Towards quality coastal tourism

Integrated quality management (IQM) of coastal tourist destinations

Enterprise Directorate-General
Tourism Unit

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A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (http://europa.eu.int).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

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Tourism is essential to achieving the general objectives of the European Union, namely the promotion of the European citizen’s interests, growth and employment, regional development, the management of cultural and natural heritage as well as strengthening European identity.

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 to be implemented to improve the situation of these areas.

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.

To be simultaneously successful in all these different areas at the level of tourist destinations requires a global approach, focused on tourist satisfaction and based on the principles of sustainable development, which is described in this publication as integrated quality management (IQM).

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, 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 purpose of this publication is to draw lessons from the experience of these destinations and to make recommendations useful for coastal tourist destinations.

The 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, guidelines for programmes in the period 2000–06, adopted by the Commission on 1 July 1999 recommend that the Structural Funds support tourism development by pursuing these objectives.

The 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.

Erkki Liikanen
Member of the European Commission
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Coastal tourism

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.

Gone are the days when tourists were satisfied by sun, sea and sand alone; modern tourists expect to find a range of activities and a variety of experiences. In this respect, European destinations have a wealth of assets to give 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.

Integrated quality management (IQM) offers an opportunity to act on all three fronts, i.e. 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.

Taking 15 case studies of European coastal destinations as a starting point, this publication highlights factors that have helped to make such strategies successful, looks at methods and procedures and shows what results have been obtained.

Who is this publication for?

This publication is for everyone, whether in the public or private sector, involved in managing coastal destinations. This includes not only those in charge of or providers of tourist services or products in the destination itself, but also those responsible for local development in the economic, environmental and planning areas.

The case studies and recommendations may also provide food for thought for local, regional and national public authorities, who are the driving force behind, and the cornerstones of, a coastal destination's quality initiatives.

The publication also looks at the ways in which tourism enterprises and in particular SMEs can help individually or collectively to improve a destination's quality.
**What kind of coastal destinations have been studied?**

Coastal destinations from the whole of the European Economic Area.

They do not just include destinations right next to the sea, but destinations that have been identified, recognised and promoted as homogeneous entities where coastal tourist activities are the primary attraction for the visitor. Ports or isolated moors and heaths from northern Europe which have few visitors are not therefore covered by this publication.

**Working method**

This publication is the result of a study conducted by the Belgian contractor OGM (‘Organisation Gestion Marketing’) for the Tourism Unit of Directorate-General Enterprise of the European Commission.

Information gathered from European, national and regional organisations and an assessment of the replies to a self-evaluation questionnaire sent out to 162 coastal destinations in the European Economic Area provided a starting point for identifying and selecting the 15 case studies.

A panel of experts initially selected a long list of 25 destinations which, following further examination, was reduced to a final list of 15 destinations for detailed study (in particular through a visit to the destination).

The 15 destinations on the final list reflect the diversity of European coastal tourist destinations from the point of view of their location, size, tourism context, the progress that has been made with quality initiatives and the ways in which such initiatives can be implemented, and their objectives and strategies. While they may not be unique situations, they do illustrate real experiences and can in no way be considered to be models.

**What does this publication contain?**

It has two main parts:

- Part 1 includes basic information and the study’s main findings and recommendations. It is divided into three strands:
  - Chapters 1 and 2 explain what methods were used for the study and what integrated quality management means for a coastal tourist destination,
  - Chapters 3, 4 and 5 look at factors playing a key part in the successful preparation, implementation and follow-up of such initiatives by coastal tourist destinations and are illustrated by examples taken from the case studies,
- Chapter 6 is a digest of recommendations for the implementation of integrated quality management within coastal tourist destinations;
- Part 2 looks in detail at the 15 case studies.
Part 1

Context, findings and recommendations
Basic concepts of integrated quality management (IQM) of tourist destinations

**General approach and objectives**

Tourist destinations – requiring an integrated approach to quality

Improving quality in European tourist destinations is essential in satisfying tourists’ needs, making the European tourist industry more competitive and ensuring that tourism develops 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 making up a strategy based on quality ‘standards’ have to be based on a thorough understanding of the customer.

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. As far as tourists are concerned, however, 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.

**What objectives does integrated quality management seek to achieve in tourist destinations?**

The reference framework given by the European Commission for analysing good practice in the area of integrated quality management of tourist destinations and presenting them in this publication is:

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 purpose of this publication is not to formulate an authoritative, single and official definition of IQM for tourist destinations but to use this reference framework to structure practical recommendations for all the interested parties.
**Developing an IQM strategy – where to start?**

Although IQM is a relatively new idea without an official definition, some existing concepts and instruments may help with work in this area.

**A systemic approach**

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 the 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 the factors of the system.

Account therefore 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.

**What is a tourist destination?**

Two interdependent elements describe a tourist destination:

- its internal reality, i.e. a given space that is internally coherent (a set of actors working together;) and makes its own decisions.
- its external reality, based on its image and perception by the outside world, i.e. its meaning for the tourist.

**Quality and quality management concepts**

**Quality**

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 all are tourists at some time 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 (the) 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.

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1 See ‘documents cited in this publication’ under ‘bibliographical references’.
Quality management

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. Several international organisations (WTO, ISO, CEN)* are, however, 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, a number of 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

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 long-term equilibrium.

* World Tourism Organisation, International Standardisation Organisation, European Standardisation Committee
The integrated quality management of a destination, i.e. of a coherent tourist system, is relatively new. Most of the initiatives discussed in this study were launched in the 1990s.

There are at least three reasons to explain why IQM is such a recent development:
- more intense competitive pressures on both the supply and demand sides;
- the newness of quality management itself which was developed during the 1980s in the service sector;
- the complex nature of the integrated quality management of a tourist destination due to various factors:
  - the number and range of agencies involved in producing and marketing the service, making coordination of their action very complex,
  - finding out who is involved, defining their function within the tourist service production system and their respective importance in the service that is provided,
  - the problem of pinpointing and characterising tourists' expectations (since tourists are a very varied group that is difficult to survey), and therefore of segmenting the different target groups and adapting services to meet their needs,
- the complex problem of measuring the global performance of the system and ensuring improved living conditions for local residents.

Lastly, European institutional and cultural differences, together with the lack of a standardised regulatory model for the quality management of tourist destinations, necessarily mean that different destinations take different approaches that may be shaped by:
- whether or not there is a national, regional or local statutory framework for quality plans;
- what stage has been reached with thinking about and the practice of quality management in destinations;
- the degree of integration of:
  - the type and number of agencies involved in the integrated quality management approach,
  - the ways in which these agencies are involved and their degree of involvement in decision-making, the design and implementation of the quality action plan and its evaluation,
  - the various measures implemented by the destination in order to meet the objectives of the quality plan, i.e. the processes.

Developing an IQM approach in keeping with tourist destinations

Integrated quality management can be approached in a number of ways. Most of these approaches originated in the private sector. If they are to be applied to tourist destinations, they need to be adapted in two ways. They need:
- to integrate the public dimension;
- to take account of all the public and private agencies involved and their many and complex interactions.

Three considerations shaped the choice of the tools examined in this study:
- the notion of integrated management;
- a dynamic scheme for defining the service;
- target group identification.

Taking these three key areas as a starting point, we initially chose two management tools or methods of analysis that have proved to be efficient: the EFQM model and the quality loop.

We gradually adapted these tools to provide a specific approach: the ‘chart of the integrated quality management approach proposed for coastal tourist destinations’, which was used to identify and analyse ‘good practice’ in the case studies discussed in Part 2.
The quality loop for a tourist destination: pinpointing and closing gaps

Based, on the one hand, on the quality loop concept developed by E. Deming and, on the other hand, on the AFNOR standard NF XP X 50-805, this model paves the way for a dynamic improvement by pinpointing and closing the gaps between expected, perceived, provided and desired quality levels.

The level of quality that tourists expect is shaped by their implicit or explicit expectations, which in turn depend to a large extent on the type of customer involved, previous experiences in the same resort or in other comparable tourist destinations, etc. The customer’s expectations and perceptions of the quality of a service can be modified by active communication and by the destination’s marketing policy.

Other gaps can usefully be pinpointed and analysed. For instance, the gap (Gap 2) between operators’ perception of expectations and its translation into objectives (quality desired). This kind of strategic choice can be set out in a quality plan.

From the point of view of service production, it is interesting to look at the gap (Gap 3) between the level of quality desired by the destination and what it actually supplies (quality provided). This gap shows how well the destination is performing.

Lastly, the gap (Gap 4) between what is actually supplied and visitors’ perceptions of what is available (quality perceived) can be closed by a promotion and information policy and campaigns about the destination’s image.

This model is interesting as it creates a dynamic and highlights the points of view of the user (the tourist) and the producer (the service provider). It highlights different levels and expectations of quality, identifies gaps between these levels and makes it possible to close them.

The model is global and can be applied to the (public and private) ‘tourist destination’ system. It also has the advantage of introducing a permanent repetition mechanism which is absolutely essential if a strategy of ongoing improvement is to be formulated and placed on a permanent footing.

Diagram 1 — The quality loop

As the diagram shows, the objective of quality management based on the quality loop model is continually to close gaps in order to bring the service supplied into line with the customer’s expectations. These gaps are divided up by type and need to be corrected in different ways.

There is an initial gap between the quality level expected by the visitor and the service provider’s understanding of this level (Gap 1).

The EFQM model: a global model for the evaluation of quality management

The EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) has equivalents in the United States (Malcolm Baldrige) and in Japan (Deming Price). It is applied in many public and private enterprises practising self-evaluation.

Overall, the EFQM model breaks down into three stages:
• strategy: primarily involving the whole of the direction and management structure leading the project, i.e. that structure that formulates objectives and policies, in order to develop available resources in an optimum way while paying particular attention to human resources management;
• practical measures: these are the initiatives and plans of action for each of the interlinked themes (accommodation, transport, etc.) through which the policies and objectives drawn up during the first stage can be achieved;

See ‘References’, ‘Documents cited in this publication’.
• **results**: expressed through measurement instruments and indicators of customer and tourism personnel satisfaction, not forgetting impact on society in the broad sense.

The EFQM model looks at nine key factors of quality management. The model criteria are weighted but not ranked. These key factors have been adapted so that they can be used to analyse the case studies of tourist destinations.

The weighting system used for the award awarded by EFQM has not been used in the case studies (see Part 2). The analysis and presentation framework for these case studies has been formulated solely from the broad outline of the model.

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**Diagram 2 — The EFQM model**

Using these two basic models to formulate an IQM strategy

These two models are in no way prescriptive and do not set out standards. In other words, they do not indicate what needs to be done or how to do it.

They do, however, stress, either through gaps (quality loop) or through self-evaluation (EFQM), what are to be seen as factors of success in quality management.

These global models are in keeping with the diversity which is one of Europe's competitive strengths: IQM has to provide a positive impetus but does not have to be uniform.

In order to identify the factors of success in a tourist destination, the models were used, on the one hand, to construct questionnaires evaluating 'good practice' during the stage of pre-selection of the destinations to be shortlisted for the case studies, and, on the other hand, to formulate a standard analysis grid providing a structure for the good practices of each destination.

They also made it possible, following a series of refinements, to construct and test the 'chart of the integrated quality management approach' proposed for coastal tourist destinations'.

Like any model, the latter is a way of representing reality and differs from a method which has a number of stages that need to be carried out to achieve a desired result.

It is important to note that the many European tourist destinations which are launching or developing IQM initiatives are opting for methods that often differ and that are illustrated in the following chapters.

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1 See ‘References’, ‘Documents cited in this publication’. 
Applying an IQM approach to coastal tourist destinations

On the basis of the models discussed above and after comparing theory with practice, the integrated quality management approach of tourist destinations can be shown in the form of the following chart:

Diagram 3 — Chart of an IQM approach for coastal tourist destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five stages</th>
<th>(1) Identify the partners</th>
<th>(2) Decide on action</th>
<th>(3) Implement action</th>
<th>(4) Measure effects</th>
<th>(5) Evaluate and adjust</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy and policies</td>
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<td>Operations</td>
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<td>Indicators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Each stage and key elements</th>
<th>Main concept</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common project</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Strategy and policies</td>
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</table>

On the basis of the models discussed above and after comparing theory with practice, the integrated quality management approach of tourist destinations can be shown in the form of the following chart:

Diagram 3 — Chart of an IQM approach for coastal tourist destinations
The IQM approach relates and integrates the five stages that mark out the quality management chain applied to a tourist destination, and attempts to describe, for each of these stages, its driving force, its content and the agencies and people that it involves. It provides and therefore requires vertical and horizontal integration:

- **vertical integration:** no stage can function unless the elements that make it up are closely linked.
- **horizontal integration:** the approach can function only if the five stages are linked by a continuous cyclical process through which all the elements of the approach being implemented can be adjusted on the basis of the results obtained.

**The IQM approach proposed for coastal tourist destinations**

1. In the first instance, a genuine plan is needed, backed by a leader capable of rallying and influencing all the partners in the destination in question.

2. The strategy and the policies that it requires (human resources, natural resources, quality of life, cultural heritage, etc.) can then be drawn up and placed on a formal footing by the partners involved, under the supervision of the lead authority.

3. This lays the foundations for the implementation of measures by the various public and private providers of the different services to be provided, both within and outside the system.

4. The approach is regularly measured, using a set of indicators, by the partners involved and the lead authority in order to survey the satisfaction of the various target groups, integration into the community and the conservation of resources from the point of view of sustainable development.

5. In this interactive process, the authority leading the plan ensures that results are analysed and lessons drawn from them so that those corrections and additions felt to be important can be injected at each level of the chain in order to ensure the correct functioning of the chain as a whole. It is this ongoing repetition that causes the system to operate as a loop.

This approach has a number of advantages since:

- it enables analysis of the information gathered in the destinations selected as case studies, in Part 2;
- it provides a structure for summarising the findings drawn of the case studies and for formulating practical recommendations:
  - on the dynamics of partnership and design in Chapter 3,
  - on the dynamics of implementation in Chapter 4,
  - on the dynamics of monitoring, evaluation and adjustment in Chapter 5,
  - (all these recommendations are summarised in Chapter 6);
- it makes it possible to develop steering and self-evaluation of all the measures taken for the purposes of integrated quality management of a tourist destination.
Coastal tourism and integrated quality management

How coastal tourism began and developed

Coastal destinations have been, and still are, the most popular destinations in Europe and the rest of the world. According to a European study of Europeans on holiday\(^4\), the coast is still the favourite destination of 63% of holiday-makers.

Coastal tourism is one of the oldest forms of tourism. The health benefits of sea bathing provided the European coast’s initial appeal and it very quickly became a place for holidays and relaxation.

There are two different types of coastal destination:

- on the one hand, destinations where tourism has developed around existing small or medium-sized structures, such as fishing villages, agricultural towns or villages and administrative centres, which eventually developed into conurbations where tourism is the main activity;
- on the other hand, seaside resorts built on the sea front. A seaside resort can be defined as a land-based system for the production and distribution of leisure goods and services (accommodation and facilities).

A seaside resort is run like a town and organised around a single socioeconomic activity based on making the most of its human and natural resources (the sea, climate, spas, etc.).

Obviously there are subtle variations within this concept: a coastal destination may have a long history as a tourist centre or it may have developed more recently, which can have a major impact on the state of infrastructure and facilities.

Characteristics such as size, location and climate, the topography of the coastal destination and its immediate surroundings (plains, mountains, islands), the general state of the environment, and the size of the resident population are also factors which distinguish destinations from each other.

Coastal destinations cater to a greater or lesser extent for seasonal mass tourism, and are dependent on the economic activity created by that tourism.

The coast is the most popular destination for most holidaymakers.

The various cases discussed in this publication are intended to cover as many types of coastal tourism in Europe as possible. It should be borne in mind that although situations are difficult to compare from a strictly contextual point of view, the challenges and problems of coastal destinations are often rooted in the same areas of concern.

Recent trends in coastal tourism

These general trends provide a background for the attempts that destinations are making to improve the quality of visitors’ experiences and to achieve sustainable local development, and explain their interest in and reasons for doing so.

\(^4\) See ‘References’, ‘Documents cited in this publication’.
Main market trends, on the demand side:

- the coast is still the favourite destination for 63% of European holidaymakers, although coastal tourism is suffering from a degree of stagnation;
- Europeans are increasingly dividing up their holidays; at present, the average stay is between 8 and 13 days;
- socio-demographic changes (increased life expectancy, shorter working week, continued rise in disposable income) are creating a much broader mix of visitor profiles (from different generations, speaking other languages, from different socioeconomic levels, etc.) leading to the development of more appropriate forms of visitor care;
- tourists are increasingly looking for a wider range of opportunities enabling them to put together a stay of a few days combining sporting and cultural activities, events, shopping, social activities and in some cases themed activities;
- this demand for variety by tourists is accompanied by a desire for guidance or even organisation of their activities and at least for permanent access to information about the services planned for them;
- the ageing of the European population is stepping up the demand for security and proximity to health facilities;
- Europeans are increasingly living in towns and cities, which means that they take their urban consumer habits with them on holiday. Tourists are therefore becoming increasingly demanding about the quality of products and services, and are looking for services of an urban nature (shops, cultural and leisure facilities, etc.);
- tourists are generally looking for a better quality/price ratio.

Main market trends, on the supply side

- the very seasonal pattern of tourist arrivals is still a hallmark of coastal tourism. In terms of quantity, capacity has been adjusted to accommodate tourists during the periods when most of them visit the destination. This leads to over-capacity for the rest of the year, and to real problems in making facilities profitable. Extending the tourist season is a major issue for coastal destinations;
- the relative stagnation of demand, coupled with a major diversification of service provision, is leading to increased competition between coastal destinations in terms of the kind of products that they offer and the differences between them, the quality of services and, most of all, prices;
- as traditional holiday destinations, coastal destinations are currently going through what could be called a ‘generation’ crisis, and are facing two major challenges:
  - on the one hand, resorts are having to adapt their infrastructure in areas such as protecting beaches and the coastline, road systems and access roads, environmental quality, etc.; this is a key issue that must be addressed by all European resorts, particularly the Mediterranean resorts,
  - on the other hand, marketing conditions are changing; as European tourism becomes more modern, it is developing a better knowledge of the market and using innovative methods for obtaining information, making reservations and for distribution; the attitude of tour operators is tending to play an increasingly decisive part in making or breaking a destination. Some tourist destinations have decided to tackle these challenges by adopting a policy of renewal;
- one of the direct consequences of this attempt to achieve a better distribution of tourist arrivals and to improve infrastructure is a greater diversity of basic products. The typical activities of coastal tourism (beach, water sports, etc.) are now being supplemented by activities such as conference tourism, rural, river, or gastronomic tourism, or mountain tourism in inland areas away from the coast;
- there is increasing public authority involvement because of the economic and social issues involved and the high-level investment needed for infrastructure, facilities and training;
- in this context of increasing competitiveness there is obviously a need for constant improvement of skills and for ongoing human resource training (visitor orientation, knowledge of languages, new information and communication technologies, etc.).
The long-standing popularity of coastal tourism, the development of mass tourism and the structural fragility of coastal landscapes all mean that coastal destinations are becoming increasingly aware of the need to develop sustainable tourism.

