **Feedback**



Over time, the transformation of inputs into outputs has increasingly involved information , knowledge factors, and digital technologies.

# Systemness conditions (I)

## (for sustainability and competitiveness of tourism firms and destinations)

The systemness conditions (Cafferata, 2016) that have to occur for tourism organizations (in particular, tourism firms and destinations) to become and remain sustainable systems, and thus competitive are:

**i. Differentiation** - Existence of rationally designed sub-units and operations within the boundaries of the social organization. This condition concerns the *division of labour* within the organization and the extent to which sub-units are created depends on its organizational dimensions, the characteristics of its environments, and the forecasts on future trends. The need for a clear separation between governance tasks and managerial activities emerges in relation to this condition. strutturazione secondo un modello.

**ii. Structuring** - Construction of the *organizational structure* for appropriately ordering the functions, decisions, and operational responsibilities which have been rationally differentiated. This condition implies setting up procedures within the afore-said sub-units as well as formalizing rules to govern the interactions between parts and participants.

**iii. Integration** - Interpersonal and inter-functional integration of what has been differentiated and structured. This condition emerges when the previous two conditions (differentiation and structuring) have been satisfied. The role of integrator can be played by the owner in case of simple organizations and/or managers in case complex ones. This role is played by the Destination Management Organization (DMO) when the destination is concerned. According to the UNWTO (2019), DMOs are involved in «planning, coordination and management of a full range of activities within an adequate governance structure with the integration of different stakeholders operating in the destination under common goals».

## Systemness conditions (II)

(for sustainability and competitiveness of tourism firms and destinations)

- iv) **Orientation towards a goal** - Orientation of the organization towards a *clear goal shared* by all its participants. The production of services to meet customer's needs is the institutional goal of the firm. Other purposes can be subordinated to this goal (such as the generation of profit) that however are subordinate to the institutional one.
  
- v) **Homeostasis** - A state of *systemic equilibrium* achieved on the basis of a proper administration of the organizations by their owners and/or managers or DMO and resulting in the coordination and control of its parts and participants.

Once achieved, systemness must be continuously vivified by nurturing the needed **resources** and **competencies** that enable careful administration, appropriate strategic analysis, planning and implementation of the policies that have been chosen, and then **competitive advantages**.

From **systemness conditions** (basic of competitiveness) to specific **competitiveness factors** (price and non price) for the *success and/or competitive advantage lasting over time*.

## Main features of tourism organizations as systems

Tourism organizations (such as tourism firms and destinations) are called to consider the managerial implications related to the following systems characteristics:

- *Significant plurality of “parts” and “participants” dynamically interacting*, meaning that each element is in a relationship of mutual functionality with the others within the destination.
- *Order and regulation* through structuring, integration and coordination of all the elements of the destination involved at multiple levels (local and multi-local).
- *Ongoing control* of the consistency between planned objectives and results achieved in relation to everything being organized and managed within the destination.
- *Shared adaptation strategies* towards the *systemic goal*.

## Who are tourists?

- Over last decades, tourism demand has gradually shifted from mass standardized tourism packages required for leisure purposes towards **unique experiences** even **co-created** with firms, organizations and local communities of the host destinations capable to fulfil various motivations successfully
- We can define tourists as those travellers that not only ask for variety but also choose and **live temporarily**—with their needs and cultural background—in the territories that they have chosen to visit, interacting with the local communities and the tourism firms that host them.
- Thus, tourists contribute to reinforce **the circular virtuous relationship** between innovation demand and new tourism offering oriented towards sustainability.



# Governance and management of the tourism firm system and destination system

## The governance protagonists (tourism firms)

Governance is a typical **entrepreneurial activity** (i.e., the activity carried out by those who created the firm, becoming wholly or partially its "owner").

In individual firms, governance is the responsibility of the **entrepreneur-owner**.

In corporate companies, governance is the responsibility of the shareholders / shareholders.

- **Governance (stricto sensu)** is a corporate activity demanded to the owners of full capital risk (shareholders) and, in particular, to the economic entity of the firm.
- **Governance (broad sense)** is a corporate activity that involves not only shareholders but also other influential subjects called stakeholders (bearers of various interests), even if they do not hold any company property rights.

## The management protagonists (tourism firms)

- **Management (stricto sensu)** coincides with the management activity (supervision, coordination and control) which is the responsibility of **managers** (area/office heads).
- Managers exercise **leadership** and play a role that is subordinated to that of the economic entity (entrepreneur/shareholders)
- **Management activity (broad sense)** concerns the corporate administrative process and involves:
  - who – as "leader" – coordinates and controls the operations delegated by the corporate governance bodies, therefore carrying out a "management" activity (**manager**)
  - who carries out (in team, workgroups or individually) firms' operations under the supervision of the manager (**employed workers**)

In **individual firms**, the management activity is headed by the entrepreneur-owner.

# Destination governance (i.e., governance of an eco-tourism system)

- **Governing a destination** means carrying out a function of strategic orientation of the whole destination considered as an eco-tourism system, capable of ensuring its general direction by defining its purposes, development strategies, and control of resources.

We need a multi-stakeholder governance approach capable of:

- **Combining the political/institutional vision with the entrepreneurial one**, looking at the evolutions of the competitive, general/institutional, and natural environment (national and international) also by promoting innovation.
- Promoting participatory negotiation processes through **cooperation between multiple subjects and interests**, both public and private.

See: UNWTO and Universidade de Algarve Forum, 29-5-2011; Pechlaner H., Paniccia P., Valeri M., Raich F. (Eds 2012), Destination Governance. Teoria ed esperienze.

# Destination management

- Managing the destination means realizing what has been established at the governance level, through a management function capable of promoting a more effective link between tourist demand and offering, host communities and tourists.

Management is responsible for:

- **Implementing the "strategic tourism plan"**, which is not a "dream book" but the reasoned planning of the objectives to be pursued and the actions to be carried out, bringing out the local resources "system".
- **Realizing the integration between multiple subjects, interests, resources, and services** through the exercise of leadership and control of everything that it has been decided to do, organize, and manage.

