

CHAPTER 11

Integrated Quality Management (IQM) Implementation in Coastal Tourist Destinations

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INTRODUCTION

One of the world's largest industries, tourism, can make a major contribution to improving living conditions, provided that the social, cultural, ecological and economic aspects at local and global levels are taken into consideration. Like other economic sectors, tourism is not beneficial per se, but rather bears risks as well, such as the overexploitation of natural resources and the erosion of social structures and cultures.

In order to strategically exploit the opportunities of tourism and to mitigate the risks, tourism management system requires a global approach, focused on tourist satisfaction and based on the principles of sustainable development. Therefore, EU develops appropriate management concepts that promote close cooperation and partnership between public and private sectors. One of the most important of them is called Integrated quality management (IQM).

The aim of the integrated quality management concept (or model) is to be simultaneously successful in all the different tourism areas, i.e., in acting on all three fronts – economic development, environmental protection and preserving the identity of the local people. By offering visitors a unique and original experience, IQM ensures their satisfaction and loyalty, and goes a long way towards satisfying residents' rightful aspirations for sustainable local development (EC, 2000).

THE NEED FOR SYNERGY IN TOURISM

Nowadays, in the new economy belonging to the knowledge-based society, competition has been moved in a great extent to global scale. The ability to enter a competition, but especially the quality to be competitive in the long run, is an essential factor of success.

If in the "atom era", the emphasis was placed on tangible and mainly on "me", but in the "network era", the emphasis moved to intangible and on "us" - "we together", interconnected, focusing our efforts within functional networks, formed by nodes, but especially of interconnections. Notably, it is said: "The sum of a whole is greater than the parts" (Botezat & Tomescu, 2010).

In tourism destination management, there is a growing need for partnership, for working together. It is very important to be able to manage wisely and competently the complexity and super-complexity specific to tourism. Each "artisan" of the tourist industry - stakeholder - must strive to become an authentic professional competent in his field of activity, but also, he has to be sufficiently intelligent (meaning group-social and emotional intelligence) so he should realize that together with other professionals he can manage his tourism activity more efficiently than on his own.

It is highly necessary to shift the complex tourist activity in this new economy towards focusing on the professionals' efforts within some intelligent but humanized networks, in which attention should be paid to social dialogue, uncertainty and complexity of management in an assumed trustful climate (Botezat & Tomescu, 2010).

Due to the fact that the tourists - who are the potential consumers, representing the demand - if they do not come to meet the offer, they invalidate all efforts, and in fact, what really matters is not the work but its effects. Tourists are looking for global solutions to their needs and they are attracted by the competitive tourist packages. The tourist package/tourist product can be defined as an assembly of tangible and intangible elements which offer certain benefits, searched by an important number of clients, or in an operational manner to some consumer segments. Solely natural characteristics (thermal waters, mountains, beach, climate) as well as the tourist infrastructure (hotels, restaurants, airline communications, etc.) do not make up a tourist product. Only a successful combination of these elements, if they concur in providing satisfactions to certain segments of consumers, can aspire to covering competitive tourist product.

In the same time, the competitive tourist product must successfully meet the two main functions of any product, namely an objective, tangible function, and a subjective, psychological function. The objective function occurs as a result of the physical performance (characteristics) of the product, while the subjective side is connected to the emotional satisfaction provided. These two functions are inseparably connected, the tourism consumer having to be offered concomitantly through the tourist product both a useful effect as well as the emotional

satisfaction. The tourism product is very vulnerable as an amalgam of different ingredients, carefully mixed and dosaged by its "creator". (Botezat & Tomescu, 2010).

The tourist demand, extremely volatile, is sanctioning any unconformity, any mistake. If there is only one element missing or it is inappropriate, it will remove all others that fit in the desired depiction of the product. If a tourist company puts on the market a tourist product which is "easy to produce", it will not be able to transform the potential consumer into a buyer. The tourist company becomes competitive if it also uses its quality, the most of adaptability and creativity for meeting the tourism consumer's needs and desires, and not only that of "assembly" of tourist product.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT AS ONE OF THE KEY FACTORS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The tourist destination is an integrated business system where generating new ideas is constantly expected, and a set of various experiences must be provided for the tourist along with the ability to deliver a desired service at the right time. The tourist's wants and needs must be identified beforehand, so managing the future from the present can be discussed.

Dr. Taleb Rifai, the general secretary of the WTO, pointed out the existence of three key factors regarding tourism development (the WTO International Conference, held in Budapest, 2007):

- Destination management
- Sustainable development
- Public-private partnership.

The competition in tourism and the hotel industry is growing progressively, and can be viewed through several aspects:

- between destinations all over the world (between existent and new markets),
- between destinations within a certain country,
- between companies within a certain destination.