The instruments used to achieve this quality objective include Agenda 21, which applies to sustainable development in all domains. It was adopted by 182 governments at the Rio Conference on 14 June 1992.

After identifying those environmental and development problems that may bring about ecological and economic catastrophes, it proposes a transitional strategy based on modes of development that are more likely to preserve natural resources. An Agenda 21 specific to tourism has been drawn up by the World Tourism Organisation, the World Travel and Tourism Council and the Earth Council.

**IQM has to take account of the context of coastal tourism**

The impact of the following factors varies in different coastal destinations.

**Rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation**

Originally, coastal destinations often managed to integrate tourism and the new building works that it brought with it into the local landscape. The introduction of paid holidays and the tourist boom of the 1960s and 1970s brought with them the new phenomena of building speculation and erosion of the countryside (division of land to build holiday homes and apartment blocks, development of boulevards, sea walls, promenades, parks, etc.).

This urbanisation of agricultural or natural landscapes (coastline, dunes, forests, etc.) has usually taken place over a very short period of time. Conflicts about the use of space have therefore gone together with sociological conflicts brought about by rapid changes in people’s lifestyles and work and in their consumption patterns.

**Structural fragility**

*Single-function activity* is a hallmark of tourist destinations. Either the destination turned to tourism when its traditional industrial or agricultural activity collapsed, or a flourishing tourist activity took over from the resort’s original activity.

This is accentuated still further by the very seasonal nature of tourist arrivals, tied to holiday periods and times when the weather is most likely to be good, which entails many ecological (pollution) and socioeconomic imbalances (unemployment levels varying from season to season, seasonal imbalance, unstable populations, etc.).

This economic weakness is particularly damaging as it makes it impossible for the destination to buy or refurbish the facilities and amenities that it needs to create a durable infrastructure.
CHAPTER 2

**Heavy pressures on natural resources**

One of the features of coastal destinations is a high concentration of human activity in small areas. The pressures exerted by tourism on the coastal region are even more damaging as these are fragile zones, situated as they are between land and sea:

- ecosystems are disrupted by tourist developments, or may even disappear once roads, holiday homes, dykes, marinas, etc. have been built;
- underground water supplies may run dry after heavy use of fresh water (swimming pools, showers on beaches, golf courses, urban-style parks, etc.).

**Destinations facing pollution problems**

Rapid urbanisation, speculative building, and the massive and seasonal influx of people which is an inevitable consequence of a tourism industry based on heavy consumption of space and assets, have all brought serious pollution problems into the heart of coastal destinations. As well as erosion of the countryside, the following areas are major concerns in the high season: treating domestic waste and waste water, keeping beaches clean, bathing water quality, and traffic and noise nuisances. These problems are dealt with in more detail in the chapters that follow.

**IQM in today’s coastal tourist destinations**

An initial table of the starting points of IQM approaches, based on an analysis of a number of actual situations, can be drawn up from a study of the integrated quality management of European urban tourist destinations.

It can be seen that a quality management system has often been introduced in destinations which are becoming aware that their success is beginning to falter. In other words, a quality approach seems to be seen more as a corrective than a preventive measure.

The destinations studied all give good reasons for the recent, and in some cases sudden, interest which has prompted them to adopt an IQM strategy. It is clear that the introduction of a quality approach is triggered by a very wide range of factors, often combined, which are illustrated by the 15 case studies.

A long history and a well-established tradition as a tourist destination, combined with a historical absence of any coherent policy of global and sustainable development of the resort, and particularly of land use, leads to:

- ageing visitor care infrastructure;
- serious structural problems caused by heavy, occasional and repeated pressure on the area.

An awareness of this deterioration and its future consequences on tourism development is often the impetus for introducing a quality strategy. The destination then proposes various forms of action with the initial aim of finding a remedy for the major problems from which it is suffering.

A quality approach may, for instance, be used to address the need for global rehabilitation of the environment and the need to find a balance, in the context of sustainable development, between resource management, economic performance and social aspirations; it also provides a framework for addressing the issues of accessibility and mobility.

Similarly, some destinations which had been living on their glorious past suddenly became aware that they needed to upgrade and revitalise their tourism industry. A study of the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism industry, or an analysis of their media image, has sometimes been enough to set in motion schemes to revitalise these coastal destinations.

The problem of seasonal swings in tourism also prompts many resorts to contemplate a quality initiative, in the form of an attempt to diversify and upgrade the products and services that they offer and to try and spread tourist arrivals throughout the year.

Regions where heavy industry or fisheries used to be the main activities now regard tourism as a key factor in revitalising the economy. These coastal destinations have understood the need to develop their infrastructure and tourist
services with an eye to achieving sustainable development, creating jobs and repositioning their image. Industrial decline has continued to increase the importance of tourism as an activity to boost the economy within a perspective of sustainable development. These regions benefit from major financial subsidies, such as the Structural Funds, which can act as powerful catalysts for quality initiatives.

Changes in consumer habits and better marketing of tourist holidays have prompted older destinations to take notice of new market trends; consumers are looking for better quality and a range of products and services within a single destination (accommodation, variety and full range of leisure activities, high-quality natural landscape, typical local features, a feeling of being away from home, etc.).

Coastal destinations which have turned more recently to tourism have certainly taken these marketing principles to heart, and have opted for a quality approach as a preventive measure. They then concentrate on preserving their cultural and natural heritage and on achieving a balanced development of the coast and its integration with neighbouring inland areas.

A quality initiative can be run at a reasonable cost and on a cooperative basis by local authority partnerships, through co-financing, joint applications for funds, and so on. This type of partnership also paves the way for geographical synergies in terms of product development that are likely to place this kind of plan on a stronger footing.
The dynamics of partnership and design

A new approach which is still not very widespread

Integrated quality management for tourist destinations is not as yet very widespread in the European Economic Area.

Fifteen destinations were selected for a detailed study of their individual total quality strategies. Part 2 contains a detailed case study of each of these destinations.

As a preliminary to these 15 individual case studies, it may be useful to pick out a sample of good practices and to pinpoint any original or new approaches that were discovered during the field studies. This presentation follows, albeit somewhat flexibly, the study's working method based on the IQM approach proposed for coastal tourist destinations discussed in the previous pages.

As a minimum, IQM makes it necessary to take account, to different degrees in different destinations, of three levels of awareness which are ever present in the IQM approach proposed for tourist destinations:

- visitor satisfaction;
- the satisfaction of tourism industry professionals;
- integration into the community, measured by:
  - the satisfaction of residents and other socioeconomic agencies in the destination and its neighbouring area,
  - environmental protection and the reasonable and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources.

Perceiving quality management in an integrated way makes it necessary to draw up ambitious plans that cover all the components of the tourist experience and integrate all the destination's tourism and economic development functions.

This chapter, part and parcel of the IQM approach proposed for tourist destinations, looks successively at the following issues:

- What is the basic impetus for a quality plan? What are the contextual factors that govern a destination's success in implementing a quality strategy? Should a destination simply introduce a quality approach to ensure its long-term survival?
- Is there enough political will (in the broadest sense) to get the plan off the ground? Is there a resolute and recognised authority? With which partners will it work?
- What strategy is required? What support policies does it need and what concrete objectives are to be achieved?

In other words, the first step is to:

- determine what particular problem constitutes the starting point;
- identify that authority able to lead the project and rally and unite all those involved;
- lay down a strategy and policies, for which the destination will then formulate methods of implementation (Chapter 4) and measurement and control instruments (Chapter 5).

Partnership dynamics (the plan) and design dynamics (strategy and policies) will be examined successively.
Various situations or contexts may provide an impetus for or point to the need for a quality approach or a quality plan.

All the coastal destinations studied had good reasons for their recent and in some cases sudden interest in this type of approach; they seem, however, to be applying this approach more as a corrective than as a preventive measure.

Analysis of the 15 case studies highlights the fact that the quality approach was triggered by very different factors that are often combined.

**Impetus for the plan**

Table 1: factors which trigger an IQM approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coastal destination</th>
<th>Reasons/Factors</th>
<th>Economic and development potential</th>
<th>Problems and need for repositioning</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Proactive approach and/or new political initiative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackpool (UK)</td>
<td>seasonal nature, safeguarding market share, diversification of services offered and stepping up growth</td>
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<td>Rimini (I)</td>
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<td>Tuscan Coast (I)</td>
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Five factors were identified:

- seasonal concentration, diversification of what the resort offers, and control of growth;
- awareness of economic potential and development;
- comparative positioning of the destination and gradual decline in tourism;
- environmental protection;
- proactive approach and political will for quality improvement.

**Seasonal concentration, diversification of what the resort offers and control of growth**

- problem of seasonal peaks (extending the tourist season over a longer period, as in Halkidiki and Pelion (GR) and Cinque Terre (I));
- need to diversify what the resort offers in order to increase tourist flows (conference tourism in Rimini (I), sports tourism on the Tuscan coast (I));
- bringing the resort up to a level where it meets the requirements of modern tourists in Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E);
- protecting market share in Knokke-Heist (B);
- one of the most important reasons reported by coastal destinations for adopting a quality strategy is the need to control growth, as in Damp (D).

Each of these destinations is gradually recognising that it needs to improve the quality of its tourism product in order to maintain and increase its position and its appeal to visitors.
Awareness of economic and development potential

Coastal tourist destinations have not always seen the genuine economic importance of tourism. Everyone now seems to be aware that it has a key role to play in economic development both because of the revenue that is generated and the jobs that are directly and/or indirectly created by tourism activities.

Tourism is an economic activity which the host coastal fabric needs, although it may not be essential. Proactive or reactive awareness of its impact led to the introduction of a quality approach:

- recognition and upgrading of tourism in Blackpool (UK) and Rimini (I);
- Nairn (UK) is trying to revitalise its economy through tourism;
- quality approaches have been triggered by a need to re-deploy the economy, and to divert tourism into new areas in IJmond (NL) and Pelion (GR);
- in Halkidiki (GR), all the partners in the economy are involved in the plan, in particular through the Chamber of Commerce.

Comparative position and a gradual decline in tourism

A coastal destination may react in order to protect its comparative position with respect to comparable coastal towns and regions, or when there is a gradual decline of tourism, even if this has not yet reached crisis point.

- Some destinations are using a quality approach to counter the decline and obsolescence of their tourism product. This is particularly true of Calvia (E) and Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E);
- some destinations are saturated by tourists, for instance Quiberon (F) and Cap d’Agde (F), which are responding to a genuine crisis;
- Halkidiki (GR) is also facing a crisis because of the problems in the Balkans, which means that it has to refocus its tourism industry.

Environmental protection

Concern for environmental protection is often an indirect result of the lack of a cohesive coastal development and land use plan. Awareness of potential deterioration and its future impact on tourism development may generate reactions that ultimately lead to the introduction of a quality policy.

An environmental protection policy is the basis of the quality plan in the Cinque Terre (I). Calvia (E), the Tuscan coast (I), Damp (D) and Quiberon (F) are applying quality approaches arising from the need to preserve their environment and natural resources.

A proactive approach and a political will for quality improvement

A long-standing and well-established tradition as a tourist destination, coupled with a rich natural, cultural and historic heritage, is often the basic capital onto which a proactive approach is grafted. This kind of destination, which is heavily reliant on tourism, tends spontaneously to develop approaches that are closest to the theoretical models of IQM (quality loop and the EFQM model). The aim of such approaches is systematically to find ways of satisfying the var-
ious actors involved (residents, tourists, tourism industry employees) and of making optimum use of the destination’s natural and cultural resources, in order to preserve its environment and ensure its survival. Examples of such destinations include Heligoland (D), which is highlighting its positive points, Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E), where the private sector has decided to take charge of the process, and Knokke-Heist (B), which is emphasising its strengths. A strong political will may provide the impetus for a quality approach, as in Calvia (E).

**Finding a lead authority for the partners**

Who are the main partners and how are they linked?

Quality plans are managed and organised in a whole range of ways.

Whatever formula is chosen, the ability to rally the various agencies involved in tourism around a common integrated quality management plan is a key factor in success. Public bodies, non-profit-making associations and mixed or private enterprises may all have these rallying and leadership abilities.

Whatever formula is chosen and however it is organised, there has to be strong leadership, i.e. an authority that is recognised and accepted, at all stages of the plan – design, implementation and evaluation and monitoring.

In the absence of such an authority, there has at least to be a widely accepted consensus on the division of prerogatives between the agencies involved.

A wide range of management and organisational formulas are reported in the 15 case studies, illustrating a wide range of possible types of body able to act as lead authority for the plan. They can be divided into four categories:

- predominantly public sector (municipality, region, prefecture, province, etc.):
  - the municipality, supported by businesses or public bodies in Calvia (E), Quiberon (F) and Blackpool (UK),
  - the province, in Cinque Terre (I),
  - a regional initiative by a Tourism Committee under the authority of the prefecture, coupled with a tourism service committee in Pelion (GR),
  - a municipality-financed non-profit-making association in Knokke-Heist (B),
  - a tightly-knit partnership between a regional planning office and an executive foundation in Umond (NL);
- centralised in local tourism agencies (tourism office, tourism promotion agency):
  - the tourism office in Cap d’Agde (F) and the tourism promotion agency on the Tuscan coast (I);
- shared by a whole range of agencies:
  - consensus between the private and public sectors as in Rimini (I), Halkidiki (GR), Heligoland (D) and Nairn (UK);
- predominantly private sector:
  - private management of the destination, including municipal services, in Damp (D), strong management by the private sector (professional federation) in Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E).

**Division of roles between the partners**

The degree of horizontal and vertical integration of the various partners also differs, although there is always some kind of local authority involvement:

- the destination’s municipal authorities are involved in most cases;
- neighbouring municipal authorities are in some cases involved in the various plans, especially when local authority associations have been set up;
- the various types of regional and/or national authorities in most cases play a particularly active role in Spain, France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

All these organisational formulas make provision for close or fairly close involvement of the private tourism industry, at least on a consultative basis, through ad hoc associations, foundations or organisations with differing degrees of formality and through the willingness of the various partners to cooperate:
• in Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E), the Las Palmas federation of hotel and tourism establishments acts as the lead authority, but there is also a very active steering committee of representatives from the local authorities, the federation and participating enterprises;

• in Rimini (I), product clubs and round tables have been set up to encourage all the partners to take part in promoting a common vision of the region and to market combined products;

• in Halkidiki (GR), responsibilities are shared by private and public agencies.

What they all have in common is a genuine and dynamic leader, who may or may not have been officially appointed and who has often been the initiator of the quality approach.

There can be no integrated quality management without strong leadership.

Very different strategic plans and objectives

Strategies that clearly refer to quality as one of their key elements are fairly uncommon. Coastal destinations’ strategies are in most cases set out in a tourism strategy and/or development and/or marketing plan. It is very important for destinations to draw up this kind of plan, i.e. a written document with a degree of permanence.

Depending on the specific case, the plan will be drawn up with varying degrees of participation by tourism industry professionals and local people. It will then provide an official foundation, and is a strong political gesture that affirms the destination’s key choices.

Analysis of current situation

Introducing integrated quality management for coastal tourist destinations makes it necessary to provide all the partners with a detailed analysis of the current situation of tourism in the destination (SWOT analysis): position with respect to main market trends, potential for and limits of sustainable development, strengths and weaknesses.

In this analysis it should be borne in mind that:

• meeting customers’ expectations and ensuring their satisfaction is crucial to the success of an IQM strategy. These can be analysed and measured by surveys and enquiries among industry professionals, intermediaries and service providers;

• customers’ requirements and expectation levels may change over time; comparative analyses should help to pinpoint basic market trends on both the supply and the demand side;

• originality, overall consistency and respect of the authenticity of places and local people (traditions, culture, daily life) play a part in positioning a coastal destination;

• assessment of the potential for sustainable use of natural and cultural resources, facilities and infrastructure, defines the boundaries within which those in charge of tourism can put together their supply, especially in the area of flow management.

Objectives and overall strategy

Quality approaches are being developed in the tourism industry to meet a wide range of objectives or combinations of several objectives:

• the priority of Rimini (I), Halkidiki (GR) and Knokke-Heist (B) is to extend the tourist season to maximise the economic return from tourism;

• quality of life and the environment are the main concerns for Calvia (E), Cinque Terre (I), Heligoland (D) and Quiberon (F);

• Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E), Damp (D) and the Tuscan coast (I) are gradually transforming the services and products that they offer by adding new tourist services or upgrading existing resources. Some destinations, such as Pelion (GR) and Umond (NL), are trying to find ways to diversify their economic base.
• Cap d’Agde (F), Blackpool and Nairn (UK) are combining a number of these objectives.

The case studies show strategies and objectives that are as different as they are original and that are set out in action plans:

• in the area of development:
  – protecting and improving residents’ quality of life: better quality of life for the municipality and seaside resort of Quiberon (F),
  – improving the quality of visitors’ experiences and of the services and products offered in Cap d’Agde (F), Knokke-Heist (B), Rimini (I). Integrated quality plan in Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E),
  – upgrading the area within a context of economic development that is likely to be of benefit to both local people and tourists; IJmond’s (NL) strategy is to make the tourist industry more professional in its approach, while Pelion (GR) has adopted an economic and social development plan,
  – coordinating the use of resources to underpin the harmonious development of an area: integrated quality management at Damp (D), quality tourism plan for the region as a whole in the Cinque Terre and on the Tuscan coast (I), tourism policy closely linked to sustainable development in Calvia (E), ‘nature and health’ strategy in Heligoland (D),
  – introducing benchmarking strategies to improve practices within a destination; a number of quality plans include highlighting a destination’s comparative advantages, as in Halkidiki (GR), and implementing benchmarking strategies as in Quiberon (F), Damp (D) and Blackpool (UK);

• in the area of image:
  – improving the destination’s image by high-quality marketing and communication measures in Heligoland (D),
  – a highly professional marketing plan in Damp (D),
  – a highly professional tourism management plan in Nairn and Blackpool (UK).