# What are the principles to manage well?

Principles of rational action in organizations:

- **Ordering** (division of activities to be managed) and **structuring** of the work, according to a project (activities to be organized);
- **Rules** in administration and in inter-functional and inter-personal relationships;
- **Calculation** in processes inherent to everything that is managed and organized (activities to be "detected" ex ante, concurrently, and ex post);
- **Behaving** as if fulfilling a professional duty, by virtue of a vocation;
- **Operating with method**, which is conscientiousness and precision, with respect to what is done in a "systematic" way.

Given these premises, the administration of both tourism firms and destinations will be exercised on solid theoretical and moral bases, which will likely lead to positive economic and social results, in a defined period of time.

## The importance of tourism firms and their good administration

- At the basis of tourism lies **the dynamic relationship between the tourism firm, their destination, and tourists** (with their own cultural and values background).
- Tourism firms are a fundamental strategic variable for the destination in which they have chosen to live and operate (Porter, 1990; Valdani and Ancarani, 2000).
- If well conducted, tourism firms become competitive forces capable of significantly contributing to progress towards the sustainability of a destination, starting from their own sustainability (economic, social, and environmental).
- A well-managed firm is capable of doing "good jobs and good products" (Talcott Parsons, 1960), which will likely lead to positive economic and social results.
- **Tourism firms, however, are not cathedrals in the desert!**

## The importance of destination and its good administration

The destination (with its social, environmental and economic dimensions) is not a neutral player, especially for tourism firms that operates in it.

Quality tourism needs a **careful administration of the destination**, whose natural and cultural resources are the real value to preserve and enhance of any destination.

**Safeguard, prudence, diversity, citizenship, and humanity** are the pillars on which this administration rests.

Tourism can become sustainable as long as its ethical structure is guaranteed (Tonini N., 2010). Hence **the link between social responsibility and sustainable tourism**.



# Key Management Tools for enhancing Tourism Firms Competitiveness and Destinations Sustainability

# General overview

- To date, concepts such as sustainability, innovation and their reciprocal connection with competitiveness are widely addressed in tourism management studies. In this regard, a central issue concerns the identification of key management tools that can be used by tourism firms and destinations to achieve and maintain their conditions of systemness over time. This is crucial for enhancing competitiveness of both tourism firms and destinations.
- These tools are well known and consolidated in the management and business administration literature. We chose them on the basis of the lesson deriving from the current global competitive dynamics in the tourism sector. In fact, as demonstrated in some of our studies, their application seems to be particularly relevant for helping tourism entrepreneurs but also policy makers to make more targeted decisions about the problems to solve in order to compete, innovate and evolve in a positive way.
- In the following slides, these tools are briefly presented in function of their usefulness with respect to three different intertwined types of analyses: i) Analysis of the external environment; ii) Analysis of the internal environment; iii) Analysis of the competitive positioning. Furthermore, these tools will be contextualised to the key current challenges to which tourism firms and their destinations are together called to gather.

# The analysis of the external environment

- An important aspect of competitiveness among tourism destinations on a global scale concerns how their unique resource setting is used. Therefore, the strategic value of both entrepreneurship and local context (social, economic and natural) clearly emerges, shifting the focus on the synergy between firms and institutions at local and multi-local levels.
- The analysis of the external environment is therefore useful for decision makers, but also for policy makers, to understand how to operate, what new opportunities may arise from the environment and what threats may be encountered, what influences may be exerted on the firm by the environment and, in turn, which influences may be exerted by the firm.
- It is for this reason that in the following slides some useful management tools are presented for both a static and dynamic analysis of the external environment, highlighting its implications for tourism firms and destinations. They are:
  - i. Systemic analysis in space and time
  - ii. PEST and stakeholders' expectations analyses
  - iii. The destination cycle of evolution

# The analysis of the external environment

## *i. Systemic analysis in space and time*

### The idea

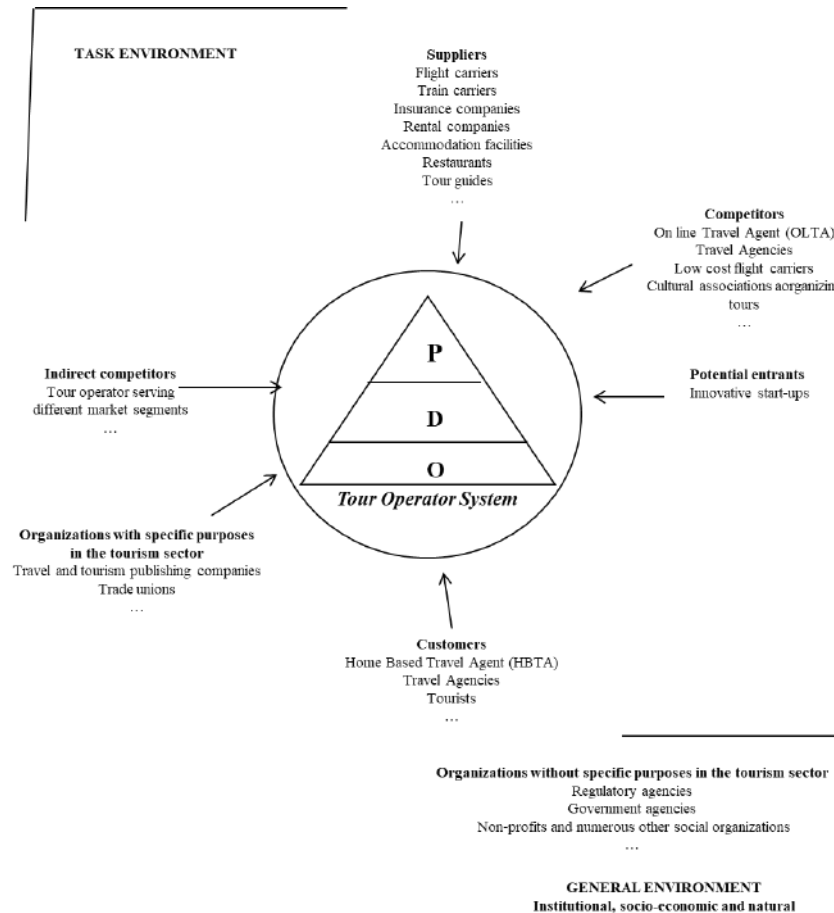
Outside the firm's boundaries is the field in which the firm operates to achieve its statutory goal: the task environment, synonymous with sector of economic activity. Each sector of economic activity is the environment where the firm faces **competitors** and satisfies **customers** of its goods and/or services dealing also with **suppliers** of input, producers of substitute goods (**indirect competitors**) and **potential entrants** (Porter, 1979). All the aforesaid organizations – including the firm – are **competitive forces** exerting pressures in the sector. Moreover, also other organizations with specific purposes in the sector (e.g. trade unions) within which they are included and organizations without specific purposes in any sector of economic activity (e.g. regulatory agencies, government agencies, non-profits) belonging to the general (institutional, socio-economic and natural) environment, are capable of influencing the firm's activities in its sector.