The new system of consumers' values and the explosive growth of information and communication technology leads certain operators and service providers to creating an offer which is not in line with the tourists' needs within their destination, which leads to the phenomenon of 'strategic drift' (Johnson &

Scholes, 1997). Strategic drift occurs when an organization's strategy gradually moves away from addressing the forces in the external environment with no clear direction. Market research is essential when forming a strategy. The stakeholders of any given tourist destination must operate strategically as 'future makers', rather than 'future takers'. This requires tourism stakeholders to ask, not 'what will the future be', but rather 'what should the future be' and 'how can we meet that future?' (Ellyard, 2006).

COASTAL TOURISM

The importance that is attached to coastal areas can be seen from the programme on integrated coastal zone management launched by the European Commission in 1995, which covers all sectors of activity and sets out key principles that should be implemented to improve the situation in these areas.

Coastal tourism is one of the oldest forms of tourism. Some resorts have been catering for tourists since the 19th century. Originally, it was only the elite who visited the seaside, but the market developed into today's coastal tourism which often takes the form of a very high concentration of tourists staying at the same destination, chiefly during the summer. Coastal tourism in Europe is nowadays facing increased competition and has a pressing need for major investment, modernisation of infrastructure and preservation of the natural assets of sea, beaches, wetlands and so on. The days when tourists were satisfied by the sun, sea and sand alone are gone; modern tourists expect to find a range of activities and a variety of experiences. In this respect, European destinations have a wealth of assets for giving them a distinctive appeal: combinations of activities (leisure activities, sports, cultural and natural heritage, cuisine, etc.), the sea and mountains, the sea and countryside, and so on. At the same time, local people are increasingly anxious to preserve their own identity, their environment and their natural, historic and cultural heritage from the impact of uncontrolled tourism and its attendant problems (EC, 2000).

QUALITY AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

Professionals in the tourism industry often see quality as a property of the destination. This kind of assessment, taking the form of a value judgement, is necessarily subjective, since it involves one observer and his own points of reference. In other words, we are all tourists at some point or another and we may all have our own personal tastes and preferences.

Standard ISO 84021 defines the quality of a product or service as 'the totality of characteristics that bear on its ability to satisfy stated and implied needs of the user.

Subjective or aesthetic quality should not therefore be confused with objective quality, i.e. that quality connected with the satisfaction of users' needs which is independent of the destination's prestige.

Quality management is closely linked to the concept of continuous improvement. Quality management does not take the form of capital – in the sense of an asset – but involves work to make something evolve. It is implemented within a reference framework, uses tools and methods and involves repetition and evaluation (we talk of the quality loop).

The same standard ISO 8402 defines quality management as 'all activities of the overall management function that determine the quality policy, objectives and responsibilities, and implement them by means such as quality planning (quality control), quality assurance and quality improvement within the quality system'.

This definition applies to all sectors. However, several international organisations (UNWTO, ISO, CEN)¹ are working to adapt this definition to the tourism sector. In other words, while the tourist sector does not have an international and global regulatory framework, numerous recent initiatives are moving in the same direction and reflect the concern shared by all those involved to achieve progress in this area.

INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT (IQM)

BASIC CONCEPTS OF INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT (IQM) OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Improving quality in tourism destinations is essential for satisfying tourists' needs, making the tourist industry more competitive and ensuring that tourism develops itself in a balanced and sustainable way.

Quality exists only to the extent that a product or a service meets the customer's requirements and expectations. Accordingly, the individual elements that make up a strategy based on quality 'standards' have to be based on a thorough understanding of the customer.

¹ World Tourism Organisation, International Standardisation Organisation, European Standardisation Committee

Total quality management systems are already part and parcel of the approaches that tourist service providers (tour operators, travel agents, hotels, restaurants, etc.) are developing.

However, as far as tourists are concerned, the satisfaction derived from staying at a destination does not just depend on their experience of tourist services, but also on more general factors such as hospitality, safety and security, sanitation and salubrity, traffic and visitor management.

A large number of factors have an impact on tourists' perception of a destination, on their level of satisfaction and therefore on their willingness to return to the destination or to recommend it to potential visitors.

The success of a destination in terms of tourist satisfaction is therefore shaped by a number of interdependent components. This underscores the need for strategic and integrated planning of tourist destinations, and for specific tools and techniques through which IQM (including quality control) can be put into practice in the destination.

IQM should simultaneously take into account and have a favourable impact on the activities of tourism professionals, tourists, the local population and the environment (i.e. the destination's natural, cultural and man-made assets). The integrated quality management strategies implemented in destinations must have the requirements of tourists as one of their major considerations.