Environment and sustainable development

Considerable importance is attached to the environment in many quality approaches, for instance:

• a local Agenda 21 in Calvia (E) and IJmond (NL);
• plans to preserve natural areas in Quiberon (F);
• a set of coordinated measures to protect the environment in Halkidiki (GR), Damp (D) and Heligoland (D);
• an environmental charter, with detailed initiatives and projects, in Cap d’Agde (F);
• training of tourism personnel in environmental issues on the Tuscan coast (I);
• upgrading of the inland countryside through an Orange Flag scheme for high-quality natural resources, in the Cinque Terre (I);
• participation in European environmental programs (LIFE, SMART, Natura 2000) and placing tourism in a context of sustainable development linked to the natural and architectural environment in Pelion (GR).
Human resources: training initiatives

The quality of visitor care, and therefore the human factor, is one of the keys to the success of a coastal tourist destination. Visitors will usually remember the quality of their contacts with people at the destination, and tell others about it.

Training programmes will be drawn up with assistance from employers in the tourism industry; they have to understand that in the end, it is the quality of the services offered to customers which determines whether or not a destination is successful, and that this quality has to be supported by a strategy of continuous training of personnel.

A strategic plan for tourism development will include:

- full and high-quality information:
  - for tourism professionals, covering the various training institutions in the town, region, or even country, as well as the programmes of training of all kinds that these institutions offer;
  - for local people and people in neighbouring areas, in particular jobseekers, covering all tourism trades and the career opportunities available in the industry, vacancies and the initial training schemes available;
- measures to encourage enterprises to train their personnel by awarding certificates, diplomas, accreditation and awards that recognise qualifications or by block release training schemes, apprenticeship contracts and work experience;
- support for the self-evaluation of training needs by personnel in the sector or the creation of a monitoring system by the authorities in charge of tourism to help enterprises better to identify their weaknesses and to work out what remedies are needed;
- the organisation of specific training for:
  - tourism professionals, especially in the areas of management, security, environmental protection, foreign languages, information and reservation systems and new technologies such as the Internet, interactive terminals and electronic mail;
  - occasional and seasonal workers (guides, reception personnel, cashiers, waiters and cleaning personnel in the hotel and catering sector, etc.) covering general information on the town, its history and principal natural and cultural attractions, seasonal events, curiosities and culinary specialities, etc.

The various quality initiatives of the destinations studied include a number of these vocational training initiatives:

- a policy of providing advanced training for tourist board staff in Heligoland (D);
- training sessions for the Borough Council’s tourism staff in Blackpool (UK);
- the creation of a Training and Employment Institute (IFOC) and an ‘All-Year’ programme for employees in the tourism industry in Calvia (E);
- training projects linked to a number of European programmes in Halkidiki (GR);
- a good continuing training policy for tourism industry employees in Damp (D).
Implementing integrated quality management makes it necessary to move on from the ‘before’ to the ‘during’. The process then enters the dynamic stage of its implementation: putting operations and actions into place.

When drawing up and implementing their integrated quality management plans, destinations’ choices of priority are shaped by the reasons that have set in motion their initial thinking about the need for a strategy of this kind.

Depending on these priorities, each destination formulates a set of actions likely to help overall and/or individually to improve the quality of all aspects of tourism: visitor satisfaction, satisfaction of residents and tourist enterprise employees and rational use of the destination’s resources.

These actions take different forms:

- public authority initiatives relating chiefly to:
  - the environment and sustainable development,
  - accessibility and mobility,
  - security;
- support by the lead authority for its tourism industry partners, including:
  - internal communication and leadership,
  - promotion and external communication, new technologies,
  - training of personnel;
- tourist services including:
  - information, orientation and signposting,
  - accommodation and catering,
  - combined products.

Public authority initiatives

The wide range of forms of tourism is reflected by a wide range of interests and practices of the various segments of the tourist population. Any coastal destination that wishes to optimise the economic return from tourism in a sustainable way, while safeguarding the quality of life of its local people, has to find answers that match the expectations of these different market segments.

The ability of a coastal tourist destination, on the one hand, to make the most of the assets represented by its natural resources and cultural and historic heritage and, on the other hand, to organise visits to them in ways that are most in keeping with target customer needs, is a key factor in success.
Personal transport, in particular the car, is occupying an ever-growing place in our society. Cars are still the form of transport most widely used by tourists in Europe. These tourist flows, which are often concentrated in time and space, generate traffic and parking problems that are increasingly difficult to resolve, while substantially increasing pollution in coastal tourist destinations. Acceptable limits have in many cases been exceeded and have made people aware of the dangers that threaten some coastal destinations.

If a long-term and universally acceptable solution is to be found for this major problem, the problems of accessibility and mobility have to be tackled overall, with a range of practical incentives and deterrents including:

- public transport networks that combine several methods of travel (train, coach, bus, tram, boat, taxi, bicycle, foot, etc.) and that are of high quality and competitively priced (or even free in some cases);
- specialist campaigns to promote alternative forms of tourism such as hill tourism, sports tourism, gastronomic tourism (the ‘wine trail’) on the Tuscan coast (I);
- promotional campaigns concentrating on the low season in order to attract visitors all year round, and the development of themed holidays at Knokke-Heist (B);
- redevelopment and refurbishment work in Halkidiki (GR), Knokke-Heist (B) and Rimini (I), infrastructure work on historical and ecological resources at Umond (NL), major public refurbishment work in Calvia (E) and Heligoland (D), urban rehabilitation and recovery of natural landscapes in Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E).

The environment and sustainable development

Policies to develop tourism are placing increasing stress on sustainable development, especially its environmental dimension. Practical measures in most cases cover a very wide range of aspects of the destination and are part and parcel of a general policy of environmental protection and management. Some of the coastal destinations studied have already adopted measures, for instance:

- management of waste, waste water and polluting activities and preservation of species in Pelion (GR);
- participation in the European EMAS programme for environmental management and control; finding and promoting alternative forms of tourism in Halkidiki (GR);
- taking account of the impact of marinas in Calvia (E);
- specialist campaigns to promote alternative forms of tourism such as hill tourism, sports tourism, gastronomic tourism (the ‘wine trail’) on the Tuscan coast (I);
- promotional campaigns concentrating on the low season in order to attract visitors all year round, and the development of themed holidays at Knokke-Heist (B);
- redevelopment and refurbishment work in Halkidiki (GR), Knokke-Heist (B) and Rimini (I), infrastructure work on historical and ecological resources at Umond (NL), major public refurbishment work in Calvia (E) and Heligoland (D), urban rehabilitation and recovery of natural landscapes in Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E).

Accessibility and mobility

Personal transport, in particular the car, is occupying an ever-growing place in our society. Cars are still the form of transport most widely used by tourists in Europe. These tourist flows, which are often concentrated in time and space, generate traffic and parking problems that are increasingly difficult to resolve, while substantially increasing pollution in coastal tourist destinations. Acceptable limits have in many cases been exceeded and have made people aware of the dangers that threaten some coastal destinations.

If a long-term and universally acceptable solution is to be found for this major problem, the problems of accessibility and mobility have to be tackled overall, with a range of practical incentives and deterrents including:

- public transport networks that combine several methods of travel (train, coach, bus, tram, boat, taxi, bicycle, foot, etc.) and that are of high quality and competitively priced (or even free in some cases);
• parking restrictions and the introduction of park-and-ride schemes on the outskirts of towns, that are easily accessible, sufficiently large and reasonably priced or free with a shuttle service to tourist sites and attractions and to town centres;

• specific products and services for tourists: inclusive public transport passes, package tours including travel passes, practical guides to towns, entrance fees for attractions, guided tours, etc.;

• promotion of these specific products and services among middlemen (travel agents, tour operators, trade journalists, etc.), hotel managers and owners, restaurateurs, conference organisers and auditorium managers, potential tourists, local people, etc., in order to encourage as many people as possible to buy them;

• specific training in reception skills, foreign language skills, knowledge of tourist resources, travel products developed by transport concerns, etc., for personnel in contact with tourists, from taxi drivers to beach attendants;

• areas in which certain types of travel have priority, for instance:
  – pedestrian zones along the seafront, in town centres and within tourist zones,
  – cycle paths and pedestrian routes to and from the destination’s tourist attractions,
  – provision of bicycles,
  – a return to old modes of transport such as carriages, boats, etc.;

• management of tourist coaches and their passengers as soon as they arrive (special parking areas, monitoring of the movements of their passengers, calls to drivers when passengers are ready to embark, etc.);

• specific measures for residents and suppliers delivering goods that enable them to move around the destination but encourage them to restrict the use of their personal vehicles (reserved parking spaces, restrictions on access times to tourist sites and attractions, to the town centre and for daily deliveries, but also special public transport passes, etc.).

Particular attention needs to be paid to the problems of disabled people, from the point of view of public transport (buses and trams with lowered floors, special vehicles operating to a regular timetable or available on request, etc.) and of accessibility of the main tourist sites and attractions, halls and other public buildings (access ramps, specially designed toilets, organised visits, etc.).

There are a number of examples of such measures:

• mobility, security, cleanliness and land development are taken into account in Cap d’Agde (F);
• Heligoland (D) has been declared a ‘car-free island’ and there is special provision for pedestrians;
• a compulsory fare structure for taxi journeys between the airport and each town on the island and the provision of coach parks in Calvia (E);
• a global travel management project that organises parking and curbs the use of personal vehicles in the town centre by providing intermodal transport solutions and developing alternative forms of transport to cars in Quiberon (F);
• promotion of alternative forms of transport in Pelion (GR);
• restrictions on vehicle traffic in town centres and plans to build car parks in Cinque Terre (I);
• free summer shuttle service serving outlying areas of the resort of San Vincenzo, especially campsites on the edge of the town, on the Tuscan coast (I);
• reviving public transport by sea in Halkidiki (GR).
CHAPTER 4

Security

The actual or perceived security of a destination is a key, but delicate, aspect of a tourist destination’s image and reputation; good security may improve its appeal to and success with the public at large. Perceptions of security can be strengthened by:

- a range of preventive measures helping to reassure residents and visitors:
  - setting up, with the participation of residents’ associations, working parties to look at the problems of crime prevention,
  - close cooperation between tourism professionals and local authorities,
  - a poster and message dissemination campaign in a number of languages to prevent petty crime and detailing the precautions that need to be taken in public places and attractions, etc.,
  - improving and integrating the lighting of streets and public monuments to take away any subjective feelings of insecurity, street cleaning, re-use of disused buildings, cleaning buildings, etc. may also be of help here,
  - provision of information about the dangers and hazards of the sea (bathing, boating),
  - provision of various forms of monitoring and supervisory services for beaches, public places, car parks, monuments, parks and public gardens, etc.,
  - ensuring that police, beach attendants, community policemen, etc., are visible;
- an assistance service for victims of petty crime or accidents which provides moral, physical and possibly financial support for victims;
- training for the local police in tourist care and the rapid processing of their complaints.

Some of the destinations visited have taken initiatives to improve security:

- a lifeguard service and regular beach cleaning on the Tuscan coast (I);
- incentives to refurbish the exterior of buildings in Calvia (E);
- quality control of infrastructure in Damp (D);
- an epidemiological prevention programme in Halkidiki (GR);
- a security programme in Nairn (UK);
- a litter hotline in Blackpool (UK);
- security of hiking that is being promoted as a way of getting around by Cinque Terre (I).

The lead authority’s services and support for professionals

Every destination’s lead authority, whose task is to provide leadership, also has a part to play in implementing a wide range of measures involving all the actors concerned in order to place the quality approach on a concrete footing.

Participatory approaches involving the support of the local authorities, tourism professionals, other economic operators and the whole population of the destination are a key factor in success.

This kind of support includes:

- communication with those involved and general leadership of the destination;
- external communication, promotion and the use of the new information and communication technologies;
- training of personnel.
Internal communication and leadership

There needs to be communication with groups such as:

- local authorities;
- members or partners of the leadership structure of the integrated quality management plan;
- industry professionals who are not members of the leadership structure;
- local residents;
- other people involved outside the resort.

This kind of communication helps to:

- establish the legitimacy of the lead authority;
- forge strong links between all those involved;
- make the industry dynamic;
- create an identity for the destination by means of a logo, a slogan, a graphics design, etc.;
- ensure that information is circulated between the various levels of power and the various agencies involved;
- ensure local people’s support for tourism development schemes.

As a minimum, it should include:

- drafting, regular updating and dissemination of a practical guide to the tourist services available in the destination, for instance villas and apartments available for tourists to rent;
- information, possibly supplemented by training, on coastal tourism and its economic prospects and on particular themes that may be of use to the industry;
- dissemination of the strategic plan to develop tourism in the destination and information on measures and developments that are under way;
- publication:
  - of the outcome of measures and of a review of the quality management structure’s work (objectives, resources, results obtained, financial statements, new partnerships, etc.),
  - of the findings of studies, surveys, statistical analyses, etc. on coastal tourism in the destination itself and in other comparable destinations, and of any other information that may be useful in developing new products.

From the leadership point of view, the lead authority should endeavour to:

- organise and lead meetings with local people for the purpose of forward thinking about the harmonious development of tourism in the destination;
- make local people aware of tourism as a factor of local development and of the role that they need to play in formulating and implementing the strategic plan.

Various examples of participatory approaches and internal communication and leadership measures by the lead authority and tourism professionals are given below:

- awareness seminars for professionals and their local partner(s), and organisation of an annual sales day for professionals to help them discover the region, its resources and its products, in IJmond (NL);
- internal communication campaigns to introduce a culture of customer service, organisation of round tables and product clubs to create a common vision of objectives and to step up cooperation and service quality in Rimini (I); 
- general promotion campaigns and annual publications and facilities for press, radio and TV journalists in Calvia (E);
- a magazine for the captive market of Knokke-Heist (B) and its surrounding area;
- press cuttings displayed on one of the municipal notice-boards, with a list of articles giving a positive view of the island, together with meeting and discussion forums for the local community in Heligoland (D);
- a ‘product manual’ and database for all businesses in Pefki (GR);
- tourist information centres with a hotline via which tourism businesses can report what accommodation they currently have available in Blackpool (UK);
- dynamic internal communication and information through the ‘Points Info Relais’ programme, a project designed to improve the information given to tourists in Cap d’Agde (F).
CHAPTER 4

External communication, promotion and the new technologies

The quality, availability and accessibility of information on a tourist destination are all important aspects of its policy of promotion and external communication.

External communication and promotion

Every tourist destination must ensure that it is known to, and visible among, tourism professionals, in particular by:

- taking part in trade fairs, congresses and conferences attended by tourism professionals and the public at large;
- disseminating promotional materials (brochures, catalogues, leaflets, CD-ROMs, etc.) to tourism professionals;
- ensuring that it is included in tour operators’ programmes and in the brochures of agencies specialising in renting holiday homes and apartments in holiday resorts;
- supporting the destination’s ‘sports ambassadors’ (or cultural ambassadors, as appropriate) (sailors, golfers, etc.) when they travel and perform outside the destination;
- inviting professionals to visit and find out about the coastal destination.

The range of approaches being taken can be seen from a few examples of external communication and promotion:

- new promotional image and production of specialist guides (guide to Nairn for teenage visitors, guide and directory of shops in the town) in Nairn (UK);
- regular themed promotions, PR and press campaigns to improve the resort’s image in Heligoland (D);
- common promotion, in national and international markets, of all the partners involved in the region of Halkidiki (GR);
- study trips organised for the trade press by Pelion (GR).

New technologies at the service of external communication and promotion

The lead authority of a coastal tourist destination should encourage tourism professionals to use the new technologies in order to help with its promotion and external communication endeavours.

These technologies should help:

- automatically and continuously to supply information within or outside the destination (interactive terminals, bulletin boards, Internet site, etc.);
- to streamline interactive booking: speed, low cost, product display, etc.;
- to record tourists’ complaints and comments about their experiences before, during and after their visit;
- to disseminate proactive (unsolicited) information to professionals and tourists who have already visited the destination (calendar of activities and special events, special offers, etc.).

Priority needs to be given to the development, introduction and rational use of an automated information and booking system which is:

- user-friendly, and enables manual forwarding to hospitality establishments;
- readily accessible from outside (travel agencies, Internet site, electronic mail) or on arrival at the destination (airport, stations, ports, tourism office, tourist information centres);
- sufficiently exhaustive to satisfy the needs of all types of visitor;
- specific to the coastal destination or incorporated in the system of a region, country, or set of European regions.

While they are an important factor in perceptions of the quality of the welcome that a destination extends to visitors, these new technologies can also be used to find out about the particular expectations of different customer segments.

For instance:

- Halkidiki (GR) is developing a telematics programme to network hotels to tourist information centres;
- Knokke-Heist (B) is installing a number of electronic information terminals for visitors;
- At Pelion (GR), there are plans to put a GIS map of the region on the Internet;
- IJmond (NL) is planning an Internet site to promote the region across all economic sectors.
Training of competent personnel

The lead authority should encourage the design and introduction of training programmes to improve the skills of tourism industry personnel that target all personnel in the destination involved in tourism and para-tourist activities, whether in the public or private sectors. The relationships forged between visitors and tourism industry personnel and contacts between visitors and local people generally have much to do with the quality of a tourist experience. Tourism is a service activity where the number and frequency of contacts between service providers and visitors is high. The risk of ‘poor quality’ is therefore also high.

High quality care and friendliness, knowledge of foreign languages, skills specific to particular activities, knowledge of the destination’s resources and events, involvement and motivation and the ability to help visitors to organise their stay, are all areas requiring appropriate staff training and commitment by local residents.

These training programmes should cover, among other things:

- reception techniques and practices;
- foreign languages;
- complaint management;
- use of new technologies;
- the quality of the various tourist services.

Tourist services

Whatever their background, tastes, interests, lifestyles and behaviour when they travel, all visitors’ perceptions will inevitably be shaped by their first encounter with the tourist destination. This contact may take different forms depending on how they travel to the destination (plane, car, train, boat, etc.), their place of arrival in the destination (airport, major roads entering the town, stations or ports), the first person that they meet (flight attendant, information and tourism office, etc.).