### Why tourism firms should use this tool?

Each tourism firm can identify its customers, suppliers, competitors (direct and indirect), potential entrants as well as other organizations with and without specific purposes in its sector (e.g., accommodation, tourism intermediation, attraction, transport). This may help tourism firms to better understand the forces exerting pressures in its sector and make decisions (strategic and not) accordingly. In parallel, this analysis is useful also for policy makers to identify, together with tourism firms, more appropriate targeted actions for contributing together to firms' as well as destinations' competitiveness and development.

# The analysis of the external environment

## *i. Systemic analysis in space and time*



The systemic analysis, graphically shown in Figure 1, is essentially static. Given the dynamic nature of the relationship between the tourism firm and its environment, it must be framed within a **temporal perspective**.

Figure 1. Systemic analysis in space of a generic tour operator

# The analysis of the external environment

## *ii. PEST and stakeholders' expectations analyses*

### The idea

PEST is the analysis of the **political, economic, social** and **technological factors** in the general environment capable of influencing the evolution of both customers' behavior and firms' activities. PEST analysis increasingly concerns **natural environmental** factors, such as natural resources and climate change, on which firms are strongly dependent. The analysis takes place through the following steps: i) identification of the aforesaid factors; ii) evaluation of the links existing between them and the firms' activity; iii) identification of threats and opportunities that could arise from changes in the general environment. PEST works well with the stakeholders' expectations analysis that is aimed at understanding what the firm can offer to meet such expectations due to the unavoidable interactions with various numerous stakeholders.

### Why tourism firms should use this tool?

Political, economic, social, technological, natural environmental/factors can exert their influence on the tourism firm and on its ongoing interactions with numerous stakeholders (including the tourism destination). These factors can indeed limit or encourage the tourism firm choices (strategic and not). Thus, time and resources should be invested to identify sources of threats as well as of opportunities in the general environment. This implies carefully analyzing contexts, including stakeholders, and realign behaviors if necessary.

# The analysis of the external environment

## ii. PEST and stakeholders' expectations analyses

<i>Political</i>	<i>Economics</i>
Regulations and directives	GDP and other indicators of economic development
Laws regarding employees	Economic growth and cycles
Laws regarding competition	Interest, exchange and inflation rates
Taxation	Rates of investment
Types of contracts and tourist protection measures	Distribution of income
Government stability	Incentives in tourism
Environment care	...
...	
<i>Social</i>	<i>Technological</i>
Demographic trends	R&D Investments
Living conditions and lifestyle	Dissemination of (new) technologies in the industry
Level of education	Current technological changes
Reference groups	Intellectual property
Spread of new technologies	Costs for energy and network connectivity
Trends towards globalization	Specific innovations in various sectors
Trends towards digitalization	Technical qualification of the workforce
...	...

**Different scenarios** for future evolution of general environmental factors need to be assessed. This can help to foresee what may happen and the potential impact on tourism organizations.

The UNWTO, for example, has recently prospected three scenarios for international tourists flows in 2020 based on possible dates of lifting of travel restrictions and gradual re-opening of international borders (UNWTO, 2020).

**Table 1.** Generic scheme for PEST analysis

# The analysis of the external environment

## *ii. PEST and stakeholders' expectations analyses*

Organization Name	Critical Stakeholder	Why critical?	Stakeholder expectation	Action to satisfy expectation	Cost of the action
State	[Yes/No – indicate order of priority]	[motive]	[description of expectation]	[action identified]	[cost to sustain for the action]
Bank "X"	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...