The focus of most traditional quality management approaches is the individual tourist enterprise. For a destination, however, the number and range of actors involved necessarily requires a systemic approach that takes account of:

- visitors;
- those involved in the sector (internally and externally);
- local people and their representatives.

Tourism is an abstract, fragile, perishable, extremely diversified and fragmented product. It requires a 'quality chain' made up of a number of links (operators): tour operators, travel agents outside the destination, passenger carriers, travel agents in the destination, hotels and other service providers. Visitors will also be faced with a set of stimuli within the destination which, although not specifically designed for them, will have an impact on their perceptions: security, the state of roads, pollution of all kinds, local services (post, telephone), etc.

For visitors, the service provided by the destination then takes the form of a global experience shaped by multiple, frequent and varied interactions between all factors of the system.

Therefore, account needs to be taken of the whole of a destination's tourism system, from visitors' initial planning to their return from their stay. Any integrated quality management initiative for a tourist destination will take account of:

- economic development, in the broadest sense (including social aspects, employment, etc.);
- the environment, culture and the heritage;
- the market, in its universal sense;
- the professionals as well as the local communities concerned (EC, 2000).

For a tourist destination, IQM can be seen as a systematic quest for internal quality and external quality, i.e. economic improvement in the short term and local development in the long term. Internal quality is the value that tourists receive throughout the chain of experiences characterising their visit from the initial information that they receive prior to departure to the 'after-sales' service. This chain includes private links (private services purchased directly at market price) and public services such as general publicity, road maintenance, water management, public cleanliness, security, etc. Internal quality has short-term aims. External quality means the development of sustainable tourism with a rational and renewable use of resources such as territory, energy, water, natural resources, the heritage, etc., in order to prevent problems of congestion. The aim of external quality is one of the long-term equilibrium.

In the field of tourist destinations, the implementation of the TQM system is therefore understood as the introduction of an integrated quality management system. It is through this that tourist satisfaction is attained, as well as the satisfaction of those businesses involved in tourism. When these are joined together, it also ensures the quality of life for local inhabitants, and the quality of the environment. As a result, the main principle of the IQM concept is that it is something "*which integrates all the holders of the tourist offer in a destination for the purpose of realising maximum quality*" (Avelini Holjevac, 2005).

IQM is derived from the concept of TQM, but it is more inclusive because it involves balancing the interests and aims of a number of different participants in the tourism system, as well as integrating all the quality elements of a tourist destination. This is why the concept of IQM is the optimal concept and model for

managing quality in tourism (Avelini Holjevac, 2005). IQM is also more flexible, because it integrates different, and often conflicting, interests and aims.

The problem in management of a tourist destination is that, generally, tourist destinations don't have an early warning system, or in other words, they quantitatively measure aspects of tourism, but don't measure it qualitatively. On the whole, periods of downturn most frequently become apparent through tourism traffic indicators, such as arrivals, number of nights stayed, length (days) of stay and similar².

Apart from uniting all important segments in terms of what a tourist destination has to offer, a characteristic feature of this model is that it enables – alongside providing financial economic indicators of success – the activation of other values, the so-called intangible assets or non-material resources (intangible and invisible resources) in which the following are included:

- human capital,
- information systems and databases,
- high quality processes,
- the relations between the consumers and the brand,
- innovative capacity, and,
- culture (Avelini Holjevac, 2005).

As a result, this system offers a framework that includes all such values, which is firstly needed in order to be able to recognise them and subsequently for them to be used with the aim of creating optimum performance. This involves the formation of a strategy of sustainable development where all stakeholders are equally satisfied. The efficiency of a destination manager is directly visible in the way they are able to recognise all values and all potentials, and also in terms of whether stakeholder's interests are being satisfied. The aim is to create a balance between different and conflicting interests of stakeholders, which is a condition and a prerequisite of sustainable development (Avelini Holjevac, 2005).

The introduction of a system of integrated quality management in tourist destinations is a must. This is made even more essential when one considers that in our context this most often involves small close-knit tourist areas, which are extremely ecologically sensitive to the forceful and uncontrolled development of tourism.

² European Commission, Early warning system for identifying declining tourist destinations and preventive best practices, Enterprise Publications, Venice – Innsbruck, 2004, In Cetinski (2005b).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT (IQM) SYSTEM

Tourist destinations create their position and success in the market on basis of the so-called *integral quality*, which is based on tourist's experience of the visit. This is based on the so-called *chain of values* that visitors expect and experience, which starts from their first impressions of the tourist destination during their stay, and concludes when they return back home.

With such a complex, integral product, the only possible way to manage it in a successful way consists in a systematic style, where the IQM model is the optimal choice.