Integrated quality management must therefore pay particular attention to the needs of tourists, from the beginning to the end of their stay and in all their possible forms, starting with their arrival and throughout their stay, so that their opinions remain positive.

The solutions that coastal tourist destinations have found for each of the objectives pursued by their integrated quality management plan show that a very wide range of measures are possible.

Balanced and consistent implementation of these measures contributes to the success of a tourist destination largely because there is a perceptible improvement in the quality of the services on offer.

1 These considerations also apply, mutatis mutandis, to final contact with the destination.
The destination should endeavour to design a tourist information system based on:

- **permanent public access**, through the use of the new technologies, and in particular the creation of an Internet site, through which the destination can:
  - supply overall or selective information on the destination’s attractions to all industry professionals and potential customers,
  - provide access to an efficient reservation system,
  - keep in contact with tourists who have visited the destination (database, satisfaction questionnaires, calendar of events, special promotions, etc.),
  - include links to other useful sites (e.g. transport, history, geography);
- a **high-level presence** of all the destination’s spokesmen, promoters and permanent ambassadors (police officers, taxi drivers, public transport drivers, traders, etc.).

The information supplied should:

- **be differentiated**, from the point of view of content and materials used, for the various categories of tourists, the various themes of visits, combined products, etc.;
- provide clear, honest and **full information** on the resources and services offered by each tourist destination;
- **be in keeping with visitors’ expectations**, making it necessary to ensure that local people (permanent residents and second home-owners as well as traders and tourist service providers) approve of the information being supplied;
- **be consistent and complete**, in terms of both form (signposting) and content;
- **attract as many tourists as possible** to special events, while leaving space for active participation by local people (direct links between these events and components of local identity or local economic activity, attractive prices, incorporating linked and/or complementary measures into these events, etc).

Lastly, any information and reservation system should provide general information (details, descriptions, price, reservation methods, etc.) and specific information (classification of hotels and restaurants, calendar and timetable of events, opening hours and types of visit to natural and cultural attractions, itineraries and timetables of transport to and within a coastal destination, etc.).

For instance:

- many types of information (welcome guide, two-monthly newsletter, information boards, accommodation guide) and a variety of ways in which tourists can make reservations (reservation switchboard available every day of the week in the season) in **Cap d’Agde** (F);
- electronic reservation system in **Heligoland** (D), computerised reservation system in **Blackpool** (UK) and centralised multi-language reservation system in **Cinque Terre** (I);
- networking of tourist information centres which will be equipped with computers and networked in **Pelion** (GR);
- six information centres have been opened in **Calvia** (E) to welcome tourists and provide them with information;
- dual reservation and accommodation classification system: a local reservation system and a national system allows information centre personnel to make reservations for other Scottish or English accommodation and also allows visitors outside the region to make reservations in **Nairn** (UK).
High-quality visitor care and orientation must be evident at all strategic points:

- places of arrival at the destination (airports, stations, ports, town entry points, etc.);
- tourist offices and information points;
- conference, exhibition and trade fair facilities;
- hotels, guest houses, youth hostels, camp sites, restaurants, shops, attractions, sites, etc.

A few examples show what steps are being taken in the area of visitor care and orientation:

- the municipal tourist department has put up welcome signs and arranges discounts in shops, in cooperation with the retail traders’ association in Blackpool (UK);
- a tourist loyalty campaign and sustained marketing policy, and a welcome pack, in Rimini (I);
- Cap d’Agde (F) has signposting for each district.

Accommodation and catering

The quality of accommodation and catering services plays a large part in the image of coastal destinations, most of which offer their visitors a large number of options: hotels, guest houses, B&Bs, self-catering apartments, as well as villas and apartments to rent, restaurants, fast-food restaurants, grocery shops, etc. The fact that so many options are available requires standardisation, monitoring and supervision to ensure the quality of the services supplied and to enable tourists to be fully informed when they make their choices and fully aware of the services that they are entitled to expect.

For these establishments, there needs to be:

- a **classification** based on a nationally recognised system that gives every potential customer a guide to the price/quality ratio that they can expect;
- **comparative evaluation** of the classifications given in different tourist guides so that trends in the classifications of these various establishments can be monitored while the quality plan is being implemented;
- **quality labels, codes of conduct** (for instance, the use of environmentally-friendly techniques and products) specific to a coastal destination, region or certain types of establishment, which ensure that services are of a particular quality and help the coastal destination in question to differentiate itself from its national and foreign rivals. Compliance with these schemes should be optional and will, for example, involve abiding by various quality standards in the areas of hygiene, cleanliness, development, tranquillity, respect of the environment, energy consumption, etc.;
- help in making the most of the **culinary heritage** of the destination and its region (quality labels, organisation of festivals of local cuisine, etc.) in order to breathe new life into local production of high-quality products;
- **specific training** for their personnel in order, in particular, to improve their customer care and customer information skills;
- **incentives to make any changes** that may be needed to accommodate disabled people.

A number of practical examples illustrate this kind of initiative:

- quality plan for a group of hotels in Quiberon (F);
- service quality approach (quality standards, grading, label) in Damp (D);
- compulsory standards on the quality of hotel services in the Cinque Terre (I);
- Calitur accreditation with a distinctive logo (which accredited enterprises can use for promotional purposes) in Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E);
- project to extend (hospitality) labelling to the whole of the Province of Rimini (I);
- many structuring schemes (standardisation of information, hotel grading system, etc.) in Knokke-Heist (B).
A coastal destination often has a wide range of resources and it is precisely its ability to link them and turn them into combined products that will to a large extent determine the appeal of the destination and the extent and quality of the positive impact generated by tourism. What is needed is an integrated approach based on the following principles:

- upgrading of the destination’s resources in ways that allow for a better distribution of tourist flows and restrict any risk of overcrowding or saturation of individual sites and, in particular, of beaches, approaches to the main attractions and town centres;
- visitor flows can be better channelled, restricted and oriented by supervising routes into the town and access routes to all its major attractions;
- a destination’s natural and cultural assets must remain open to local residents;
- opening hours for sites and attractions must be reasonably long, and flexible;
- if a correct balance is to be found between the various products and services offered by a coastal destination, account has to be taken of the expectations of all target groups:
  - families, leisure tourists, day visitors from neighbouring localities at weekends and on public holidays, cultural tourists, etc.,
  - individual visitors and organised groups: limits on numbers visiting some attractions, hours set aside for one or other category,
  - businessmen and conference delegates: services and attractions need to be open throughout the year, outside office hours; short break packages.
This balance also has to take account of:

- weather conditions: a mix of open-air attractions and indoor activities (attractions, visits to monuments and cultural and historic sites, auditoria and sports facilities, etc.);
- visitor entertainment: a spread of activities in keeping with their expectations.

From this point of view, some destinations have opted for ‘organised’ visits:

- the Cinque Terre Holiday Card offers visitors a range of discounts in shops and museums and a child-minding service in establishments which are members of the Cinque Terre Consortium (I);
- plans for monitored package tours in IJmond (NL);
- a special low-price meals programme in Halkidiki (GR).
It is not enough to formulate and implement a quality approach. The process also needs to be monitored, and the ‘after’ examined when the ‘before’ and the ‘during’ have been completed. This threefold dynamic of measurement (monitoring of indicators), evaluation (processing and analysis of results) and adjustment (adjustment of strategy and policies) is one of the main responsibilities of the authority leading the project.

Many people may think that quality measurement goes without saying. Instruments for measuring quality are, however, relatively undeveloped and are little used by coastal destinations.

Quality management is based on the principles of feedback and repetition within a cyclical process of ongoing improvement. Quality measurement is therefore a necessary point of transition between an ad hoc approach and a permanently evolving system. In other words, the system functions as a loop, permanently producing antidotes and corrections, provided of course that the latter are put into practice.

A measuring and surveying system within a coastal destination and its neighbouring area should make it possible:

- to gather the data needed to identify and describe the different segments of coastal destinations’ tourist markets;
- to identify the destination’s target segments;
- to formulate an IQM approach that is in keeping with these targets and has both quantitative and qualitative objectives;
- subsequently to compare the results achieved with these objectives;
- to interpret these results and to redefine the strategy by incorporating the appropriate adjustments.

A system of this kind, which is a key factor in a quality plan as it enables monitoring and evaluation of the outcome of the approach, targets visitors and tourism professionals as well as the local community and should be based on:

- the collection of a wide range of simple statistical data through which the results of the quality approach can be quantified;
- traditional qualitative surveying techniques (telephone or face-to-face interviews, questionnaires, analysis of complaints received, suggestions and comments received through suggestion boxes, visitors’ books, etc.) from which it is possible to evaluate preferences, the importance attached to each variable and the level of satisfaction with each service provided, etc.

A monitoring system, based on indicators, needs to be set up as soon as an IQM approach is launched, in order to:

- measure visitor satisfaction (surveys, etc.) and socio-economic impact on the destination;
- control the impact of tourism on the local community and on the environment;
- keep abreast of changes in the environment (supply and demand), emerging trends and market changes;
- compare the destination’s situation with other similar destinations and pave the way for dialogue and exchanges of good practices within a network of coastal tourist destinations;
- analyse all the data gathered in this way and publish and disseminate a summary of findings among all the actors, and, in the case of certain information, among visitors as well (quality indicators for instance);
- listen to reactions to these findings so as to build up participation and set in motion the repetitive IQM cycle.
Tourist satisfaction

It is impossible to pinpoint the quality of a tourist destination unless visitors’ expectations are surveyed and their levels of satisfaction with services regularly monitored.

Quantitative indicators are the first type of indicators needed to evaluate the performance of the tourism sector by category of visitors and service provision.

These indicators provide information on:

- the number of visitors classified by target market segments, for instance: by geographical origin, age and sex, type of tourism (business, conference, leisure, cultural, etc.), method of organisation (individual, family, group travel, etc.), type of accommodation, length of stay, transport used (air, sea, rail or road, car or coach), for each of the destination’s sites and attractions;
- the revenue generated by tourism by category of service (accommodation, catering, attractions, cultural and historic sites, entertainment and events, individual or public transport, etc.);
- the number of tourists visiting tourist information centres and points, types of questions asked, complaints received, suggestions and ideas put forward.

More qualitative indicators are then needed to measure the endeavours that professionals in the various branches of tourism have made to comply with the standards and quality labels developed and implemented by their professional associations and/or the authorities in charge of implementing the IQM approach.

These indicators provide, among other things, information on:

- trends in the classification of establishments in the various sectors, compliance with classification systems, standards and programmes specific to each sector: 
  – general or specific European, national, regional or local standards,
  – quality labels, authenticity labels, charters,
  – environmental protection incentives, such as the Blue Flag;
- trends in visitors’ satisfaction with each of the service categories that they have used and consumed;
- efforts made by professionals to train their personnel in order to better meet visitors’ expectations.

Most of the destinations visited do not have any system for measuring visitors’ expectations and opinions. The systems being used range from a simple register of complaints to systematic surveys among visitor samples. The scientific value of these systems and the methods that accompany them varies as does the rigour with which they are applied. Too often, studies and surveys are conducted only occasionally, on a regular but fairly well-spaced basis or even on an ad hoc basis when the need for a quality plan has become evident. The content, frequency and use of the findings from these surveys vary greatly from one destination to another, indicating a lack of method or a consensus as to whether they are genuinely necessary. They are carried out on a regular (at least annual) basis in Rimini (I), Cap d’Agde (F), the Tuscan coast (I), Damp (D), Calvia (E), Blackpool (UK), Cinque Terre (I), Halkidiki (GR) and Heligoland (D) or periodically, as in Quiberon (F); in most cases, they cover aspects of visitor motivation and satisfaction. It is still unusual for their findings to be directly used to design or update IQM programmes.

A number of destinations have created a powerful monitoring facility, in the form of a permanent tourism observatory:

- the provincial tourism observatory at Rimini (I) constantly monitors trends in the tourist market via a sample of over 650 tourism and accommodation operators;
- on the Tuscan coast (I), a provincial tourism observatory systematically records tourist motivations and satisfaction in the Province of Livorno, via a simple sample of 800 tourists spread throughout the province;
• a local tourism observatory was set up in 1991 at Cap d’Agde (F) to devise a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure visits to the destination, such as, for example, tonnage of domestic waste collected;

In Damp (D), there is no observatory as such, but one of the main points of Ostseebad Damp’s strategy is permanent monitoring of levels of visitor satisfaction in relation to objectives.

Similarly, the Calitur plan in Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E) includes continuous analysis of demand through surveys conducted among customers for each of the intersectoral factors.

Knokke-Heist (B) has a statistical database for accommodation, consumption, etc.

Another measuring instrument which exists to some extent in most of the destinations is a complaints management system:

• complaint forms are available in Cecina on the Tuscan coast (I);

• the tourism office at Quiberon (F) records complaints, which are then dealt with directly by the director of the tourist office and the deputy mayor in charge of tourism;

• in Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (E), enterprises in the industry have agreed to set up a complaints system;

• in Pelion (GR), complaints are followed up and replied to by the information centre network and by individual tourist enterprises;

• in Knokke-Heist (B), the tourist office has put out suggestion boxes inviting visitors to give their opinions of quality of performance in the tourism sector. The market research department is starting to devise a complaints service;

• in Nairn (UK), the Highland Council has drawn up a guidance procedure on complaint management for tourism professionals: response, investigation, standard forms and complaints’ registers, and an information brochure for the general public explaining the procedure to follow if they have a complaint.

**Satisfaction of tourism professionals**

While most destinations are concerned with the qualifications of tourism employees, too few destinations are genuinely aware of the advantages offered by competent and motivated people who can help to improve the quality of the tourist services offered to customers and who need to be made aware of their role as ‘tourist ambassadors’.

In some cases, however, schemes to measure satisfaction and to detect training and/or recognition needs have been implemented as part of the quality approach:

• surveys of personnel satisfaction in enterprises providing tourist services;

• evaluation of training needs, organisation of appropriate training and measurement of any change that such training has generated;

• internal evaluation of personnel responsible for implementing the quality plan in order to find out about their needs and take the appropriate steps.

Tourism is an industry in which jobs are precarious and working conditions are poor. Seasonal contracts, part-time work, low wages and lack of career prospects are the most visible signs of this. One of the key objectives of any IQM approach must be to evaluate the quality of the jobs and careers of industry employees. This evaluation should cover employees of public institutions as well as employees of tourism businesses.

Analysis of the 15 case studies shows some interesting initiatives in this area:

• in Nairn (UK), the Investors in People programme monitors employees’ satisfaction through satisfaction surveys in the industry and among enterprises accredited by the programme;

• in Blackpool (UK), the municipal tourism department regularly measures staff satisfaction;

• in Umond (NL), the Sontij association is gathering the resources needed to make the industry more professional and to improve cooperation between professionals, in particular by organising enterprise visits, courses, seminars, information meetings, etc.;

• in Calvia (E), the social action plan drawn up by the municipal authorities with the support of the main trades unions goes some way towards solving the problems of training and employment in the region.
Local people’s quality of life

In a concern for the well-being of their residents, the tourist destinations studied have used various methods to find out what their residents think of tourist flows, to prevent any worsening of problems or the appearance of new problems, and, as far as possible, to meet residents’ demands.

Few resources are used to measure the results of quality plans and they vary from one destination to another. They are often limited to simple consultation:

- a cumulative consultation process spread over four months was arranged in Calvia (E) in order to set objectives and find out to what extent the municipality’s plans were accepted by local residents;
- an extensive programme of consultation with local people was undertaken in the context of the seafront tourism management plan in Nairn (UK): face-to-face discussions were held, a questionnaire was sent out to a panel and a letter was sent to all residents and local traders on the seafront, telling them about the study and inviting them to give their opinions;
- conferences and annual meetings are held for local residents in Halkidiki (GR) to give them an opportunity to make their feelings known;
- a survey was conducted in 1994 in Quiberon (F) to pinpoint the levels of satisfaction of tourists, residents and industry professionals;
- an extensive programme of consultation with local people was undertaken in the context of the seafront tourism management plan in Nairn (UK): face-to-face discussions were held, a questionnaire was sent out to a panel and a letter was sent to all residents and local traders on the seafront, telling them about the study and inviting them to give their opinions;
- conferences and annual meetings are held for local residents in Halkidiki (GR) to give them an opportunity to make their feelings known;
- studies of social impact are under way in Pelion (GR) and examine both jobs and economic impact.

Helping tourists to behave responsibly

In parallel with schemes to improve the quality of services offered to tourists, some destinations and tourist businesses are drawing up tourist charters or codes of conduct. The aim is to make tourists more responsible for the implications of tourism and to make them aware that the natural and cultural resources and lifestyles of the residents of the destinations in question need to be respected. Although directly in keeping with quality policies and approaches promoting sustainable development, there are still few examples of this very recent kind of action by coastal tourist destinations.

Another way of developing responsible behaviour among tourists is to provide them with information about the environmental and sustainable objectives that a quality approach is seeking to achieve. Halkidiki (GR), for instance, has run an information campaign for tourists on environmental security and protection. In Pelion (GR), alternative forms of transport, i.e. bicycles and walking, have been promoted under a policy of respect for the environment and more responsible tourist behaviour.

Impact on the local economy

One of the main reasons for launching an IQM strategy in coastal tourist destinations is to find out about the real or potential impact of tourism. An analysis of the impact of this kind of approach on the local economy can therefore be seen as a key indicator for these destinations. While most of the destinations studied are taking practical measures to step up and broaden the positive impact of tourism on the local economy, measurement of this impact is not as yet widespread enough.

Nairn (UK) has played an active part in a study of visitor volumes and resources generated throughout the Highlands and locally.
Impact on environmental quality and sustainable development

All the destinations visited were concerned to preserve the environment from any harm that might be caused by flows of visitors and the substantial and constant increase in tourism. The quality approaches of many destinations therefore include measurements of the positive or negative impact of tourism on the environment.