**Table 2.** Scheme for stakeholders' expectations analysis



# The analysis of the external environment

## *iii. The destination cycle of evolution*

### The idea

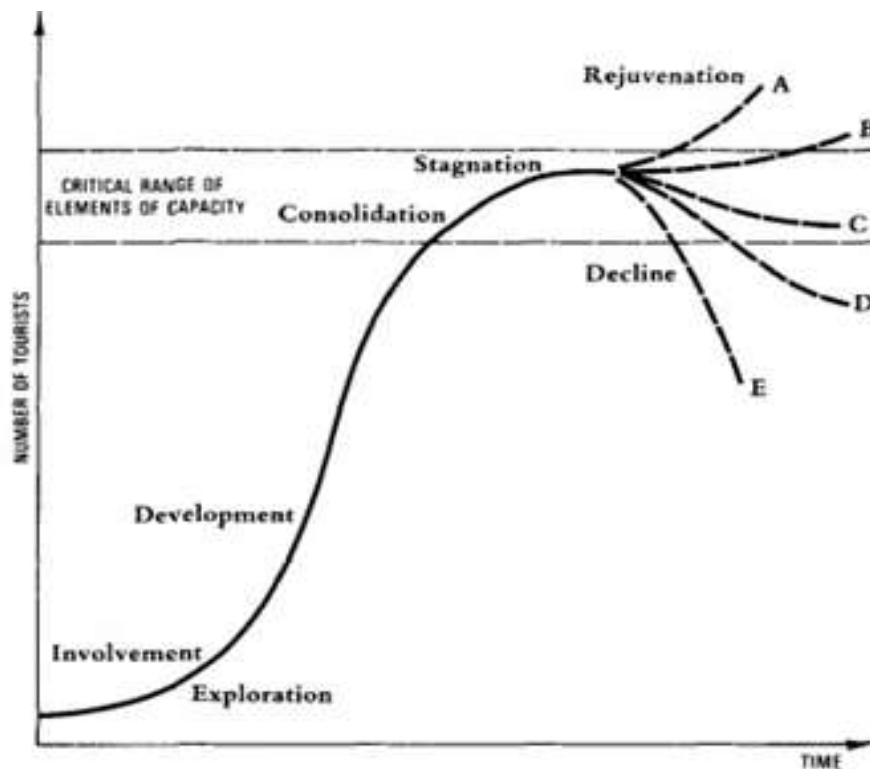
The *Destination Cycle of Evolution* has been theorized by Butler (1980) considering the following three main dimensions: time, number of tourists, carrying capacity. On this basis, this model allows to consider the evolution of a tourism destination in relation to its carrying capacity and six main phases of evolution, i.e. **exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, decline** or **rejuvenation**.

### Why tourism firms should use this tool?

This model can be particularly useful to identify those phases of a destination evolution when cooperative behaviors between institutions and tourism firms are of vital importance both for the sustainable development of a destination and for the tourism firm's life itself. This latter, in fact, has its own life cycle and its creation, survival, success and, eventually, excellence take place within the destination and through the destination's phases of evolution. Thus, it can be effectively adopted by tourism firms and destinations as a managerial tool to better evaluate the actions to take—in terms, for example, of expansion strategies or product innovation—in relation to the current (but also desired) phase of destination evolution.

# The analysis of the external environment

## *iii. The destination cycle of evolution*



**Figure 2.** A destination cycle of evolution

SOURCE: Butler, 1980

**Exploration phase** - An area is outside any tourist circuit. Following feedbacks of first “explorers”, some tourism firms are created and infrastructures constructed.

**Involvement phase** - Ongoing pressures by first tourists pushes public and private sectors’ investments.

**Development phase** - In the absence of continuous and careful control at local or national level, this phase can lead to the deterioration of natural resources and characteristics of the destination.

**Consolidation phase** - The destination is fully established in the tourism sector requiring even more continuous and careful controls.

**Stagnation phase** - Loss of value and attractiveness of the destination for intensive exploitation. Recovery actions are needed.

**Renewal** of a tourism area.

# The analysis of the internal environment

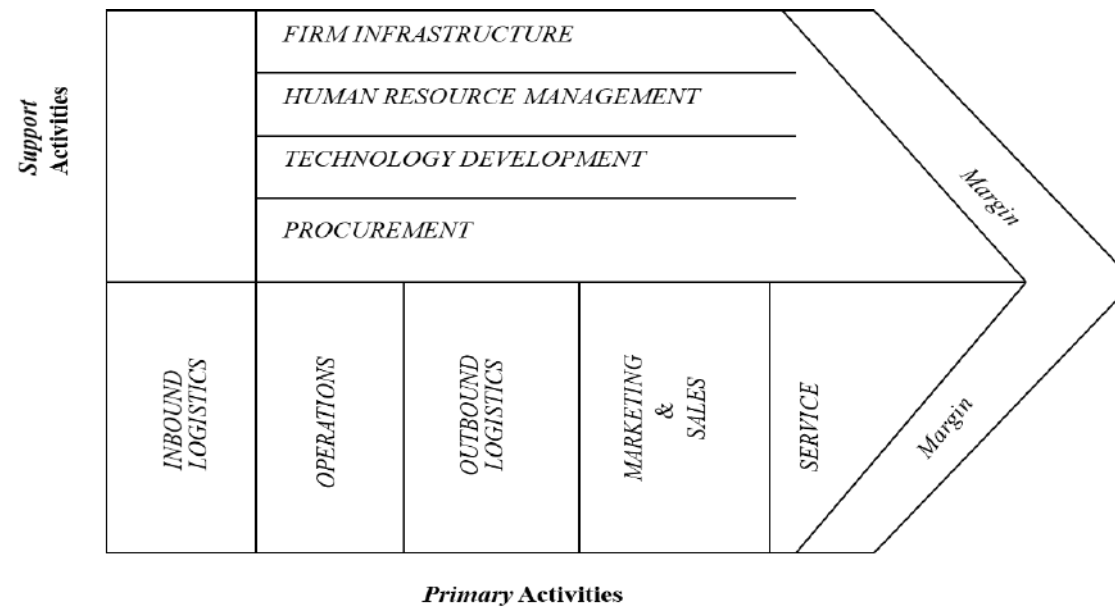
- In order to take advantage of opportunities offered by the environment, avoid threats and maintain a competitive, successful position, each tourism organization has to nurture the needed **competencies** and **neural centres** (governance bodies, leaders, high performing individuals) which enable the same entity to make autonomous strategic decisions.
- Moreover, it is fundamental to encourage synergies within and between tourism organizations on the basis of **shared values** and **cooperative behaviours** driven by a **common vision of development**.
- A contribution in this sense can be offered by the many tools described in the literature. Some of them can be considered as a valuable support to carry out the necessary **self-analysis** on which ultimately the survival of each organization depends. Others can be of help to **orient practices and behaviours** towards collaborative approaches in engaging with the sustainability issue. In particular, in the following slides we analyse:
  - i. The Value Chain
  - ii. Hofstede's national cultural dimensions
  - iii. Gantt chart
  - iv. Road mapping

# The analysis of the internal environment

## *i. The Value Chain*

### The idea

According to the *Value Chain* model (Porter, 1985) each firm generates value through its five primary and four support activities and related connections that take place within the firm itself.