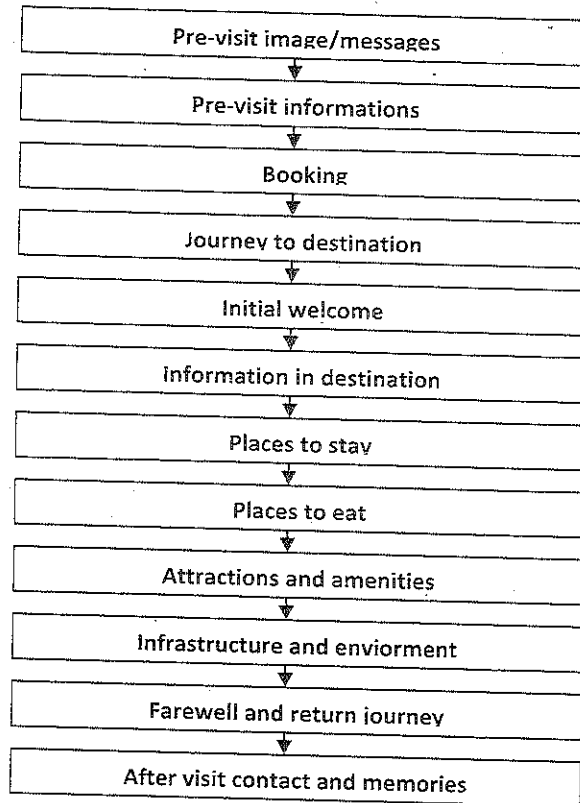
Awareness of the need of tourist organisations in order to create links with stakeholders is not new. The community tourism approach of Murphy (1985, 1988) emphasised the importance of involving the communities in destination management because of their role as key stakeholders, although actually this often meant working with industry and community-based groups in a destination context rather than through wider public participation mechanisms.

The difficulty in implementing community-based tourism strategies is reflective of wider difficulties with respect to effective destination management and tourism planning (Davidson & Maitland, 1997), namely the diffuse nature of the tourism phenomenon with the economy and society and the problem it creates with respect to coordination and management.

Something of great use in conception of the IQM system in tourist destinations is that it employs a temporal and spatial analysis of visitors' experiences, in sequence, and includes all phases. This starts from the planning of a tourist's stay, the journey and the very visit itself, and ends with the phase after the journey, which is the point when visitor's "impressions settle". This analysis has resulted in the so-called *tourism value chain*, as shown in Picture 1.

Quality management is based not only on fulfilling, but also on going beyond the expectations of visitors, and in such a way where the system of optimal standards needs to be established. These standards definitely need to be adhered to, and need to be successfully presented to the market.

Picture 1: Tourism value chain



Source: European Commission (2000b:11). In Krajnović (2006).

THE NEED TO INTRODUCE THE IQM SYSTEM IN CROATIAN TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Although IQM is a relatively new approach, a certain number of coastal tourist destinations are making real efforts in this direction. They have defined strategies with the key partners, they are implementing good practice and are constantly developing monitoring and evaluation tools for adjusting that approach according to its economic, social and environmental impact.

The EU Commission Communication on 'Enhancing Tourism's Potential for Employment' of April 1999, underlines the importance of a wide dissemination of this kind of work. On the basis of that Communication, the Council of Ministers on 21 June 1999 gave a further boost to activities in the area of quality and sustainability in tourism. Moreover, the guidelines for programmes in the period

of 2000–06, adopted by the Commission on 1 July 1999, recommend that the Structural Funds support tourism development by pursuing these objectives.

The EU Commission intends to foster the exchange of good practice in the area of tourism, with the help of all the public and industry partners concerned (EC, 2000).

In terms of Croatia, quality management systems for tourist destinations are something that is still novel and sometimes even unknown, whereas many destinations in developed countries, in particular, members of the EU, have already seen positive results from integrated quality management, or to put it differently, from the application of the IQM concept.

Introduction of the IQM system is a required constituent part and the founding framework of destination management. When implementing the IQM system, it is necessary to be aware of all those factors that are included within the tourist system: tourist organisations (in our context, Tourist Associations at all levels), local and regional governments, those in charge of the spatial plan, political parties, the government, and finally, the tourist industry, in particular small and medium (mainly family) businesses. All of these groups should recognise the principles of IQM, and consider development of a tourist destination in holistic terms (EC, 2000).

Research into the implementation of IQM systems (which was carried out in Great Britain and Germany on the behest of the European Commission in 1998 and placed a particular focus on coastal, urban, and rural destinations) set out to examine what has been done in developed countries in terms of the question of integrated quality management. The studies formed a very interesting case study. They were collated into one single document, which outlined the extent of the implementation of IQM systems in Europe, and showed key questions and stances in IQM in rural tourist destinations. This was based on the observation of 15 destinations (15 case studies), and acts as a guideline for sustainable tourism in rural areas based on the principles of IQM (EC, 2000).