This measurement makes it necessary:

• to know what parameters need to be examined:
  – natural resources (water, air, ground, space, landscape, natural sites, biodiversity),
  – cultural heritage, including buildings,
  – legislation in force,
  – the public budget allocated to the environment,
  – enterprises and public services directly and indirectly connected with tourism,
  – specific environmental policy incentives for enterprises,
  – enterprise schemes,
  – associations active in the protection of the environment;
• to select indicators and to measure the impact of tourism, whether mass or occasional, on the environment and to evaluate this impact. A number of relevant indicators need therefore be formulated in order to measure:
  – the capacity of destinations, and of natural and cultural sites,
  – water, air and soil pollution levels,
  – the proportion of developed land,
  – waste management,
  – cleanliness of coastal areas,
  – deterioration of the landscape,
  – association dynamics,
  – the dynamism of enterprises, in particular SMEs,
  – the local benefits of tourism,
  – innovation,
  – residents’ quality of life;
• to feed the data gathered back into policies and strategy. A number of the problems encountered and analysed relate to pollution by noise, grime or the saturation of an area by tourists. Almost all the quality plans drawn up by the various destinations are trying to find at least a partial solution by addressing problems of accessibility and mobility (park-and-ride schemes, pedestrian streets, pedestrian or cycle paths, etc.). Similarly, several destinations have integrated the strategic objectives of their local Agenda 21 into their integrated quality management plan and vice versa.

The following examples show some of the ways in which environmental problems are being addressed:

• in Nairn (UK), the business plan forming part of the seafront tourism management plan involved an environmental audit of 15 hotels. The green tourism business plan, as a system for evaluating the quality of environmental impact, is the first of its kind in the United Kingdom;
• still in Nairn (UK), samples of bathing water are taken at least once a week and analysed by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, which publishes the results. In Rimini (I), sea water quality is tested every day by the regional laboratory, and the results are sent to newspaper editors and tourist information centres;
• in Quiberon (F), results indicators have been devised to measure the real effects of the quality plan, notably indicators to measure environmental impact (reduction in vehicle numbers, traffic flow, reduction of polluting emissions, etc.);
• a study by IRPET (Tuscany’s Regional Economic Planning Institute) of the impact of tourism on the environment of the Tuscan coast (I) was published in 1998.
Adjusting components of the approach

It is at this stage of the process, which is nevertheless essential since lessons need to be drawn from situations measured in the field so that corrections can be incorporated into the system, that the quality approach proves to be either at an embryonic stage or to be defective. Very few destinations have developed systematic procedures for processing results and very few have made the players in this process aware of their responsibilities in this area.

In a fair number of destinations, there has been a noticeable improvement in the quality of the tourism product and the services offered to tourists, e.g. in Calvia (E), Knokke-Heist (B), Damp (D) and Heligoland (D), and in some cases a quality strategy has actually been implemented, as in Halkidiki (GR); or again, there has been an immediate grasp of how important quality management is to the strategy, as in Umond (NL).

Many destinations have established a considerable degree of cooperation between the various partners involved in order to correct deficiencies (judicious coordination of resources for the regional economic rehabilitation project in Umond (NL), cooperation between local councillors responsible for tourism and private partners in the three-year plan in the Cinque Terre (I), exemplary collaboration between the public and private sectors in Pelion (GR) through cooperation on joint actions as well as in the design and implementation of complementary measures and assistance for the industry’s many SMEs).
The recommendations set out below are chiefly aimed at public and private agencies working in tourism keen to play their part in the harmonious development of the tourism industry in their towns and surrounding areas by achieving the best possible impact on tourist satisfaction, socioeconomic development and the quality of life of their fellow citizens.

They are based on an analysis of those factors that seem to play a key role in the success of integrated quality management in coastal tourist destinations. These recommendations cover the stages of design of the approach, strategies and practical measures and of implementation, resources, measurement and results.

They are practical and designed to meet the actual needs of those involved in tourism, who often hear the integrated quality management of a tourist destination spoken of without really understanding its issues and implications or how to tackle and introduce an approach of this type.

The following should, however, be borne in mind:

- These recommendations are neither universal nor exhaustive, but illustrate successful practices, the guiding principles of which can be transposed;
- Integrated quality management is a new managerial approach for tourist destinations: its pioneers are still in most cases on a learning curve where successes are often matched by failures;
- Many of those involved are unaware of the actual concept of integrated quality management: destinations other than those selected are undoubtedly launching this kind of approach without ever having felt the need to link it to the concept of integrated quality management;
- The findings of this study should be seen as a contribution to European policy to promote quality and quality strategies in order, amongst other things, to disseminate good practices within the Member States;
- It has been possible, through this study, to develop a chart for an IQM approach proposed for coastal tourist destinations which has provided a framework for the presentation of the case studies. This chart is global and systemic and flexible and adaptable: in some ways it is an evolving and repetitive framework.

It has been decided to present the conclusions and recommendations using a framework similar to that of the chart which itself provided a framework for the presentation of the case studies and for Chapters 3, 4 and 5.
There is no recipe for the successful introduction of a quality plan in a coastal tourist destination. A sustainable quality improvement will be more likely, however, if a number of basic conditions are satisfied.

Generally speaking, integrated quality management is a repetitive and participatory process.

In tourism, particularly in coastal destinations, this process involves an integrated management policy, i.e. a policy that concerns everyone involved in the basic services and products supplied to tourists, which are the source of attraction for the visitor, as well as in secondary services, which are an important part of the overall tourist experience.

Six criteria are helpful in creating, maintaining and progressing a dynamic partnership between all those involved.

They are as follows:

- establishing a strong, well-structured, institutionally-based management that has resources (financial and human) for action, autonomy and responsibility and the support of the public authorities, the private sector and local people;
- from the formulation of the plan right up to the monitoring of its implementation, forging a partnership approach based on close and cohesive cooperation between all those involved at local, regional, national, and even international level, thereby making the most of the resultant synergies, spin-offs from measures and economies of scale;
- working towards a common vision of tourism development by consulting the agencies involved and local people and establishing a high-quality internal system for the circulation of information;
- looking for a balanced distribution of the positive impact of coastal tourist development between visitors, industry professionals, their personnel and local people. The foundations need to be laid for a positive outcome that offers added value for everyone;
- drawing up a consistent policy and coordinating, in the field, the activities of services responsible for tourism and other services responsible for development of the coastal destination which have a major part to play in the quality of the visitor experience (environment, urbanisation, transport, public cleanliness, police, etc.);
- introducing incentives to promote the emergence and encourage the development of private initiatives to improve tourism quality. These incentives may be constructive or repressive and can take a whole range of forms (tax concessions, aids and subsidies, information and promotion, prizes and rewards, training, etc.).

Finding a strong leader for the partners: integrated quality management requires a strong and recognised authority.
Who are the main partners and how are they linked?

The strategic development plan should:

- identify the various partners, representatives of political and administrative authorities at all levels (local, regional, national, European), tourism professionals in the public and private sectors (public tourism bodies, professional associations, owners and managers of tourist enterprises), representatives of civilian society (non-governmental organisations, local people’s representatives, residents);

- set up structures for concerted action, consultation and information of the various partners and describe their methods of operation (working groups, neighbourhood meetings, surveys, methods of monitoring and evaluating the results, etc.).

Division of roles between the partners

The strategic development plan should precisely define the role, responsibilities and rights of each of the partners in each of the stages of the integrated quality management approach.

The dynamics of design

Strategic plans and objectives

The choice of objectives depends on factors connected with the context, positioning and orientation of tourist development policy of the coastal destination. Ideally, these objectives should be formulated so that they are in keeping with the development policy for the area. Implementing integrated quality management in coastal tourist destinations requires in-depth work to:

- analyse the current situation;
- define the objectives and overall strategy of the approach;
- examine the environment and sustainable development;
- improve human resources and training schemes.

Analysis of the current situation

The partners working in a coastal tourist destination should carry out a detailed analysis of the SWOT type on the position of tourism with respect to the main market trends, its potential and the limits on its sustainable development, its positive impact and its constraints.

Defining the objectives and overall strategy of the approach

- The reasons for introducing an integrated quality management approach need to be clearly set out in order to avoid any subsequent frustration of the expectations of the public and private partners and the local community. These reasons should preferably be positive and preventive rather than negative and corrective.

- The objectives should be operational, possible to evaluate and staggered over time. If they are few in number, they can be readily communicated which should help to unite the partners, step up the internal mobilisation of the destination and provide visitor information that is increasingly sensitive to consumer notions.

The environment and sustainable development

These objectives should be part and parcel of an overall strategy of coastal development whose aim is to make the most of local socio-economic impact and to optimise the quality of life of current and future generations. Account should be taken here of Agenda 21 themes.
CHAPTER 6

When implementing an integrated quality management plan, every coastal destination will choose its own priorities. These choices, often shaped by the reasons that provided a starting point for initial thinking about quality and tourist resources, will take a whole range of practical forms, often involving public authority initiatives in particular in the fields of:

- the environment and sustainable development;
- accessibility and mobility;
- security.

The dynamics of implementing integrated quality management

Public authority initiatives

When implementing an integrated quality management plan, every coastal destination will choose its own priorities. These choices, often shaped by the reasons that provided a starting point for initial thinking about quality and tourist resources, will take a whole range of practical forms, often involving public authority initiatives in particular in the fields of:

- the environment and sustainable development;
- accessibility and mobility;
- security.

The environment and sustainable development

Policies to develop tourism should include practical measures covering a broad range of aspects of the destination and should be in keeping with a general policy of environmental protection and management.

These measures should include, in particular, waste collection, links between tourist infrastructure development or coastal protection programmes and town planning, etc.

Accessibility and mobility

The coastal tourist flows generated by the use of personal vehicles, which are still too concentrated in time and space, cause traffic and pollution problems within tourist destinations which are increasingly difficult to resolve.

Local authorities need to develop a global approach based on both incentives and deterrents.

The main components of this approach should include:

- high-quality, competitively priced, intermodal public transport;
- sales of products and services that encourage tourists and residents to use public transport;
- park-and-ride schemes and zones in which access and traffic are restricted. Particular attention should also be paid to the needs of disabled people.

Security

A real and subjective improvement of the security of a destination improves its image and tourist appeal. Preventive measures, services to help victims of crime and training for local police in tourist care and rapid processing of their complaints should all help to improve perceptions of security.
The lead authority’s services and support for professionals

Any coastal tourist destination implementing an integrated quality management approach has to provide support for tourism professionals through a range of services including:

- internal communication and leadership;
- promotion and external communication;
- the new information and communication technologies;
- training.

Internal communication and leadership

Internal communication should:

- ensure that the managing structure is recognised and that its tourism development plans receive the active support of local people;
- target different groups, ensure exchanges of information, forge links between all those involved and make the tourism sector dynamic;
- consolidate the destination’s identity.

Internal communication should include:

- analyses of the current situation of coastal tourism and its economic prospects;
- the organisation, with all the partners, of working and consultation meetings on the development of tourism in the destination;
- the strategic plan for tourism development and the outcome of initiatives and endeavours;
- a practical guide to tourist services in the destination.

Promotion and external communication

All tourist destinations should develop their policy of promotion in two ways:

- ensuring that tourism professionals are constantly aware of the destination, by making use of the new technologies, setting up an Internet site, etc.;
- ensuring that the destination is well represented by its local promoters and occasional ambassadors (police officers, taxi drivers, public transport drivers, traders, etc.).

The new information and communication technologies

The leader of a coastal destination will encourage tourism professionals to use the new information and communication technologies to:

- supply, automatically and on line, useful information in and outside the destination;
- pave the way for interactive reservation;
- encourage dialogue by recording complaints and comments by tourists and local people.

Training

The lead authority will encourage tourist industry personnel to consolidate their skills and to improve interpersonal skills and the quality of visitor care.

Training should be available in a variety of fields including customer care, helpfulness, personnel involvement and motivation, foreign languages, knowledge of the destination’s resources and events, helping visitors to organise their stay, etc.
Tourist services

Particular attention needs to be paid, in an integrated quality management approach, to the needs of tourists when planning their trip, throughout the visit itself and after they return home.

Information and visitor care

Information should be available at any time, using the new technologies or from partners in the destination. It should be consistent, complete, attractive and in keeping with visitors' needs.

High-quality visitor care:
• should be apparent at all strategic points of the destination;
• requires friendly, helpful and skilled tourism professionals;
• will be consolidated by the active participation of local people;
• will make use of the new technologies (payment methods, dissemination of and access to information, etc.).

Accommodation and catering

The quality of accommodation and restaurant services is very important in creating a positive image of a coastal destination which generally offers its visitors a number of alternatives.

The destination should therefore introduce:
• national or local classifications;
• quality labels and codes of conduct;
• comparative evaluations of classification systems.

It should also try to introduce:
• upgrading of the culinary heritage of the destination or its region;
• specific training in tourist care for personnel in the accommodation and catering services sectors;
• modifications to meet the specific needs of disabled people.

These are all elements that play a part in positive image of a tourist destination; tourists will then calmly and confidently be able to gauge the quality and range of accommodation and catering services.

Attractions, events, combined products

The diversity of a coastal destination's resources and its ability to link attractions and events will to a large extent determine its appeal and the extent and quality of the positive impact generated by tourism.

An integrated and diversified approach is needed here:
• upgrading of the coastal destination's resources;
• control and channelling of flows within the destination;
• optimum accessibility for both visitors and residents;
• organised visits for different target groups.
CHAPTER 6

Integrating quality management is based on the principle of repetition. Relevant information on results obtained in the area of satisfaction, on changes in the context and on trends must be regularly fed back into the process.

The dynamics of monitoring

Integrated quality management is based on the principle of repetition. Relevant information on results obtained in the area of satisfaction, on changes in the context and on trends must be regularly fed back into the process.

Tourist satisfaction

Various types of indicators should be devised and as much information and numerical data as possible gathered before, during and after the tourist’s visit to and/or stay in the tourist destination.

An initial set of surveys before and during the visit should help to:

- anticipate the main trends in the coastal tourism market and determine the destination’s position with respect to these trends;
- identify visitors’ profiles and behaviour;
- fix the image of the destination in the minds of visitors and likely and unlikely visitors;
- find out about visitors’ and likely visitors’ expectations;
- check the image of the destination that opinion makers and retailers are passing on to people likely and unlikely to visit the destination.

A second set of surveys should be carried out on departure or after the visit. They should help to:

- evaluate the extent to which visitors’ expectations have been met and their levels of satisfaction;
- evaluate whether the image of the destination has been modified by the visit;
- measure the impact that this change of image has had on visitors’ satisfaction and what they are likely to tell friends and family when they return home;
- gather visitors’ comments and suggestions quickly.

Satisfaction of tourism professionals

Quantitative and qualitative indicators need to be devised in order to:

- evaluate the performance of the tourism sector by category of visitors and service provision;
- measure the endeavours that professionals in the various branches of tourism are making to meet the standards and quality labels formulated and implemented by their professional associations and/or the authorities in charge of implementing the integrated quality management approach;
- evaluate the quality of employment contracts and the career opportunities open to employees in the sector.

Measuring the impact of tourism on the economy, the environment and residents’ quality of life

Quantitative and qualitative indicators are needed, through which it should, among other things, be possible to measure:

- local people's perception of the effects of tourism, its drawbacks and its benefits;
- socio-economic impact, creation of jobs and revenue (wealth), new infrastructure and improvements of public facilities and services as a result of tourism;
- the positive impact of the integrated quality management approach on the actual and subjective quality of life experienced by the residents of the destination and their neighbouring areas.

- the real positive or negative impact of any development of tourism on the quality of the environment and the impact of the approach on sustainable development.

These measurements of subjective and objective impact will require detailed thought about which parameters to take into account, which indicators are the most relevant and how the data collected can then be fed back into policies and strategies. Impact on neighbouring areas, in particular rural areas, should also be measured by these indicators.
The dynamics of evaluation and adjustment of components of the approach

Quality management is based on the principle of feedback and repetition within a cyclical process of ongoing improvement. Measuring quality is therefore a necessary step in converting an ad hoc approach into a permanently evolving system.

All of the measurements of impact provided by the quantitative and qualitative indicators should be evaluated so that:

• appropriate corrective action can be taken;
• the partners involved will be given a view of their performance;
• the evaluation will ensure that the integrated quality management approach is permanently rooted.

Conclusion

The task of the lead authority is to:

• lead the integrated quality management approach for the coastal tourist destination;
• unite the various partners by establishing facilities for concerted action and consultation;
• initiate specific measures likely to improve the quality of the services and products offered to visitors;
• integrate this approach into the broader framework of the general development of the destination and its neighbouring region;
• put forward a policy of sustainable development of tourism based on the optimum use of the destination’s resources.

Public and private tourism service providers should:

• work with the public authority to design, implement and monitor the integrated quality management approach;
• comply with standards and quality labels (as well as environmental labels) and continually endeavour to improve the services and products offered to tourists;
• listen to visitors and to their staff in order to provide food for thought and feedback for the integrated quality management approach;
• help, through individual and collective initiatives, to improve the destination’s appeal;
• ensure that visitors have a positive image of the coastal destination and are aware of its specific nature.

Local people should:

• take part in consultation meetings and surveys organised by the public authority as part of the design, implementation and monitoring of the integrated quality management approach;
• play an active part in improving visitor care through their attitudes, friendliness and helpfulness to visitors;
• abide by and help to implement the measures and regulations drawn up by the public authority in areas such as cleanliness, the rehabilitation of buildings, respect of the environment, use of public transport and security.

For this purpose, tourists should be encouraged to behave in a responsible way and:

• be made aware of the well-being of the local population;
• respect the traditions and cultural features of the destination’s residents;
• abide by measures to minimise the negative impact of tourist flows on the environment.
Part 2

Case studies

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What does each case study contain?

Each case study describes the destination’s general quality approach, starting with a brief overview. Some key figures and information on main attractions then help to provide a picture of the destination. The structure of the case study matches the five dynamics of the chart of the IQM approach proposed for coastal tourist destinations. The methods and practices illustrated in Chapters 3 to 5 are fleshed out and located in the destination’s specific context.

How is the information on each destination presented?

The study’s five dynamics are illustrated by five original pictograms that readers may interpret in their own way: some idea of the thinking on which they are based is nevertheless given below.

The dynamics of partnership

The letter Q bearing and enhanced by a circumflex accent means that quality is to be found under the same roof and is systemic and holistic. Quality must, however, be managed.

The dynamics of monitoring

The letter Q is progressing up a graduated scale helped by an arrow in its centre that is moving in the direction of progress.