**Figure 3.** Representation of a generic firm's value chain.

SOURCE: Porter, 1985, p. 37.

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# The analysis of the internal environment

## *i. The Value Chain*

### Why tourism firms should use this tool?

Tourism firms can adopt this model to identify areas of competitive advantage (current or potential) within the firm itself. In order to do so, the following phases of analysis are needed:

*i. Identification* of all the firm's activities.

*ii. Recognition* of the activities that generate value.

*iii. Allocation* of primary and support activities according to the value chain's generic scheme.

*iv. Break down* to a sufficient level of detail all the strategic activities.

*v. Identification of internal connections* existing between activities of the same area and also between activities of different areas.

*vi. Identification of external connections* existing between the value chain of the firm and the value chain of suppliers and customers.

*vii. Analysis of costs and margins* for each primary and support activity.

After having gone through all the above phases, tourism firms should be able to answer the following fundamental question: "**What kind of competitive advantage can be pursued?**". The answers are, in synthesis, essentially three:

**1. Cost leadership:** producing at lower costs than all competitors,

**2. Differentiation:** producing products with unique characteristics,

**3. Focus:** production may be oriented toward cost or differentiation in one or a few market segments.

# The analysis of the internal environment

## i. The Value Chain

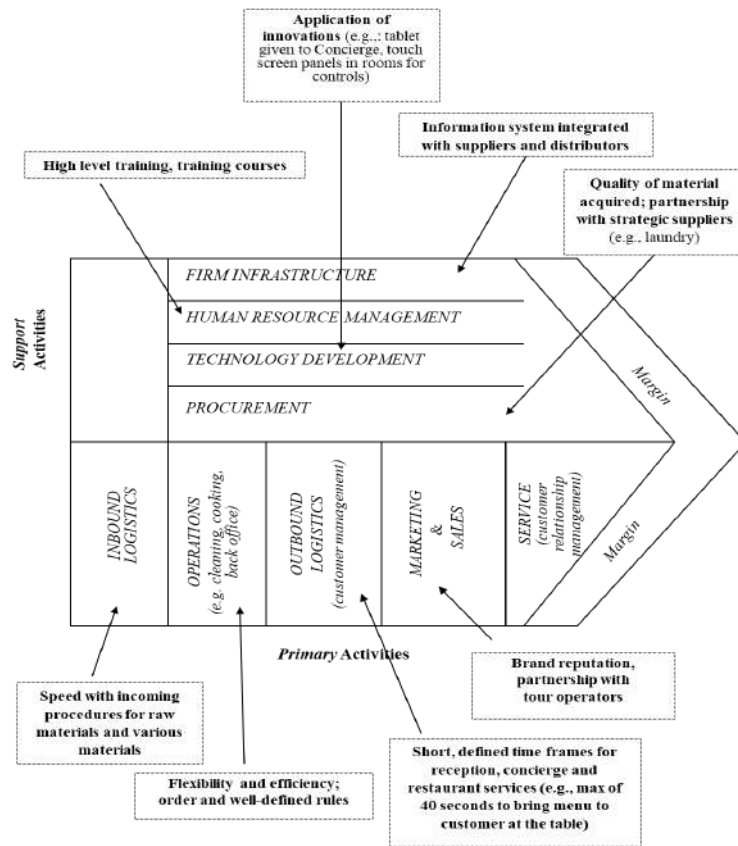


Figure 4. Representation of a generic hotel's value chain.

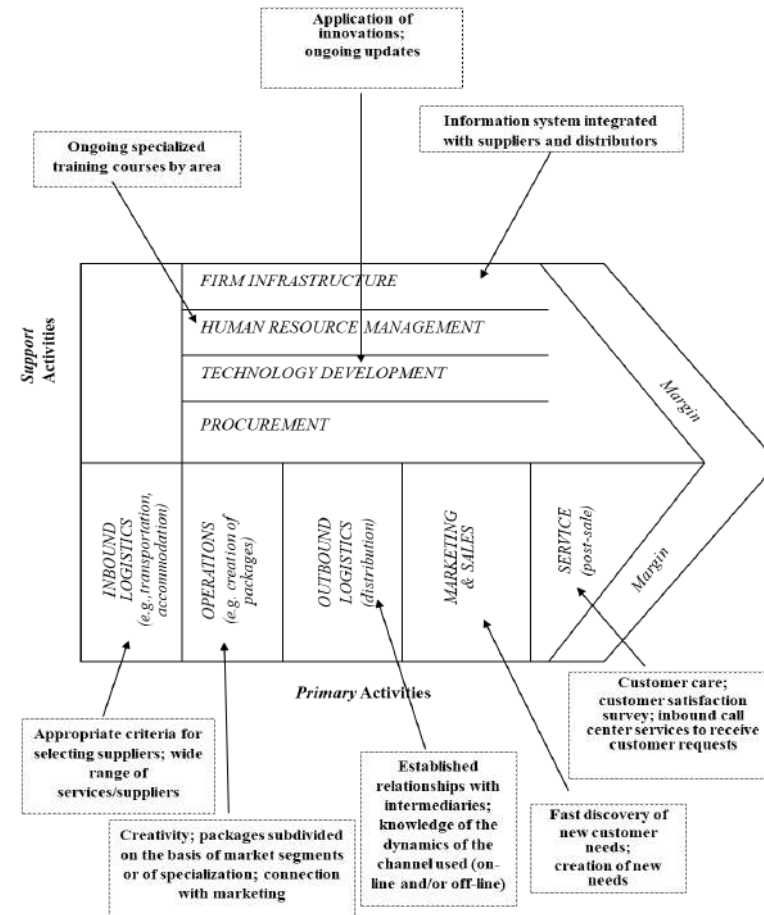


Figure 5. Representation of a generic tour operator's value chain.