One feature that is absent in organisational terms is a single organisation that will take on the role of manager of a tourist destination, and will also manage a networked tourist system. Networking and cooperation are the keys factors of success.

The following sets out directives for implementing the IQM model in the Istrian tourist destination, according to the aforementioned guidelines of the European Union.

The model includes:

1. Thinking up a joint strategy

The following is especially critical:

- To ensure an integrated approach and to include all factors of the tourism system in the implementation of the IQM system.
- DMO – Destination Management Organisation must be recognisable, firm in its leadership, and must coordinate all those factors involved in tourism. This is especially pertinent because of often individual and diffuse business units, and also because of the local government, local inhabitants, interested parties and associations, and such like.
- A clear strategy in which all factors in the system are known. There must be a clear direction for improving and advancing quality.

2. To ensure quality in every phase of a tourist's journey and visit to a destination

Above all else, it is necessary to construct a system of quality indicators that are directly related to a specific tourist destination. Prior to the creation of quality standards, previously shown value system in tourism – the quality chain – must be employed.

3. The implementation of the IQM-system and monitoring

The IQM system is understood as a number of processes: the introduction of standards, the improvement of quality, and checking of the results. The following are particularly important:

- Identifying the needs and wishes of visitors, as well as measuring and estimating quality and visitor satisfaction of the tourist services in a destination. A key issue in the IQM concept involves gaining an understanding of the needs and wishes of the visitors. Thus, it must involve a systematic method of following and monitoring the expectations and level of satisfaction of services in a destination.
- Establishing standards, their control, and informing the market about these standards. Criteria – quality standards must be established for different elements of the integral product of the destination. They must be systematically controlled, and also be presented to the market in an adequate way with the aid of a quality control mark.
- Quality training. IQM assumes the organisation and the carrying out of a systemic way of training, as well as expert and financial consulting by the destination management organisation.

- Monitoring the influence of tourism on the local economy, social community and environment. The ecological fragility of a rural area and its social community has a very great natural, cultural and social sensitivity to the aggressive influences of negative ecological and sociological factors that accompany tourism. Consequently, one of the most important tasks of a destination manager is to systematically follow any eventual negative impact of tourism on the local environment and community.

Strategic guidelines for the development of a coastal tourist destination should involve the following:

- cooperative management, the improvement of the general quality of a destination, and the quality of individual service providers,
- the introduction of new packages – itineraries and new marketing initiatives,
- the integration of business and non-business activities into the tourism system,
- mutual cooperation between the units of local government and local Tourist Board, the introduction of common quality criteria,
- cooperation between business, local administration and the local tourist community,
- to develop tourists' appreciation of the cultural-historical heritage,
- a commitment to the sustainable development of tourism.

The following steps should be simultaneously taken:

- to organise an open forum that will uncover key questions, create a partnership, and a sense of community,
- to make all participants aware that IQM are guidelines of a long-term character. Changes cannot be implemented instantly, it involves a process,
- stakeholders outside the destination should also be included in the process – the national tourist organisation, the government, tour operators and others. They must be included and consulted in the process,
- all efforts and initiatives must be clear and inclusive to all interested parties,

- every component of the tourist product and activities in the process must be systematically and permanently included.

ISTRIA'S EXAMPLE OF IMPLEMENTING THE INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT (IQM) SYSTEM IN NOVIGRAD: A CASE STUDY

The project of implementing the IQM system, which the Tourist Board of the town of Novigrad started at the end of 2006, is one of the most important new projects for this Tourist Board. It is also probably the first – or one of the first ones – of its kind in Croatia.³

The aim in implementing the model is to gather opinions about single quality elements of the tourist services offered in the Istrian destination of Novigrad, where these quality elements are specific to Novigrad. It is on the basis of descriptive or numerical indicators of a destination's single quality elements that one attains the so-called *integrated* or *integral evaluation* of the total quality of a destination.

The idea behind the implementation of this system is that it enables stakeholders themselves to present what Novigrad has to offer. In the second phase, visitors recognise and appraise individual elements of this tourist destination, where they jointly recommend measures as to how it can be improved. The task, which in this case is one of the Tourist Board as well as of other stakeholders in the project (for instance, in some countries these can be units of local government), is to gather and consolidate the results gained from workshops. It is in these workshops that opinions and suggestions from individual subjects have been gathered about how to improve the integral quality of the town as a tourist destination.

It is possible to see the similarity to workshops that were held in Istria before the adoption of the Master plan for the development of Istrian tourism. However, IQM involves a larger number of participants, and furthermore, it employs the principles of continuity and monitoring.