The dynamics of design

The letter Q in the form of a target with an arrow in its centre reflects the concern for accurate and consistent strategic thinking. The target’s concentric circles represent policies radiating out from the strategy pinpointed by the arrow.

The dynamics of evaluation and adjustment

The letter Q is free from any external devices here; it is full and complete, forming a dynamic loop whose permanent self-motivating force is shown by the arrow.

The dynamics of implementation

The letter Q with a trowel passing through it represents practical work to put the plan into action. The trowel, like the arrow, points towards the future.
Overview

The plan
- Triggered by the need to recognise and develop tourism
- Strong leadership by the municipality and creation of a consortium

Strategy and policies
- Strategic plan 1997–2002 and description of responsibilities and tasks: private partnerships, key areas, policy choices
- Participation in the benchmarking project (comparative study) launched by the British Tourist Authority, Southern Tourist Board and Winchester City Council
- Training of council staff working in tourism

Operations
- Litter hotline
- Quality model for accommodation
- Computerised reservations system
- Dialogue and integration between tourism and public transport

Indicators
- Detailed study of motivations, behaviour, comparison and satisfaction
- Opinion-measuring system
- Model for measuring cost of contact
- Procedure for dealing with complaints

Results
- Annual review of progress towards objectives

Blackpool

Blackpool is a seaside resort on the west coast of England, in the county of Lancashire. In the 18th century it was just a small village; it developed very rapidly during Victorian times, and is now a resort which offers an almost unlimited range of leisure activities.

Although Blackpool is the largest seaside resort in England, few tourists go to the beach or spend their time on traditional seaside activities. The main attraction is Blackpool Pleasure Beach, an amusement park and leisure complex which runs for five miles (8 km) along the seafront. The leisure park is the leading tourist attraction in England, with 7.2 million visitors a year; the fact that it is situated on the seafront further improves its appeal to visitors. Blackpool also ranks high on the list of conference tourism locations in the UK.
Some figures (1994):

- Population 154,000 (25% retired)
- 14 million visitors generating revenue of about EUR 817 million (17 million visitors in 1997)
- 57% day visitors
- 3,000 accommodation establishments with more than 100,000 beds
- 25% of the working population employed in the tourism industry
- Town budget (about EUR 179 million) includes about EUR 4 million for tourism
- Very high return rate: 97% of visitors have been to Blackpool before, 43% that year and 39% the year before

Main attractions:

- The beach and Blackpool Pleasure Beach, an amusement park and leisure complex offering around 145 attractions
- Three other centres, on the north, central and south piers. The north pier is famous for its theatres, restaurants and pubs. The Victorian facade of the south pier has been restored; this is the most popular part of the resort for sunbathing
- A tower which is a copy of the Eiffel Tower
- The illuminations, in the autumn
- Many theatres and cinemas
- Zoo and winter gardens
- Tropical swimming paradise
- Tussauds’ waxworks
- Many parks and flower gardens
- Leisure and sports facilities, discos

The dynamics of partnership

What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?

The trigger for the quality plan was a desire to upgrade an industry which was being left behind.

A study was conducted in 1997 in all departments of the Borough Council to determine the range of tourist services provided by the Council. The study highlighted Blackpool’s weaknesses in relation to tourism, i.e. the Council’s managers lacked any practical knowledge of tourism, or even any interest in it, despite its being the largest employer in the town and the region, and there was a lack of dialogue with business owners and operators in the industry.

The study showed that there was a need for a global and strategic approach by the tourism industry. Since 1998, the tourism department of Blackpool Borough Council has been responsible for coordinating and implementing a new strategy to correct these deficiencies.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?

Blackpool Borough Council is unquestionably the leader; since 1998 it has been the only body responsible for tourism development in the region. The Council closely supervises marketing and promotion activities in the town, through both its tourism and its technical departments, and is involved in many areas such as parking, street cleaning, and management of municipally-owned attractions such as the illuminations, zoo, parks and gardens.

The North West Tourist Board. As a product, Blackpool is so different from the rest of the region that it is difficult to formulate a common strategy for the region as a whole. Cooperation between the regional tourist board and Blackpool Borough Council to develop tourism in Blackpool is rare.

Blackpool Hotel and Guest House Association has more than 1,000 members.

The Holiday Trade Association has an important advisory role on tourism-related matters.

Blackpool Borough Council’s tourism department has set up the Blackpool Tourism Consortium with the two main tourist enterprises in the town, Blackpool Pleasure Beach and First Leisure Corporation. First Leisure Corporation is the largest reservation service, and owns a number of accommodation centres. The main aim of the partnership is to identify target markets, and to promote and organise promotional events. The three partners have provided the consortium with a substantial budget of EUR 188,651, which gives it the resources it needs to run advertising campaigns on national television.
Analysis of current situation
Following the audit of all the council departments, Blackpool Borough Council drew up a strategic plan for the years 1997–2002, based on a study of developments in the tourism industry and the Council’s role and responsibilities in this area.

Benchmarking
Blackpool Tourism Consortium is taking part in a benchmarking project launched by the British Tourist Authority, the Southern Tourist Board and Winchester City Council. The project is based on studies carried out in Winchester and other destinations in the south of England, the findings from which have been used to devise a number of indicators such as cleanliness of roads, public lavatories, car parks, etc.

It is planned to extend the project to other destinations in the United Kingdom, in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a destination as perceived by tourists, to identify good practices in a destination and to take any measures required to help the destination reach the desired standards.

Objectives and overall strategy
The general objective of the Council’s strategic plan is to reinforce and improve Blackpool’s position as the country’s leading tourist destination, by using the powers, responsibilities and resources of the Borough Council effectively and by entering into partnerships with the private sector. The plan clearly identifies the key areas to be addressed and the policy choices to be made:

• in partnership with the private sector, maintain and improve the quality and range of available tourist accommodation, its accessibility, and the qualifications of managers and their teams;
• reinforce and develop Blackpool’s position as a conference centre;
• encourage the development of new infrastructure and attractions, and encourage investment in existing infrastructure and attractions, in order to preserve and broaden the town’s appeal;
• improve the appearance, and protect and improve the environmental quality of the seafront, town centre, accommodation areas and tourist areas in general, for the benefit of both visitors and residents;
• develop the tourism potential of the sports, leisure and entertainment facilities owned by the town;
• improve car and coach parking, and improve public transport to and from the station for the benefit of both visitors and residents.

Human resource policy
Training sessions were arranged for the Borough Council’s tourism staff, to improve the team’s skills.
Public services

Bulldozers clean the beach every day, and the cleaning of some areas is subcontracted during the summer.

A litter hotline has been set up so that any particular problems concerning the cleanliness of the town or beaches can be reported.

**LITTERLINE**
621195

For Action on the Streets

Services for industry professionals

The Council is working in partnership with the National Tourism Board to design a model for tourism enterprises concerning the quality and accessibility of available tourist accommodation, and the qualifications of managers and their teams. The model takes account of a number of aspects which are also dealt with at a national level, such as training of personnel, promotion, visitor care, user manuals, various types of audit and analysis, etc. Local enterprises which do not comply with this model or which have failed audits will not be represented by Blackpool’s tourism department.

Tourist information centres have a hotline via which tourist businesses can report what accommodation they currently have available.

The council tourism department works in cooperation with the Blackpool traders’ association when there are special events in the town, for instance by putting up welcome signs in shops, and arranging discounts.

Tourist services

The tourism consortium has provided the town with a tool and substantial resources for promoting the destination. Blackpool is also the only UK destination which can run advertising campaigns on national television. The tourism department promotes all aspects of Blackpool as a destination, while the consortium targets more specialised areas such as leisure activities and entertainment.

A CABS (computerised accommodation booking system) system has been introduced, as a result of the concerted pressure put on the Blackpool Conference Bureau by the main conference organisers. The tourist information centres will eventually use the same system, which will replace their existing one.

The food hygiene and safety department makes regular checks on the quality of restaurants.

The Council’s tourism department has a representative in the transport department so that tourism is taken into account in their decisions and in projects concerning accessibility and mobility.
Staff satisfaction
The Council’s tourism department regularly organises team meetings, for which everyone is invited to put forward agenda items. This makes it possible to measure staff satisfaction regularly and to circulate information.

Knowledge of markets and visitor satisfaction
In 1997, the tourism consortium commissioned a study using various methods such as short initial interviews with visitors in the street and in attractions and hotels, follow-up interviews at home, omnibus surveys, group discussions, surveys in a group of 18 hotels, and group interviews with conference participants.

The main areas covered by the study were reasons for the visit, activities during the visit, comparison with other destinations, level of awareness of the opportunities offered by Blackpool, level of visitor satisfaction, etc.

In 1999, the tourism consortium will introduce a system for measuring opinion which will complete the results of the 1997 study. Electronic information-gathering points will be used to measure visitor satisfaction instantly.

The tourism consortium is developing a model to measure cost of contact (cost of promotion and active response by consumers).

Blackpool has developed a complaints management system. Any visitor wishing to make a complaint receives a standard form to fill in, and an explanation of the procedure. Once the complaint has been logged it is sent on to the department or institution involved.

The procedure includes discussions between the tourism department and the establishment concerned before a decision is reached about what action should be taken. This decision is then forwarded for action by the responsible departments and institutions.

Blackpool Pleasure Beach has its own procedure to deal with both complaints and praise.
The strategic plan specifies that progress made towards objectives should be reviewed annually.

More than 97 % of visitors questioned said that they intended to return to Blackpool. Visitor satisfaction levels are fairly high. This does not stop visitors feeling that the town is more concerned with marketing and promoting itself than with working towards sustainable development, improving the environment, regeneration or quality control.

The new status of the tourism department and the strategic plan are developments which are too recent for their impact to be measured. This also applies to the creation of the Blackpool Tourism Consortium.
Overview

The plan

• Triggered by a new policy initiative to deal with a decline in the quality of the product and of the environment
• Tight centralised control of tourism management by the local authorities, through a public enterprise
• Excellence Plan and Declaration of Calvia.

Strategy and policies

• Constant process of quality improvement and regeneration, objective of sustainable development
• Local Agenda 21 (the first time it has been applied to a tourist resort)
• Policy integration as an objective
• Creation of IFOC, a training and employment institute and an ‘All year’ programme for employees
• Multi-tasking agreement with the unions
• Municipal strategic model 1995–99

Operations

• Incentives for renovating the outside of buildings
• Taking account of the impact of marinas
• Participation by local residents
• Quality system for hotels and tourist apartments, and recruitment of a quality manager
• Mobility: fare structuring
• Innovative ecological initiatives concerning flora and fauna

Indicators

• Visitor satisfaction surveys
• Cumulative consultation with local people
• Support from tourism professionals

Results

• Effects of IFOC action
• Effects of the ‘Hotel and tourist apartment quality system’ programme
• Detailed budgeting

Calvia

Calvia is one of the leading tourist destinations in the Mediterranean, with more than 120 000 beds. Calvia is situated on the west of the island of Mallorca, with 54 km of coastline and 23 beaches which are often very crowded. Calvia lies at the centre of a contrasting landscape of wooded hills (48 km of forest) and valleys of major biological and ecological interest.

It has a population of 32 000 (the second largest municipality in Mallorca after Palma) living in 16 separate urban centres, including the town of Calvia, a cultural and historical centre. Some of the urban tourist centres are marinas. The population has grown faster than anywhere else on the island of Mallorca (2 914 in 1960 compared with 20 982 in 1991). The population is younger, more active and increasingly heterogeneous than in the rest of the island. More than 10 % of the resident population are Europeans (from outside Spain), including both pensioners and teenagers, who often work in the tourism industry (as guides, in visitor care, etc.).
The quality initiative was triggered by a desire to counter the decline in tourism that goes with an ageing infrastructure and heavy pressure on natural resources. Calvia was one of the original Spanish resorts which started the country’s international tourism boom during the 1960s. For two decades, Calvia was a typical development based on short-term interests, uncontrolled building not in keeping with local traditions and non-sustainable uses of outstanding natural resources. At the end of the 1980s, following the sudden drop in tourist arrivals, a new team at the local authority decided to adopt a policy of massive investment to make up for the previous lack of investment, together with a town planning policy based on promoting tourism in order to modernise, improve and broaden the range of services and products available locally. At the beginning of the 1990s, however, the anticipated growth had not materialised. At the same time, the deterioration of the environment was becoming more and more obvious, with rapidly ageing leisure facilities and a saturation of tourist areas that posed a serious threat to local development, highly dependent on growth in the tourism industry.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?
The local authority was the clear leader of the integrated quality management initiative. A local authority team was given the task of managing the excellence plan. The team’s role was to advise and lead the work of all the local authority departments, to help local politicians to explain the approach to local people, to establish relationships with professional associations, the regional authorities on the island and the government of the Balearic Islands, and to prepare all the documentation.

A forum of advisers was set up, chaired by the mayor, with specialist committees for various areas to ensure consistent policy.

Calvia 2000 s.a. was set up in June 1987 as a public enterprise with the local authority as sole shareholder; it is responsible for running certain municipal public services.

Making the industry more dynamic
Under the leadership of its mayor, the local authority took a series of measures to improve the quality of the environment, reorganise visitor flows, and rehabilitate areas of the coastline and decaying and derelict urban centres. In 1995, in the context of the ‘Plan Futures’, in cooperation with the Spanish Minister of Tourism, the local authority put forward a proposal for an ‘excellence plan’ under the direct responsibility of a project leader appointed by the mayor. The local authority then declared a moratorium on new building, and introduced a local Agenda 21 as a basis for a long-term tourism policy based on sustainable development.

In April 1997, the local authority presented the first successful results from the Excellence Plan to the international conference on ‘Tourism and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean Basin’. The conference was attended by nearly 500 delegates, including tourism industry experts and managers from the various countries, regions and municip-
Analysis of current situation
A new philosophy has been introduced into the area’s management process – the concept of the life cycle of tourism products. Following this analysis of the tourism product, it was decided to introduce a process of continuous quality management and refurbishment in order to avoid decline.

Objectives and overall strategy
The key elements of this policy are:

• freezing 1,500 hectares of land which were in the process of being developed;
• launching a local Agenda 21, to protect the environment of the island of Mallorca and beyond, in the Mediterranean basin;
• technical work geared towards sustainable development, in social as well as economic and environmental terms;
• collective and individual efforts, substantial participation by residents;
• call for cooperation between all residents, social and economic agencies, civil and professional associations and anyone wanting to protect the well-being of the community in order to ensure the success of a plan which tackles the challenges of the future.

Environmental policy – Agenda 21
Calvia’s current situation:
1. Calvia’s environment can no longer support the present high number of tourists; its capacity would be exceeded;
2. the negative environmental impact of an excessive number of tourists is greater on the coastline than further inland;
3. the negative impact of an excessive number of tourists is greater in summer than in winter.

In 1997, the local authority received the ‘European Sustainable City’ Award.
Calvia celebrates ‘World Environment Day’ every year.
Public services

Palma airport has been completely refurbished, and an air terminal was opened in 1997.

Local police force numbers are increased during the summer season.

Services for industry professionals

The local authority is beginning to be concerned by the state of its residential and tourist buildings. Although an ambitious programme is under way to tackle public housing, on some routes the local authority is asking for the outside of apartment buildings and retail units to be renovated. The owners themselves are responsible for refurbishing buildings internally. The idea is to turn a number of under-used rented apartments into commercial facilities such as hotel complexes or timeshares. Some people feel that the rental system should be placed on more of a commercial footing, as buildings are more likely to be refurbished when financial returns are good.

Human resource policy

IFOC, a training and employment institute, was established in Calvia in 1994 to tackle the problem of seasonal swings, increase employment for young people, pave the way for new ways of working, open up new areas of economic activity and provide support for compulsory vocational training. This has led to the launch of the ‘All year’ programme for employees in the industry.

A framework agreement was signed in 1996 with the most representative trades unions. Its objective was to develop a plan for social action covering training and jobs, the role of tourism in social action, participation by residents, the social environment – in conjunction with the local authority plan for demolishing tower blocks – public transport, the environment, education, sports, well-being, salubrity, the family planning centre and recognition of the local trades union councils (representation on the governing bodies of public enterprises such as Calvia 2000).

The dynamics of implementation

Public services

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Human resource policy

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Although the local authority is trying to reduce the impact of marinas on the environment, the pressure from boat-owners is very high, with the level of demand in the Balearic Islands increasing. Local promoters are trying to extend existing ports.

The problem is a difficult one, with strong economic arguments. It is important that precautions are observed in any building work.

The local authority at Calvia regards internal communication as an essential tool in integrated quality management. Residents are kept informed on a regular basis and invited to participate in decision-making at each stage of a project, through local consultation and forums:

- extensive discussion of the principles of sustainable development chosen by the local authority by local politicians and representatives of local residents;
- a document called Calvia, local Agenda 21 – the development and sustainability of older tourist destinations on the Mediterranean coast was distributed in 1995, explaining the foundations on which the new local authority policy was based;
- in 1995, a local authority strategic model for 1995–99 for the municipality of Calvia and a model local authority strategy for 1995–99 for the tourism industry in Calvia were issued to residents and tourism professionals;
- a municipal circular was published in 1996 setting out the various elements of local council policy and was distributed to local residents. The circular described the various aspects of this policy;
- The World of Calvia is published every year, describing activities in the municipality, with articles in Catalan, Spanish and English;
- 3 000 copies of the journal Entorn which deals with environmental issues, are published and distributed free of charge to associations, professionals and local politicians, and to anyone asking for a copy.

The local authority has started the ‘Mallorca Calvia Club’ for trade journalists from both the press and radio and television.

The local authority is forging closer links with other regional and national authorities.

Tourist services
Six information centres have been opened to welcome tourists and provide them with information. The centres stock a number of promotional documents produced by Calvia and also offer help with booking accommodation or any of the activities offered in Calvia.

The area is actively promoted by means of general campaigns, print material and an Internet site which has been operational since 1997.

Tourism professionals, hoteliers in particular, have introduced a quality system for hotels and tourist apartments within the framework of the Spanish tourism quality plan. The hoteliers’ association of Palma Nova-Magalluf runs the programme for five neighbouring associations, and has recruited a quality manager. The procedures and standards applied are the ICHE (Spanish Hotel Quality Institute) standards. Sixty-five hotels or hotel complexes with a total of 22 500 beds are following the programme, and more than 3 000 employees have been trained. The budget for the programme is EUR 1.5 million for the whole of Spain. For Calvia it is in the order of EUR 300 000.