# The analysis of the internal environment

## *ii. Hofstede's national cultural dimensions*

### The idea

Geert Hofstede (1991, 2001) provided the basic framework for explaining national cultural differences. In particular, he surveyed more than 116,000 IBM employees across 50 countries about their work-related values and identified five dimensions of national culture that vary widely across managers and employees of different countries. These five dimensions have a strong impact within organizations, and are: i) **Power distance** (degree to which members of a culture accept that power is distributed unequally within institutions and firms); ii) **Individualism versus collectivism** (degree to which for a given culture social ties are centered on the individual or on group belonging); iii) **Quantity of life versus quality of life** (degree to which people in a country value assertiveness and quantitative achievements); iv) **Uncertainty avoidance** (extent to which people in a country feel uncomfortable with unstructured situations and whether people are willing to take risks); v) **Long term versus short term orientation** (extent to which people in a country adopt a future-oriented behavior).

### Why tourism firms should use this tool?

In the current global competitive contexts, tourism firms are called to develop cross-cultural competencies in order to be able to adapt effectively in cross-cultural environments. In practice, this model provides organizations with an effective tool to understand key cultural differences when dealing with international tourists, partners, suppliers. This can help tourism firms to prevent cultural misunderstandings and failures, to develop cooperative approaches as well as greater focus on other organization's and tourists' needs with an appreciation for different viewpoints.

# The analysis of the internal environment

## *iii. Gantt chart*

### **The idea**

The Gantt chart is a specific tool that can be used for representing firm's activities related to time. Indeed, the existence of every firm takes place in **time** and is deeply affected by time (Paniccia, 2018). In particular, a Gantt chart can be used to show the amount of work assigned to employees or to a project over a given period of time (Gantt load chart) or to depict the schedule of the project that has many tasks associated with it (Gantt project chart). This chart allows managers to know what has yet to be done to complete a job or a project, to compare the assigned date with the actual progress and to assess whether the job or the project is ahead of, behind, or on schedule.

### **Why tourism firms should use this tool?**

In tourism, managing time is of fundamental importance for the competitiveness of tourism organizations. Tourism firms, for example, have to cope with seasonality that affects the need for personnel over the twelve months (and the work shifts), leading also to price discrimination depending on the season (high or low). Moreover, when running an accommodation facility many other time-based activities have to be considered, such as check-in/check-out waiting time for consumers, hotel's supplier lead time or real time online booking. Above all, for tourism firms is of vital importance filling the "**time co-experienced**" with tourists with multiple appropriate contents (e.g., Paniccia et al., 2010; Paniccia and Leoni, 2019). In order to do so, the rational combination of **time and knowledge** can be valuable to ensure the necessary ordered and normal development of firms' processes.



# The analysis of the internal environment

## *iv. The Road Map*

### The idea

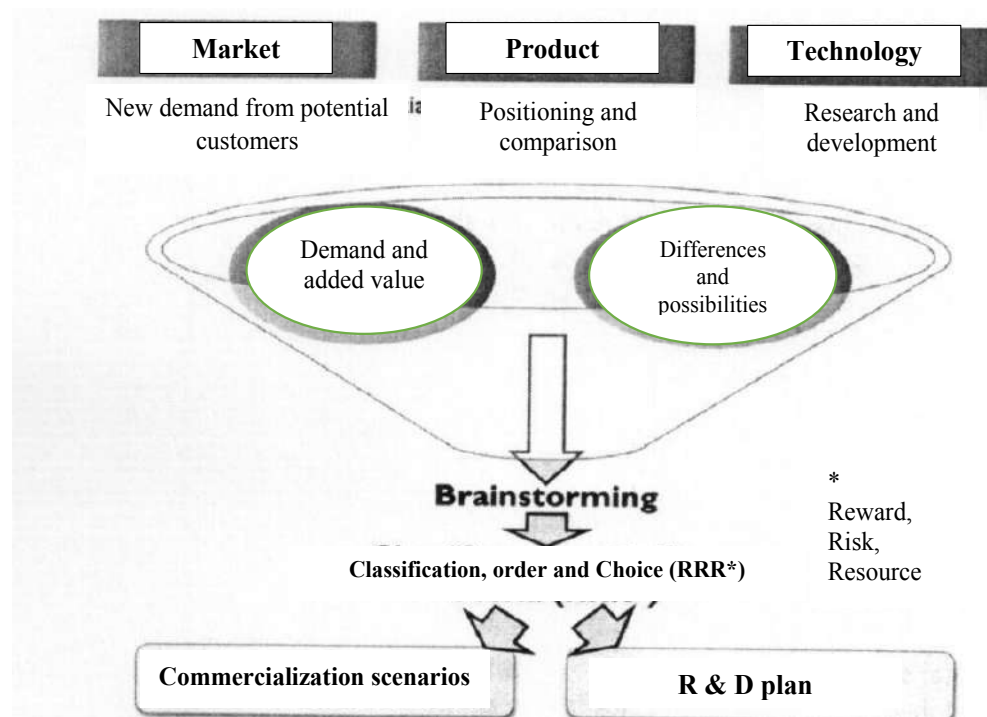
Road map means “schedule” and road mapping is a technique aimed **at creating a shared vision** within an organization. This technique allows experts to **plan future developments**, particularly in the areas of technology and the market place, outlining the potential consequences for the business. Basically, through road mapping future goals are clarified on the basis of analysis and opinions of experts recognized in the technological area of reference and the “way to go” to reach those goals, with any eventual stages in between, is indicated. Given that the road map has to create a shared vision, it should be synthesized and represented graphically, so as to be intelligible for all firms’ employees. Different types of road maps can be developed: for a sector, for a firm, for product-technology.