The second phase of the project includes surveying and collecting the opinions of visitors.

The project's continuity, where achieved results are monitored on the basis of opinions that are collected, will be secured with the organisation of the so-

³ For the implementation of this project, Tourist Board of the City of Novigrad has received «The Golden Goat» award «for special contribution to Istrian tourism» in the year 2008. This prize is awarded annually by the Tourist Board of Istrian County.

called "Novigrad Tourist Forum". This will be held on annual basis and will be organised by the Tourist Board. As a result, all those who have an influence in tourism services in Novigrad, and who are involved in them, will be able to work on perfecting them from year to year. In other words, they will take a more active role in building Novigrad as a tourist destination.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT TO IMPLEMENT THE SYSTEM

In the first cycle, a total of eight workshops were held and were attended by representatives from the largest Novigrad hotel-tourist firm "Laguna Novigrad d.d.", representatives from small hotels, shops, caterers, representatives from tourist agencies, private renters, representatives from nautical centres, as well as members of the town council. By means of an open invitation to individual groups, the best response (with 40 participants) was at the workshop for private renters, fifteen participants attended the workshop for agencies, eight participants attended the workshop for caterers, the shop workshop had four representatives, and there were three representatives from the small hotels. Three workshops took on a more 'closed' form because they were aimed at particularly narrow groups, such as the management of the nautical centre "Nautica", "Laguna Novigrad dd.", and members of the Administration and the Town Council of the town of Novigrad, whose response was the smallest (with only two fulfilled questionnaires).

The basic working strategy in these workshops was that participants were given questionnaires with 20 headlines of quality themes that were related to the entire tourist service. Participants gave a short comment about each individual quality theme, either verbally or in the written form. They also discussed other problems, questions and possible solutions that were related to the quality management of the destination in which they live and work.

In the questionnaire, the following questions were asked:

- The image of the destination before visiting.
- Information before travelling.
- Reserving the trip.
- Travelling to the destination and the welcome upon arrival.
- The destination's brand – basic and supplementary tourist products, added value (competitive advantage), visual identity.
- Information about the destination.
- Accommodation buildings.

- Catering facilities.
- Levels of traffic both within the destination and in the immediate vicinity, transport connections with the surrounding destinations and localities.
- Cultural attractions and their valorisation, cultural itineraries (cultural tourism).
- Natural attractions and their valorisation, itineraries for visits into the natural surroundings.
- Shopping facilities (the size and range of shopping facilities, the prices, the richness and variety of shopping possibilities, the depth and breadth of the range on offer, available souvenirs, accessibility and opening hours of the shops, kindness of the staff).
- Infrastructure and the spatial organisation of the area.
- Organisation and architecture of the urban space, as well as the destination's wider area, decorative elements, the conservation of autochthonic architecture.
- Ecology.
- Fun, entertainment, sport and recreation.
- Inclusion of the local inhabitants in tourist life, contact with visitors.
- The security and protection of guests.
- A program of creative tourism, which directly involves tourists in organised events (event management).
- Destination itineraries (cultural, itineraries for the natural surroundings, itineraries for neighbouring localities and surroundings), the creation of destination itineraries, the possibility of creating independent destination itineraries, contact with specialist agencies.

Participants were asked to give answers to three additional questions:

- Please write here – if you have any – your proposals, suggestions, and thoughts which are related to the development of tourism in Novigrad, and which have not been included in the previous section (20 quality themes).
- Please write down what you expect from your Tourist Board in terms of improving the development of tourism in Novigrad.
- Problems and difficulties that you have encountered in your work in catering – tourism – renting.

STAKEHOLDERS' REACTIONS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IQM MODEL

After holding the workshops, the following questions were put before the Tourist Board. These questions were intended as a critical review of the consequences and effects of implementing the model, as well as directives for further development of the model.

One of the basic aims of implementing the system is enabling the feedback between the stakeholders - destination manager.

Consequently, this analysis is presented through four segments of analysis:

1. What has the Tourist Board, in its role of the destination manager, done for stakeholders through this model?
2. Conversely, how did the stakeholders accept and support this project, or model?
3. What is the advantage of this model for the destination's development?
4. Impressions, feelings, reactions, perspectives on further development...

Group 1: What has the Tourist Association, in its role of the destination manager, done for stakeholders through this model?

- We gave them a chance to manage the destination – we opened it up.
- We gave them a chance to learn more about professional-scientific approaches to destination management
- For the first time, we gave them a chance to get together and spend time together, confront each other and even argue with one another.
- They were able to review both general and shared problems in the development of the destination and management.
- They had a chance to proactively think about the management of the destination.
- They developed awareness about the integrated product and its elements.
- They developed awareness about quality and managing quality.