A compulsory fare structure for taxi journeys between the airport and each community on the island is displayed and distributed to information offices at the airport. Facilities for tourists on package tours (70% of traffic) have been improved by building 120 parking places for coaches at the airport.

In the spirit of the local Agenda 21, Bendinat Real Golf has taken measures to protect local flora and fauna, following a forest fire on the hills overlooking the golf course. An inventory of the flora and fauna of all the golf courses has been carried out in cooperation with the University of the Balearic Islands at Palma de Mallorca, and contacts have been forged with an American ornithological association with more than 200 000 members that has set up a cooperative system of bird sanctuaries. The golf club has been a member of this network since November 1996 and manages its environment very carefully.

Leaving aside promotional aspects, this experiment is beginning to gain ground in the Balearic Islands and throughout Spain.
Visitor satisfaction

Visitor satisfaction has been measured since 1994 by satisfaction surveys, which are a requirement of the national ‘Excellence Plan’. The last two surveys concerned the 1997 summer season, and winter 1998.

Satisfaction of local people and integration into the community

Cumulative consultation is arranged over four months of the year (September to December). Signatures are taken after the participant’s identity and home address have been checked. This procedure helps in formulating objectives and in finding out how far the local population accepts the local authority’s various plans and projects.

Satisfaction of tourism professionals

Professionals, particularly hoteliers, have supported the local authority’s action.

Professionals felt that the results of the hotel and tourist apartment quality system programme were very satisfactory, and they would be happy to enhance and extend it over the next few years to include a system for staff management and motivation. The result indicator was customer satisfaction, which showed a sharp upturn in the hotels and hotel complexes concerned.

Positive impact on the environment

Since Calvia 2000 was set up, monitoring of drinking water supplies, waste water management and purification systems, collection of domestic and industrial waste, the cleanliness of the municipality and the cleaning of beaches have been improved and, more recently, a cable television network has been installed.

Calvia 2000, which employs 245 people, had a turnover (income from operations) in 1995 of nearly EUR 12 million. Two small neighbouring municipalities, Tramontana and Andrax, now use its services, and inter-municipal cooperation seems to be on the cards.

The dynamics of evaluation and adjustment

Through IFOC, the municipality has adopted a policy of re-deploying employees and has found work for 1,098 people, mainly in the tourism sector, through the creation of new types of employment such as the maintenance of public gardens and open spaces. IFOC has also advised and guided 2,108 people.

IFOC uses funds from European initiatives under the ADAPT programme, takes part in the ‘All year’ campaign to counter the seasonal aspects of tourism and works with three local vocational colleges.

Debt servicing accounted for about 15% of the municipality’s annual budget in 1996.

The eight programmes of the local Agenda 21 (stabilisation of the population, sustainable management of water resources, protection of the ambient environment and natural resources, development of and incentives for agriculture, protection and management of the coast, atmospheric quality and noise, revitalisation of the countryside, and a general environmental education programme) cost more than EUR 25 million. Refurbishment of leisure buildings and facilities may cost more than EUR 10 million every year for the next 10 years.

The plan has achieved good results, with hotels which were spoiling the environment being demolished, and several parts of the seafront being remodelled.

The last report, published in June 1998, on the extent of and areas chosen for action, has made it possible to evaluate the current situation and put figures on the action programme for the future. Water resources seem to become increasingly scarce because several supplies of groundwater are drying up, the disposal or recycling of solid and liquid wastes is becoming increasingly problematic and the deterioration and loss of many coastal and maritime ecosystems is to a large extent irreversible.
Overview

The plan
- Triggered by the need to improve what is on offer and bring it into line with what customers now require
- First French seaside resort to implement a quality plan (in 1991)
- Strong management based on the tourism office
- Management committee and quality plan committees
- Support for local municipality networking, and the launch of an inter-municipal charter by the town of Agde

Strategy and policies
- Diagnostic surveys on the quality of products and services, types of deficiency and corrective action
- Very complete quality plan which takes account of all components of the destination
- Discussion seminar and tourism development plan
- Concern for the environment reflected by a range of operations and projects
- Training in language skills

Operations
- Take account of mobility, cleanliness and land development
- Processes for internal communication and information
- Multimedia information centre, for exchange of ideas and for training
- Loyalty-building endeavours (setting-up of a GIE (economic interest grouping))
- Many different forms of information and reservation methods available to tourists
- Pilot scheme for improving accommodation
- Multi-strand initiatives to enhance theme-based tourism in the region
- Health and safety commission to improve hygiene
- Wide-ranging security schemes
- Reservation switchboard for marketing

Indicators
- Consultation about signposting
- Setting-up of a local tourism observatory
- Study of reputation and image

Results
- Strong integration as a result of inter-municipal action
- Integration of quality into urban environments

The seaside resort of Cap d’Agde was created by the Joint Ministerial Task Force for the development of tourism along the Languedoc-Roussillon coast in 1963, and was developed during the 1970s within the general framework of the redevelopment of the Mediterranean coast between the Rhône delta and the Spanish border. Today it is the best known resort on this coast. It consists of the town of Agde, Le Cap d’Agde, Le Grau d’Agde and La Tamarissière.

Agathé Tyché was originally a Greek colony and a Mediterranean port. Later, Agde was the seat of a powerful see. The town was then dependent on viticulture, the port and the canal du Midi, before the influx of tourists made it into the leading French tourist resort. During the 1960s, the expansion of the neighbouring port ended the era of an economy based on fishing, agriculture and small industry. There are now only a hundred or so fishing boats in the area. Wine and shellfish are increasingly linked to the development of tourism products.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?

The quality approach was based on the notion of improving what is on offer in order to meet customers’ new requirements.

The destination’s urbanisation has brought with it problems that are hard to tackle:

- there are four urban districts, which function almost independently of each other;
- infrastructure is not in keeping with the needs of the built-up parts of the area;
- cleaning services need to be modernised in some cases;
- technical services are reaching the limit of their capacity in trying to satisfy the needs of the summer influx of visitors (salubrity of public areas, traffic, etc.);
- pressure on the environment because the summer population is 10 times larger than the local population.

Until 1991, tourism developed without any real goodwill between the municipality and the resort; rumours that Cap d’Agde was breaking away from the municipality have circulated in the past. It was therefore a matter of some urgency to react to this situation and relaunch a global policy for the municipality and resort based on improving the quality and image of tourism. With the approval and support of the French Ministry of Tourism (AFIT, the Agence Française de l’Ingénierie Touristique, a French agency which provides technical assistance in France and abroad, was involved from 1993 onwards). Agde, which includes the Cap d’Agde resort, therefore became the first French seaside resort to implement a quality plan, which makes it a pilot resort for this type of approach.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?

The municipality of Agde.

Municipal tourism office. In 1991, the new director of the tourism office became involved in the quality process at Agde, on the strength of an earlier experience of a quality initiative at La Plagne (FR) with AFIT.

Sodeal, a semi-public company whose general manager was also head of the tourism office, was set up in order to provide effective management of tourist facilities in a manner consistent with the objectives of the quality plan.
Ecological associations and associations for the protection of nature are involved in managing tourism development and in upgrading tourism (undersea trail).

A quality plan steering committee was formed in 1991, to decide on its targets. Its task was to decide on appropriate proposals and to evaluate the resources needed to implement the action plans chosen.

Prior to this, there was much discussion by the quality committees.

The task of the quality committees is to discuss how to proceed and to draw up a set of concrete proposals and specifications for each action plan.

Multi-industry working groups
A network of businesses in the Pays d’Agde’s various local municipalities was formed; the network takes a common approach to questions of visitor care and promotion, the relationship between tourism and the environment, access and transport etc., and has developed a tourist trail – the ‘Vineyards and Fisheries trail’ – which links the municipalities with each other.

Agde is a signatory to the ‘Charte Intercommunale Vignes et Étangs’, which 17 municipalities have joined since 1994. This project aims to develop the existing heritage (restoring sites, improving public spaces such as squares and entry points to villages, etc.), network resources and jointly promote them and draw up a common plan for a sea shuttle on the Étang de Thau and training courses for industry professionals.

The dynamics of design
There are four stages in the quality plan:

• analysis of the current situation (1991–92);
• presentation of findings, and discussions (1992);
• deciding on and scheduling the action to be taken (1992–93);
• implementation of specific measures. This phase has now been completed but has been continued since 1995 through the Resort Plan programmes (assistance in developing tourist products).

Analysis of current situation
In Agde, the starting point for discussion of the quality plan was a diagnosis of the quality of products and services by means of two surveys, one among customers, and the other among local industry professionals. This first stage identified expectations and deficiencies in terms of information, accommodation, mobility, shopping, bars and restaurants, markets and fairs, discos, entertainment, children’s activities, environment and development, public services, sporting activities and games.

Objectives and overall strategy
The specifications of the 1991 quality plan included 11 areas of deficiency, together with the corrective action to be implemented:

• information: change how information is disseminated to different target groups, put up signs, organise information days for professionals;
• visitor care charter: establish quality-branded information points, define commitment to visitor care and offer the best possible quality-price ratio;

• accommodation: support the renovation and refurbishment of the leisure environment;
• activities and entertainment: organise publicity and formulate a global long-term plan for entertainment;
• sports activities: reinforce the nautical image and develop health tourism and discovery trails;
• children’s activities: develop what is currently on offer and adapt the local environment by developing special areas;
• shops: deal with the problems of seasonal swings, help customers in their choices by creating charters and labels;

• markets and promotion: make the most of the resort’s assets, organise themed holidays, particularly out of season, win over new target groups;
• environment: set up pilot experiments in sorting waste before collection, increase street furniture and the number of public toilets;
• traffic: improve parking and the cycle path network, develop car park access routes;
• security: step up surveillance and implement measures to improve the municipality’s brand image;

After the quality plan had been introduced, the municipal tourism office organised a discussion seminar in 1994 on the future of tourism. The seminar was chaired by the mayor and attended by six administrators from the tourism office and nine external professionals. An attempt was made to formulate a long-term tourism development plan which would take account of changes in the market (resort project) by:
• consolidating the achievements of the quality plan;
• identifying priorities in terms of security, change of image (culture, tradition and nature rather than concrete);
• creating facilities for out-of-season activities;
• ensuring environmental quality (peace and quiet, cycle routes, open spaces, etc.);
• restoring leisure facilities.
From 1995 onwards, the quality initiative was therefore integrated into the resort project.

Environmental policy – Agenda 21

An Environmental Charter for the Agde municipality was published in 1996 following the discussions of a steering committee and after extensive democratic debate. The charter sets out objectives drawn up by working groups which included representatives of local people and technical specialists.

The objectives are:
• control of the area around Agde by protecting areas of outstanding natural interest, areas close to the shore or coast (beaches, dunes, cliffs, water quality) and marine environments;
• management of natural hazards, public services, sources of pollution: natural hazards, urban water supply, domestic waste disposal, listed facilities, noise and summer visitor numbers, traffic and urban transport;
• local development incorporating measures to protect the environment: municipal organisation, particularly inter-municipal aspects, maintenance of agriculture and fishing, tourism, employment and the environment, education and information about the environment.

A total of 42 operations were planned for the period 1997–2001. A new land use plan was approved in 1999, with potential development of 12 000 hectares.

The Conservatoire du Littoral, a French government agency which purchases land for conservation purposes, has purchased 36 hectares in the 600-hectare Banas reserve. At present, a compulsory purchase procedure has been initiated on behalf of the Conservatoire du Littoral, which will hand management of the reserve back to the municipality. The Nature Protection Society will be responsible for the operational side. The aim of another project undertaken in cooperation with the Conservatoire du Littoral is to run a pilot 30-hectare vineyard project.

Human resource policy

An ambitious language-training programme has been organised for industry professionals in order to improve visitor care for foreign tourists. This training also helps to meet employees’ qualification needs – the majority of whom are seasonal – in a region where unemployment is high.

Public services

In the area of mobility, a global plan was adopted which established various cycle routes. Improvements have been made to the road system to benefit people of reduced mobility. The town has also been examining a new way of organising transport in the municipality, in cooperation with the local transport company.

Work is carried out every year to protect the beaches and the coastline, i.e. constructing groynes, replenishing sand, protecting dunes, etc.

The dynamics of implementation

A beach quality plan has improved cleanliness by using a new cleaning material, by introducing dog-minding facilities, installing sanitary facilities and showers, installing litter bins and increasing the frequency of collection.

Services for industry professionals

The plan has incorporated practical measures to improve internal communication, such as distributing the main findings of the 1991 quality survey, and Special Quality, a tourist information newsletter published in October 1992 and July 1994.
Under a programme to set up information points (‘Point Info Relais’), it is planned to improve the dissemination of information to tourists. Traders who agree to act as information points are given a display unit and a sticker.

The ‘Maison des savoirs’ project was launched in 1998; this is a multimedia centre for cultural activities, information, training and a meeting place for local people and tourists of all ages.

Two procedures have been introduced to build up customer loyalty and to rally the area’s various tourism partners:

- help with creating and marketing local products;
- formation of an economic interest grouping (GIE) which runs, among other things, a loyalty card scheme offering discounts on leisure activities.

Tourist services

A ‘Welcome’ guide has been published since 1994. It contains information about activities available in the resort, and is distributed by the tourism office and industry professionals.

There is a weekly guide to local events, ‘Cap Agenda’, which is left with traders who have agreed to be an information point.

Information boards have been put up in pedestrian zones to publicise activities available to tourists. Information points have been sited in various places in response to requests.

The accommodation guide has grown from 5 to 32 pages, so that every establishment appears in it, with a description, photo and prices.

The reservation hotline is open every day of the week in the season and more people have been drafted in to man it.

The state of the buildings that house leisure and other tourism activities is one of the most worrying aspects of quality management. Nearly 25 to 30 years after the resort was created, the rebuilding or major maintenance of communal facilities and buildings has become a very heavy burden, particularly as the level of quality demanded by consumers means that facilities need to be thoroughly overhauled. A pilot operation has been launched to improve the number of accommodation facilities on offer, through an apartment refurbishment plan.

The aim of the plan is to:

- improve the quality of the interior of apartments on the basis of a study of the expectations of French and foreign customers (couples and families). Apartment owners would therefore be given guidance in refurbishing their properties;
- decentralise visitor care to each district, setting up a common structure to organise and improve services to individuals staying in apartments.

Mobility has been improved by updating local plans of the area. The solution chosen was to provide sign-posting for each district; there are 10 districts in Cap d’Agde, and the same system will be used for maps.

Various improvements have been made to the region, such as:

- a vineyards and fisheries trail, which was inaugurated in 1995. This is a permanent route, laid out so that people can find out about the various occupations in the region, such as wine-making and fishing for shellfish;
- day trips to inland areas;
- marketing one-day cruises on the canal du Midi;
- the formation of an ‘Association of Former Greek Trading Posts in the Mediterranean’. Ten towns are members of the association which has its headquarters in the town of Agde.

A health and safety commission has been set up by the town to provide regular monitoring of the quality of products in food shops and restaurants.

The town has launched a number of security measures:

- a local security plan to develop cooperation between the national and municipal police forces;
- a video surveillance system with about 20 cameras installed in the most sensitive areas, such as outside discos, Leisure Island and the port;
- a police station on Leisure Island;
- stepping up of the municipal police force during the high season by drafting in a crime prevention squad;
- emergency telephones;
- new urban lighting.

A number of bye-laws have been issued by the prefecture, to change campsite opening and closing times. These bye-laws will now be based on the provisions of the natural flood hazard exposure plan.

1 Quality improvement plan for all coastal resorts and communities (launched by the interministerial Commission for the tourism development of Languedoc-Roussillon in 1963).
2 Compagnie Républicaine de Sécurité.
Satisfaction of personnel and professionals
Tourism professionals were consulted during satisfaction surveys in 1991.

Visitor satisfaction
A local observatory was established in 1991.

Annual surveys have been carried out since the quality plan began in order to monitor changes in numbers of arrivals and to measure customer satisfaction levels. The observatory has devised a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators; for instance, the number of arrivals in the resort is measured from the tonnage of domestic waste collected.

Surveys cover themes which are related to the strategic options of the plan.

A study of the image of Cap d’Agde and how well it is known was conducted in 1997.

The dynamics of evaluation

Industry professionals, local politicians and residents have participated widely in the quality initiative.

Since the quality plan was introduced, there has been no further question of the municipality breaking up, and work to forge closer relationships between neighbouring municipalities has continued effectively, particularly as a result of the ‘Pays d’Agde’ SIVU (single-purpose inter-municipal association) structure. Neighbouring municipalities are starting to take up the integrated quality policy begun in 1991.

A report has been produced since 1994 to enable the tourism office to identify what has and has not been achieved.

Average customer satisfaction indices are all over 80%. The index of intention to return is becoming more positive; it was 59% in 1993, and 69% in 1996. In general, it is important to emphasise that notions of quality now pervade municipal town planning, including its aesthetic aspects. Quality has become a reflex for local politicians.

The interest of the quality plan for Cap d’Agde lies in the length of time that the project has been running. It was started in 1991, and is being continued through the Resort Plan that concentrates on improving the local environment, as in Quiberon (FR). Resort Plans are also being implemented in other regions of France and are focusing in particular on inter-municipal links – a typically French issue because of the small size and areas of jurisdiction of French municipalities.
The name ‘Cinque Terre’ has been used since 1448 to refer to five small medieval villages (Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola, Riomaggiore) along Italy’s north-west coast.

Cinque Terre has a very diverse range of resources, including natural and cultural (Eugenio Montale literary centre), historical, ethnography and weather resources. It offers traditional seaside tourism, as well as sports, cultural, wine and food tourism, etc.

These secluded areas are also a site of national, geographical and marine interest, which is protected by Unesco.

Cinque Terre is a very privileged site in environmental terms; the prohibition of vehicles in the villages has paved the way for green tourism and walking tourism and for the preservation of the wealth of ecological resources and the beauty of the countryside.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?

The quality initiative was triggered by a desire to preserve the environment.

The lack of open space and the limited number of places for visitors to stay are a major obstacle to the development of tourism in Cinque Terre. The region is therefore concentrating on maximising its resources, especially its natural resources, and existing infrastructure by extending the tourist season all the year round, by creating synergies with inland areas (i.e. nature, wine and food, etc.) and by developing new products.