### Why tourism firms should use this tool?

The product-technology road map can be a particularly useful and complete tool for tourism firms to outline both the plan for research and development and future scenarios of marketing. In order to effectively develop a product-technology road map, the results of the three following activities are needed: 1) market analysis; 2) examination of technology; 3) product evaluations. The results of the aforesaid activities must be discussed by the team (preferably be multidisciplinary) in charge of road mapping and with a member from outside the firm (consultant) expert in the technology field related to the product.

# The analysis of the internal environment

## *iv. The Road Map*



**Figure 6.** The road mapping process

SOURCE: Adapted from Van Assen et al., 2009

# Competitive positioning analysis

In the previous slides, some management tools have been presented as useful to analyze the environment, external and internal, of tourism firms, but also of other tourism organizations, such as destinations. We will now try to expand on this subject pointing out how the information collected on the external/environmental factors and internal/tourism organizations-specific factors capable of influencing their competitiveness can be jointly considered providing useful information for the resolution of problems. Accordingly, in the following slides we present:

- i. The SWOT analysis
- ii. The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) matrix
- iii. The Weaver matrix

# The analysis of the internal environment

## *i. The SWOT analysis*

### The idea

The S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis is considered very useful in management practice, particularly in many strategic problem solving processes to best optimize reflections on specific object of investigation. This analysis is based on the following assumption: for the competitiveness of a firm, it is essential to know **strengths** and **weaknesses** of the firm as well as **opportunities** and **threats** from the environment. To this end, it is possible to use the results obtained by adopting the tools commented earlier in the slides.

### Why tourism firms should use this tool?

This analysis can help tourism firms to develop adequate knowledge about how opportunities can be grasped leveraging strengths, minimizing or eliminating weaknesses, or converting threats into opportunities.

# The analysis of the internal environment

## i. The SWOT analysis

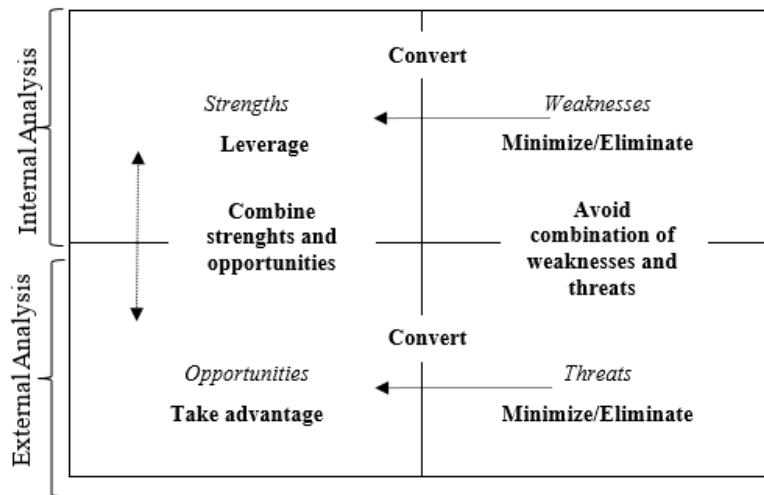


Figure 7. S.W.O.T. analysis scheme

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality level of accommodation facilities</li> <li>Pro-active tourism entrepreneurs</li> <li>Broad variety of hotel and non-hotel accommodation facilities</li> <li>Increasing number of high standard hotels</li> <li>Evolution of the hotel and non-hotel accommodation offering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of univocal and coherent regulation</li> <li>Accessibility</li> <li>Lack of an effective and integrated sanctioning system against unauthorized phenomena</li> <li>Lack of international hotel chains</li> <li>City tax</li> <li>Few repeaters</li> <li>Physical accessibility</li> <li>Lack of clear, organized and multilingual information</li> </ul>
Opportunity	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historical-cultural and religious heritage</li> <li>Growth of high-spending tourism demand</li> <li>Tourism offering to specific market segments (e.g. en plain air facilities)</li> <li>Digital technologies to provide multicultural assistance and information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unauthorized accommodation facilities</li> <li>Lack of continuous coordinated action between institutions and tourism firms</li> <li>Competitive dynamics between tourism firms</li> </ul>

Figure 8. S.W.O.T. analysis of the accommodation sector in Rome

# The analysis of the internal environment

## *ii. The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) matrix*

### The idea

The BCG matrix is a model of strategic analysis of the product/market portfolio based on the assumption that a firm implementing a production of any kind has to optimize the allocation of financial resources to different areas of activity. The matrix is built on the basis of two dimensions: the growth rate of the target segment (which acts as an indicator of attractiveness), and market share, possibly considering that of the most dangerous competitor (used as an indicator of the competitiveness of its product). A double-entry table built on two dimensions is obtained. The two dimensions are: the size of market growth and the size of market share. Thus, four quadrants define a similar number of different situations, which will be managed separately in terms of marketing strategy. In particular, the following **four different product-market conditions** in terms of priority strategic objectives emerge: 1) the **cows to be milked** (cash cows), products whose market is characterized by weak growth but for which the firm holds a high market share; 2) **dead weights** (dogs), products whose relative market share is low in a sector that is aging; 3) **dilemmas** (problem children), products with a modest relative market share in a rapidly expanding market; 4) the **stars**, leading products in their market, that experiences rapid expansion.

# The analysis of the internal environment

## *ii. The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) matrix*

### **Why tourism firms should use this tool?**

In tourism, the BCG matrix can be very useful for the analysis of large diversified operators, such as tour operators who also manage accommodations, or tour operators with different packages, or even hotel chains with different levels of service and different structures. Furthermore, this tool can be applied, with some adaptation, to tourism destinations and their products. In fact, as already explained in previous slides, each tourism destination can offer a variety of tourism products.