Group II: Conversely, how did stakeholders accept and support this project, or model?

- They have the opinion that they know best because everyone in their area of expertise knows best.
- They have the opinion that they know best because they have closer contact with tourists.
- Their attendance to workshops shows they have faith in the destination manager, a desire to do something and to join up the system.
- We received a variety of other suggestions that were related to the development of tourism and the town – especially the infrastructure which is extremely vital for tourism.
- They gave us a chance to profile IQM as a contemporary project and system.
- They gave the Tourist Board the opportunity to be profiled as destination manager (as perceived by the Tourist Board system, the local government, and members of the Tourist Board).

Group III: What is the advantage of this model for the destination's development?

- Synergy.
- Brainstorming.
- The possibility of improving the integrated product of the destination – its entirety as much as its individual parts. We all gained a systematic perspective on the problems of how to structure and maintain the quality of an integrated destination product.
- The possibility of measuring and managing the product in its entirety and its parts, in other words, of managing the quality of the entire product and its parts. This involves the point that by large there is an absence of education.
- A better understanding of the role of the public sector (Tourist Association and town) and a reduction of the stakeholders' perception of feeling alienated from the public sector.

Group IV: Impressions, feelings, reactions, perspectives on further development...

- The majority of stakeholders is satisfied with the feeling that they can manage the development of the town in which they live and work.
- There is a general consensus that the project should be continued – which is moreover an inherent feature of the IQM model itself. The publication of informative bulletins produced by the Tourist Board needs to continue. As well, the local government needs to be more acceptive of the Tourist Board as destination manager.
- To include visitors in the system through questionnaires and other methods. Consequently, suggestions and complaints of guests should be amalgamated and systemised, and parallels with the conclusions from the workshops need to be found.

OTHER REACTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

Based on the results from the workshops, as well as through the use of Delphi methods (which also involve those people who are exponents of the model), observations are presented in the following reactions and notes regarding the implementation of the model.

The model is positively accepted, reactions were mainly positive. There were some negative reactions, such as the presence of irony, ridicule, misunderstandings, but they were in smaller doses.

Regarding the question who was the main manager of the destination, stakeholders expect a lot from the Tourist Board. However, the Tourist Board is not the centre of power; instead, it is held by the units of local government.

There are high expectations from the Tourist Board as destination manager; they perceive the destination manager as a “saviour” who will quickly solve their problems.

A small compendium of the wishes and needs of guests was given by the stakeholders, who are in direct contact with them. It was noticed that wishes and criticisms of guests are often compatible with those of stakeholders, especially those of private renters.

It was noted that there is a great feeling of frustration and powerlessness. It is as if they don't have anyone to turn to. Therefore, in the process of destination management there is a real need for the manager.

They expect quick results and are not aware that it entails a process.

An absence of initiative was observed. They expect someone else to solve their problems, they will find someone to blame for their problems, and there is not enough knowledge about this. There is a lack of faith in the public sector, and there are feelings of insecurity, confusion, and a lack of trust.

The Tourist Board as destination manager is perceived as the mediator who will approach others – for example, to local government – to stimulate them into solving the destination's problems.

It was noted that there is a particular focus on the problems (more than a focus on how to improve things) – there is more negative attitude than positive one. Many problems are shared and have already been noticed previously, but this system enables them to be shown, shared, discussed, and commented on, and also for solutions to be suggested. There is now a systemic approach to problems, which are defined by degree, or in other words, by priority.

A large number of problems is related to demands for improving the infra- and super-structure, both in terms of tourism and in general. In this area, the expectations placed on the public sector are at their greatest, and thus, it is to be expected that a larger part of these discussions involved talking about this area.

In general, a lot is expected from this project.

Continuity is expected from the project. On the one hand, if the quality cycle is defined as one year, it is going to be a too short period for a significant shift in raising the quality of individual elements of the destination's product. If this is longer and lasts, for example two years, then the time gap between the two workshops (educational programs, meetings to discuss operational questions and other matters) needs to be filled. Stakeholders want to be in constant contact with the Tourist Board (possible solution to this is to provide an open forum on the Tourist Board website, contact e-mail for complaints and suggestions from citizens and guests and similar).

Some of the stakeholders experienced it as too abstract, inapplicable, and doubtful. For years, there has been the presence of an alternative "way of thinking", which now needs to end (some claim that "not everyone was allowed to approach the Tourist Board"). Those who are satisfied and those who are sceptical are divided – the basic issue is the extent to which the Tourist Board can really find solutions to the destination's problems.