# The analysis of the internal environment

## ii. The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) matrix

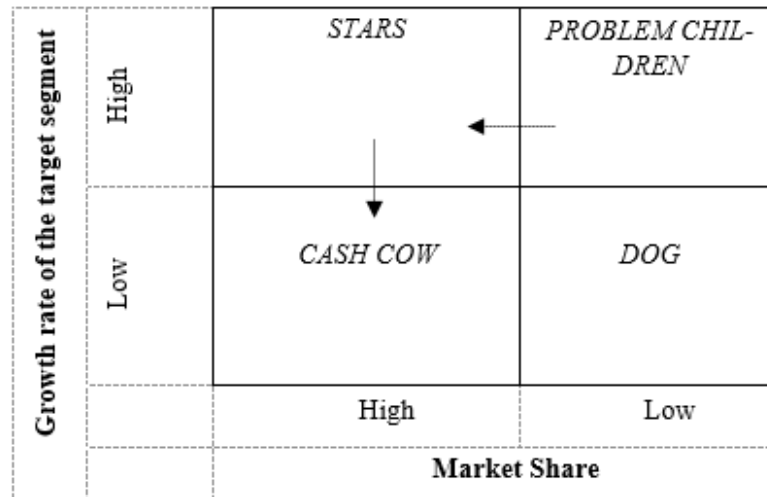


Figure 9. The Boston Consulting Group matrix

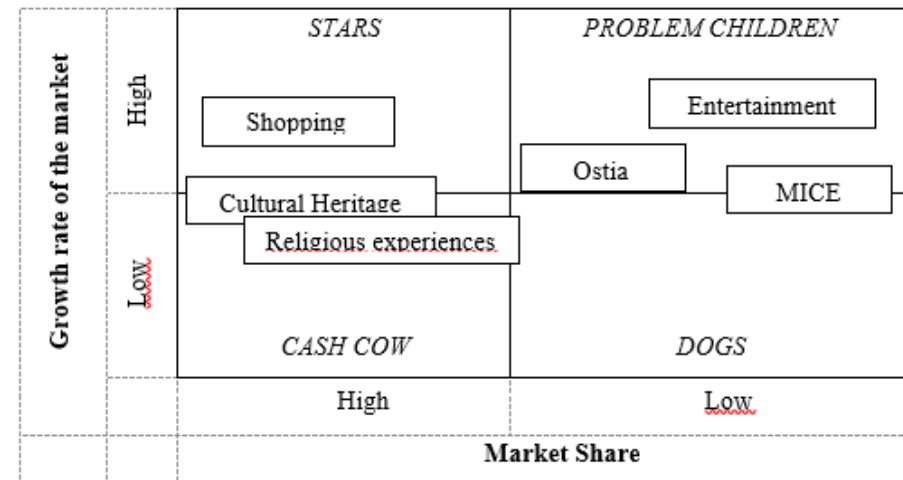


Figure 10. The Boston Consulting Group matrix applied to Rome



# The analysis of the internal environment

## *iii. The Weaver matrix*

### The idea

The Weaver matrix (2000; 2011) is a tool for identifying the competitive positioning of a destination in the tourism market, based on the **sustainability** of its tourism development. The variables to consider are: i) **Tourist intensity** inside destination (e.g., ratio of tourists and residents, number of people employed in tourism, carrying capacity and average stay); ii) destination's **tourism regulation** (e.g., legislation of tourism activities, rules for safety and security, health and hygiene, protection of the natural environment, heritage protection, and respect for residents' needs). The intersection between the two dimensions creates a matrix of four quadrants, identifying the same amount of sustainable tourism development models of a destination: 1) **Unsustainable Mass Tourism** (UMT); 2) **Sustainable Mass Tourism** (SMT); 3) **Deliberate Alternative Tourism** (DAT); 4) **Circumstantial Alternative Tourism** (CAT). The way tourism intensity and regulation **combine** and interact with each other is particularly relevant. Over time, increasing levels of regulation are recommended in that able to guarantee **sustainable development** of the destination, independently from the degree of tourism intensity of the destination itself. In particular, the competitiveness of a tourism destination is measured on the basis of the level of sustainability achieved through an appropriate regulation of its tourism activities and, thus, not only in relation tourism intensity.

# The analysis of the internal environment

## *iii. The Weaver matrix*

### Why this tool should be used in tourism?

This matrix represents a useful framework for **analyzing the competitiveness of any destination**. The two aforesaid dimensions of the matrix can be used to identify the sustainability of alternative models of tourism development and to monitor or manage their evolution over time. The dimension of tourism intensity (low or high) measured by tourist flows, allows the identification of patterns of niche tourism (CAT and DAT) and models of mass tourism (SMT and UMT). The consistency of tourist flows is, in fact, generally reduced in niche destinations and raised in mass tourism destinations. The amount of regulation of flows and incentives to promote improvements or quality, allows, instead to discriminate between sustainability (DAT, SMT) or the unsustainability of both models (CAT, UMT). Niche destinations are sustainable (DAT) if they can attract segments of demand for sustainable tourism and apply regulatory levels that preserve the integrity of the natural environment and the culture of the local community. With sustainable mass destinations (SMT), higher regulation makes it possible to manage significant tourist flow by keeping them within the limits of the socio-cultural and environmental load capacity. If appropriate regulation is missing, mass destinations become unsustainable (UMT) for excess load capacity, while niche destinations (CAT), given the small scale of the demand that characterizes them, do not have the possibility of developing economically. The latter can, only with proper regulation, go beyond the stage of exploration of tourism development.

# The analysis of the internal environment

## iii. The Weaver matrix

Tourism Regulation	High	<i>Deliberate Alternative Tourism</i> (DAT)	<i>Sustainable Mass Tourism</i> (SMT)
	Low	<i>Circumstantial Alternative Tourism</i> (CAT)	<i>Unsustainable Mass Tourism</i> (UMT)
		Low	High
		Tourism Intensity	

Figure 11. The Weaver matrix

Tourism Regulation	High	DAT	SMT WILANI ROMA
	Low	CAT	UMT ROMA
		Low	High
		Tourism Intensity	

Figure 12. The Weaver matrix applied to some Italian destinations

# Thanks for the attention!

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