There are great differences between different stakeholder groups, and sometimes even antagonism between them (for example, between private

renters and tourist agencies). There is a desire for a stronger connection between the groups, in order to solve problems more easily and to form a partner network.

Information bulletins were praised as being a support to the system in terms of media-information. There are many possibilities, for example, with the assistance of the Tourist Board web pages, bulletins of the results of the workshops were put on the website of the Tourist Board.

There is an undeveloped way of thinking in terms of the need for a partnership network in tourist destinations.

Many stakeholders were not familiar with the idea of quality, neither with why it is needed nor with the way it can be managed. They were not aware in what measures their facilities offered good/bad quality, there was an absence of benchmarking.

A small destination has an advantage because it makes it easier to implement the model. They are looking for more concrete and want less generalised answers – how and in what way to solve problems – marketing channels.

Generally, the image of the public sector has improved – that of the Tourist Board and of the local government.

CONCLUSION

Quality tourism can contribute to sustainable development of coastal areas by improving the competitiveness of businesses, meeting social needs and preserving the cultural and natural environment (EC, 2000).

Managing the development of tourist destination implies monitoring global trends and creating adapted, innovative products with close co-operation of the public and private sector which implies creating joint projects through public-private partnership. Joint co-operation is the only way to successfully meet the challenge of change and raise competitiveness of the entire destination (Bagarić, 2010).

Destination provides the framework for provision of much of the tourism product and its significance has grown as places have increasingly come to compete against each other. Central to this competition is the development of networking and collaborative strategies through which firms cooperate towards common goals, often in conjunction with agencies at local or even state level.

The basic element of tourist destination's success lies within the ability to recognize and adapt to changes through a spectrum of key factors which are mutually interactive. In a period of intense economic, political, technological, sociological and cultural changes, tourist destination management requires a partner-based relationship of all destination development factors along with implementation of the highest quality standards. Aimless strategic wandering can be avoided by innovative strategies through selecting adequate and feasible management models, methodology, as well as quality organizational structure.

One of the greatest problems that arise in the creation of a coastal tourist product, which also applies to rural and urban destinations, is how to unify all the segments of a particular destination into one single product. This is also a problem that is encountered in the active management of a destination.

Currently, one of the best solutions to this problem, which is accepted in other European countries, is the implementation of a holistic quality management system in tourist destinations. In this particular guise, it unifies a destination that is made up of specific features, and it is from this that one gets the term Integrated Quality Management system, or IQM.

The basic principle of the IQM model, as the optimal model that is dedicated to connecting and working with tourism enterprises in a destination, is to include all tourism enterprises, visitors, and other important subjects in the creation of a quality tourist service and to constantly monitor this service. The IQM project is at the moment the most efficient way, or method, of managing the quality of a tourist destination both theoretically and in practice. It is recognized as being the most contemporary means to manage all complex systems in the field of economics, and especially for tourism, and for tourist destinations as complex, stochastic, "living" systems.

The principle of "top to bottom" in management is consequently replaced with the principle of "bottom up", where the source for management decisions comes from the "base". In this case, this is from individual members of the tourist association and their proposals.

The IQM approach contains two key elements:

1. Focusing on the consumer (visitor), the development of all the services that are used in the destinations, satisfying their needs and increasing their activities during the time of tourist's visit.
2. Actively involving local inhabitants and businesses in destination management.

We think that this project contributes to the development of sustainable (responsible) tourism, as well as seeking to balance quality in the relation between visitor – local inhabitant – tourist enterprises. The quality of a visitor's stay is perceived solely through the prism of the quality of life of the local inhabitants.

Further research should shine more light on what possibilities are there available to apply the IQM model in other Croatian tourist destinations, and also if this model could be incorporated into the legal regulations of our country. This is particularly pertinent with regard to the Law about Tourist Board and the promotion of Croatian tourism, which definitely needs to have some changes made to it, so it conforms to the new tasks and the key role that Tourist Boards have in developing the system of tourist destinations in Croatia.

We sustain and argue out our belief in partnership, in working together and we consider that in order to manage wisely and competently the complexity specific to tourism, axiological mutations with behavioural implications at both individual and group level are required.

In our case, the partnership emerged as good practice in Novigrad, Istria, whose primary objective was increasing awareness of all stakeholders (tourism practitioners, owners, specialists, public authorities, etc.) about the need to develop and promote the tourist destination as a whole.

This article concludes with the idea of the necessity of collaboration among individuals which is a step into developing a network in the benefit of local community. This experience was characterized by the people who took part in it as being a very useful and satisfactory project. Each of them justified by their own point of view the benefits they got.

After all, the most beneficial outcome was the fact that the people involved in this partnership started to understand that: "The interdependence is a higher value than independence!" which is the core of a successful partnership (EC, 2000).

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