The region has therefore adopted a policy of preserving intact the beauty of the landscape and of protecting the environment, in order to develop alternatives to traditional seaside tourism, such as green tourism, walking, sports tourism etc., which will improve its all-year-round appeal.

Attempts to introduce high-quality environment-friendly tourism in keeping with the surrounding area have included a prohibition on vehicles in village centres.

Another important factor which demonstrates how important the environment is to the way that tourists spend their free time is the creation by the Region of Liguria of an Orange Flag scheme, which accredits inland areas in the same way as the Blue Flag accredits coastal areas.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?

The Province of La Spezia plays an important role, since it handles tourists’ complaints and grades accommodation and restaurants against specific quality criteria. It has also produced a three-year tourism plan for 1998–2000 which aims to bring together the various partners involved in tourism. Lastly, it publishes statistics on the numbers of tourists visiting the region.

The Region of Liguria is more involved with promotion and with applications for funding from the European Union (Objective 5b) for hotel enterprises which are certified to ISO 9000 level and which have adopted principles of high-quality visitor care, in order to improve the level of tourist facilities. The Region also promotes improvements to the general environment.

The tourism promotion agency in La Spezia, which is supported financially by the Region, promotes tourist resources and runs information points and visitor care centres such as the IAT (information and visitor care centre) at Monterosso. The office cannot make bookings, and is open for only four months of the year.

The Cinque Terre Tourism Consortium was set up in 1996 at Monterosso; it is responsible for improving the image of the region and the quality of hospitality through a quality label scheme. It plays an active role in a number of different areas such as promotion, producing a footpath map in several languages, carrying out a questionnaire-based survey of tourist motivation and satisfaction, etc.

The Pro Loco tourism office at Monterosso deals with reservations, visitor care and local events; unlike the IAT, the office is open for nine months of the year.

Main attractions

- beaches, rocky coves and wealth of marine life
- valley landscape protected from pollution and other harmful factors
- network of footpaths
- major cultural and historical heritage
- marine and landscape natural park
- wealth of local traditions and typical products

Some figures (1997)

- population 4 656
- 9.4 % growth in tourist flows between 1994 and 1997
- foreign tourism has increased by 27.6 %
- three main markets: Germany, United States 21 464 arrivals, Switzerland 19 262 arrivals
- the tourist season extends from April to October, with a concentration of Italian tourists in July and August
- the average stay is 3 days

THE PLAN

The dynamics of partnership
Leadership is provided by the Province of La Spezia. It builds on the synergies between the public and private sectors in the areas of culture, territory, environment, tourism and vocational training. It has drawn up a three-year tourism plan that paves the way for genuine coordination between local politicians responsible for tourism in the province’s municipalities. As a result of this initiative, all professionals in the private sector, particularly in the tourism industry, are continuing to work together to preserve the momentum of joint public and private initiatives.

**The dynamics of design**

**Objectives and overall strategy**

The strategy and policies described above have been adopted by all tourism professionals in the region and are followed by everyone involved in tourism, at all levels of decision-making, who all work together. Objectives have been laid down by the Province, in the three-year tourism plan for 1998–2000, one of whose criteria is the destination’s quality. The goal is to establish quality standards for the tourist services and products offered. In this light, in August 1998 it set up a framework for coordination of the work of all municipal councillors responsible for tourism, encouraging them to work together and build on each other’s achievements.

**Environmental policy – Agenda 21**

A novel approach in the plan is the development of tourism further inland in order to concentrate on alternative forms of tourism, i.e. rural tourism, green tourism and wine and food tourism. This is one of the objectives of the Province of La Spezia’s three-year plan, and is also one of the aims of the Region of Liguria, which launched the idea of an Orange Flag scheme for quality in inland countryside, as an equivalent to the Blue Flag scheme which applies to the coast.

The environment plays a key role in people’s decisions about how they spend their leisure time, as well as being the essential raw material for developing and organising tourism management. One of the main objectives of the Region of Liguria and the other partners in the region is therefore to preserve its natural resources. To do this, the region came up with the idea of an accreditation scheme for inland areas, using the same procedures as those adopted by FEEE for its Blue Flag scheme. The TCI (Touring Club Italy), which welcomed the scheme, ensures that procedures are transparent and provides technical support; the TCI is also interested in extending the experiment nationally and internationally, once the first stage had been completed. This is the first experiment of its kind. The criteria chosen for awarding an Orange Flag are:

- environmental quality of the region (cleanliness of water, air, landscape, etc.);
- quality of the habitat;
- quality of hospitality;
- quality of the social context (services offered, facilities for leisure activities, etc.).

Under the project procedure, locations considering that they satisfy these criteria contact the TCI. An evaluation form specifying what criteria need to be met is being produced as this study is being written. TCI will award an Orange Flag on the basis of this evaluation, with the help of experts and technical specialists. The experiment may later be extended to other regions, particularly through Community partnership schemes with other regions of Europe.

The morphology and nature of the province’s tourist areas means that tourist flows are very concentrated, giving rise to transport-related problems. For this reason, the Province of La Spezia’s three-year plan (1998–2000) looks at tourist mobility, and in particular high-quality transport offering users the best possible opportunity to appreciate what the local area has to offer. Under the three-year plan, all the partners concerned are to work together to achieve a genuinely integrated tourist transport system within three years.

**Human resource policy**

The Province of La Spezia in particular runs vocational training courses in tourism marketing and language skills, financed by the European Social Fund. These courses are run by various agencies such as the tourism business consortium and are targeted at tourism businesses.
Internal communication is provided by holding regular meetings and working meetings, and by publishing documents and press releases.

**Services for industry professionals**

In the area of visitor care, the Region of Liguria is trying to draw up a methodology and common reference procedure under the international standard ISO 9000. The first stage is one of fact-finding and encouraging and involving as many partners in the industry as possible.

An important second stage of the experiment will be to enlist the help of the 22 visitor care centres to conduct an in-depth study to draw up a quality manual for the accreditation, within the context of the standards specified by ISO 9000, of accommodation providers. During 1998, this will be followed by a law setting out incentives that should make it possible to set up an accreditation scheme at the lowest possible cost.

**Tourist services**

There is an active promotion programme based on leaflets, brochures, footpath maps, guides in several languages, publications etc. Cinque Terre is also the Italian coastal region which is mentioned most frequently in the foreign press (McCann Erickson research, 1998, Italy).

The reservation system is run by Pro Loco, and, especially, by the consortium. The consortium has also developed a multi-language tourist information service which is accessible 24 hours a day, and a web site (www.cinqueterre.it) through which reservations can be made directly. This service has attracted a larger number of American tourists in particular.

The Province, in its capacity as guarantor of the service quality plan, draws up an annual star grading system for accommodation, which looks at a number of parameters, such as room size, bathroom facilities, furniture, the presence of a night porter, etc. Hotels are monitored regularly to ensure that they comply with these quality criteria.

Motor vehicles are not allowed inside the villages, and car parks have been built outside the centres. This makes it possible to protect the special features of the environment.

Cinque Terre Tourist Consortium has introduced:

- a Cinque Terre Holiday Card, which offers tourists reductions in shops and restaurants; it is sent directly to customers in hotels;
- since the summer, a child-minding service has been available for families staying in accommodation facilities which are members of the consortium.

The fact that the villages are clean and secure and that great importance is attached to the environment helps to support action to protect the region’s diversity and beauty.

The quality and number of restaurants is a strong point. Almost all the restaurants offer a typically Ligurian cuisine. A wine produced in Cinque Terre can be tasted in many wine cellars in the region. The quality of the products used is regularly monitored by the health authorities.

Cinque Terre, notably Monterosso, has been awarded a Blue Flag for 1998 for water quality. This is monitored regularly.
Visitor satisfaction

The province gathers data on tourist stays and tourist arrivals, mainly via questionnaires distributed to visitors. It produces annual statistics which take into account the grade of accommodation, visitors’ place of origin (province, country) and how long they are staying. These statistics do not take account of stays in second homes or holiday homes.

In 1998 the Cinque Terre Consortium produced a multi-language questionnaire designed to measure the level of tourist satisfaction with the quality of services offered. For instance, during summer 1998, survey findings provided a starting point for improvements in visitor care and an increased range of services, such as child-minding services.

Lastly, the Region of Liguria financed a study on changes in demand during the 1990s, which was conducted by ILRES (Ligurian Institute for Economic and Social Research) and published in February 1998.

Consortium members have to meet specific quality criteria to become members, and are therefore subject to constant monitoring.

Satisfaction of local people and integration into the community

The improvement of the region’s image and the increase in tourist flows has had a positive socio-cultural impact on local people and has led to a greater emphasis on typical products and local traditions.

A real quality dynamic has been established.

Cooperation between the public and private sectors has increased.

The dynamics of evaluation and adjustment

The development of a series of alternatives to seaside tourism, such as green tourism, walking tourism, and cultural tourism, has resulted in a marked extension of the tourist season, which now runs from April to October. This has led to a successful development of tourism that respects the region’s particular features and natural assets and that is controlled from within the Cinque Terre. In addition, residents have become involved in their region’s socio-economic destiny.

At the initiative of the Province of La Spezia, the various public and private sector partners have helped to draw up a three-year plan for tourism which places the emphasis on the quality of services and facilities and sets out two global strategies: the tourism system itself, and the quality of the tourist destination.
The range of services offered has also been extended in order to satisfy a wider-ranging demand, and the coordination of the various tourism partners has made it possible to introduce some consistency that can be seen, for instance, in the centralised planning of events in the region.

Improvements in the quality of visitor care were well thought-out from the point of view of integration of tourist services into the region. The target was to achieve a standard level of quality in the services offered, through partnerships and the pooling of experience, in order to build on synergies between inland areas and the coast, extend the tourist season throughout the whole year, and thus preserve the region’s viability.

Globally, the region is experiencing an increase in the number of visitors, thanks to the extension of the tourist season. During 1994, accommodation providers recorded 174,817 visitors; the figure for 1995 was 173,711; for 1996 it was 181,847 and for 1997, 191,196. The provincial initiative to coordinate local councillors responsible for tourism throughout La Spezia has optimised resources and endeavours and has helped to promote and develop tourism. Information about Cinque Terre is available all the year round by telephone or on the Internet. As mentioned earlier, Unesco granted protection to this part of Italy, which became a natural park in 1997.

On a purely economic level, the extension of the tourist season has had a positive impact on employment, which in turn has brought favourable socio-economic changes, more emphasis on typical local products and traditions, and a better image for the region.
In the heart of Tuscany, the Tuscan coast forms the mainland part of the Province of Livorno. It runs for more than 80 km along the Tyrrhenian coast and includes the municipalities of Livorno, Rosignano Marittimo, Collesalvetti, Cecina, Bibbona, Castagneto Carducci, Suvereto, Campiglia Marittima, Sasseta, San Vincenzo and Piombino. The coast is readily accessible via the A11 motorway (Genoa–Livorno) from the north, via Pisa Galilei international airport and via Livorno’s boat terminal. The Turin–Rome express stops at Cecina, and at San Vincenzo during the summer.

The region is also situated less than 120 km from most of the principal towns of Tuscany. The area is rich in history, culture, art and nature. The Mediterranean scrubland and the many animal species that live there are protected by parks and reserves. Tourism has played a key role in the area since the beginning of the century. Following the decline in the region’s traditional occupations (metal-working, railways and mining), tourism is now an important economic resource.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?

The quality initiative was triggered by a desire to extend the tourist season and to rehabilitate the industry.

One of the main features of tourism on the Tuscan coast is the high concentration of tourists during July and August, which does little for the region’s profitability, and causes various economic problems, traffic gridlock, a poor reputation abroad, etc. In order to improve these negative aspects, action was needed in the areas of integration, rehabilitation and information. A study of the development of tourism along the Tuscan coast highlighted several important factors which provided a basis for action plans, including, in particular, plans to diversify the product to spread arrivals throughout the year and plans for environmental rehabilitation.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?

The APT (Tourism Promotion Agency), a regional public body, produces a whole series of promotional leaflets and provides a coordinated image of the region. It runs the IAT tourist offices in all the municipalities along the coast, sometimes in cooperation with the municipality and the Tirreno Promotour consortium, which are generally responsible for supplying a member of staff to man the information office during peak periods. Through its IAT tourist office network in particular, APT is the clear leader in the areas of promotion, marketing and information.

Towns also have their own promotion policy financed from the municipal budget. Most initiatives are the result, however, of synergies between the municipality, the APT, tourism businesses and European Union financing, particularly in San Vincenzo, where there is considerable cooperation between the public and private sectors. Leadership is therefore shared by the various partners.

The Tirreno Promotour consortium, a private cooperative which includes almost all private businesses and accommodation providers (150 operators), is the main partner in the area of tourist information. It also handles marketing, visitor care and tourist information in cooperation with the other institutional partners (mainly the Region of Tuscany, the Province of Livorno APT, and some of the municipalities along the coast). It also administers European funding for new services for tourist arrivals and promotional activities. The consortium was founded in 1992 and has rapidly taken on a major role.
The private cooperative of hoteliers in San Vincenzo is planning to produce additional information for tourists.

The company Parchi Val di Comia, a mixed enterprise, with help from San Vincenzo, Campiglia Marittima and other municipalities along the coast, runs an integrated network of six natural, archaeological and mining parks, making the most of each park’s special features.

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The dynamics of design

Objectives and overall strategy

The strategy pursued by all the institutional partners is to avoid concentrating local strategy on a single resource, the sea, but to offer tourists a variety of alternatives in order to spread tourist arrivals throughout the year. For example, walks have been signposted, tourist information has been produced about the hills inland and a great deal of information has been disseminated on regional cuisine and the region’s mild climate. One of the major alternatives is sports tourism.

Another area of the strategy is to improve the quality of service and visitor care in holiday locations through a quality label scheme. San Vincenzo’s municipal ‘second home’ project, intended to upgrade the stock of rental property for the holiday market, has this as one of its aims.

Environmental policy – Agenda 21

The last two objectives concern the issues of mobility and reduction of the negative impact of tourism on the environment. The municipalities of San Vincenzo and Cecina are currently involved in quality projects which, if successful, will be extended to other locations on the coast.

The towns of Cecina, Bibbona and Castagneto Carducci have also launched a quality plan, with technical support from the Florence Tourist Studies Centre. San Vincenzo will join the plan at a later date. The plan was launched in 1996, and has three phases:

- meetings with tourism businesses to look at ways of analysing tourists’ motivation, security standards and standards for refurbishing buildings, sports tourism, services, themed tourism, etc.;
- surveys of the sports facilities available, sailing tourism, knowledge and reporting of hotel room vacancies by the various operators (classified by the level of services currently offered), environmental quality and protection, tourism professionals’ opinions of the quality of visitor care offered to tourists on the Tuscan coast in order to draw up a list of required criteria;
- training of personnel responsible for overseeing the maintenance of quality criteria, including environmental aspects, and ensuring that they are valid: setting up of a committee and a commission, appointment of inspectors, involvement of public institutions, tourism businesses and consultants. These agencies will be responsible for all the stages of validation: inspection and services offices, evaluation and publication of information on evaluations, decisions and results for the general public.

Cecina’s beach is suffering from erosion caused by adverse sea currents. An agreement has just been signed between the local and regional administrations and authorities to finance the construction of dykes.
Public services

The municipality of San Vincenzo has taken a number of measures to ensure that public places are clean, including:

• sorting of waste before collection;
• recruitment of additional staff during the peak summer periods to collect domestic waste;
• daily cleaning of private beaches, and provision of life-guards for public beaches;
• regular analysis of water quality;
• water purification (the resort has a population of 35,000).

The municipality of Cecina is planning to clean beaches regularly during the summer.

In San Vincenzo, the main street is a pedestrian-only zone all year, and the centre is a pedestrian-only zone every evening during the summer. During the high season, there is a free shuttle between the outskirts and the centre after 8 p.m., which was introduced by Pro Loco (the information office).

Services for industry professionals

In the area of accommodation, the municipality of San Vincenzo has launched a project, called ‘Second home’, concerning apartment and holiday villa rentals. The project aims gradually to improve the quality of the stock of holiday homes for rental, which are not covered by national or regional regulations. The project has two phases:

• analyse what is on offer: type and quality of accommodation offered to tourists;
• devise a label and criteria for its award, and produce promotional material to encourage people to apply.

The label will draw tourists’ attention to holiday homes which comply with standards of hospitality and quality (location, facilities, security, decorative state, quality/price ratio, etc.). The municipal council will decide whether or not to award the label, after consulting a commission set up for this purpose and led by Pro Loco. The commission is made up of representatives of agencies working in the industry, tourists and local authorities. Owners who subscribe to the label will benefit from tax advantages (local authority taxes) and favourable bank rates for financing property purchases or for refurbishing apartments intended for the rental market.

Tourist services

The Province of Livorno APT publishes a whole series of promotional leaflets and catalogues in several languages.

The Tirreno Promotour consortium runs a project promoting tourism in the region, financed by the European Union.

San Vincenzo has produced and published a new guide to the town which, for the first time, is the result of cooperation between private operators and local authorities. The local authority has also developed an Internet site.

Several specialist promotion campaigns are trying to develop sports tourism and, in particular, green tourism, walking, etc., gastronomic tourism (a ‘wine trail’) and cultural tourism (archaeological centres and museums).

The information office has full information about the Tuscan coast, itineraries, excursions, and hotel availability.

The creation in 1995 of the Archaeological and Mineralogical Park at San Silvestro was another major initiative. In fact, it is part of a larger structure, Parchi Val di Cornia SpA, a mixed enterprise which runs a network of six parks (Populonia, San Silvestro, Rimigliano, la Sterpaia, Poggio Neri and Montioni), which has its headquarters at Piombino. The aim is to highlight the region’s scientific resources and to diversify a region in crisis, particularly by extending tourism over a longer period. The San Silvestro park is open from March to October and is visited by many schools which see the park not just as somewhere to visit, but also as an opportunity for children to take part in various activities. The park also has plans to organise more seminars, workshops and training courses and to become an off-campus/university department. Visitor numbers have risen from 15,000 in the first year to 25,000 in the second year (1997).
Visitor satisfaction

The information office is run by a manager from the cooperative and another from APT; it stocks various forms for tourists to complete so that all the tourism partners can gain a better idea of tourists’ expectations:

- a complaints form, which is dealt with centrally by the Province of Livorno;
- a form for internal use by APT, chiefly to find out what kinds of documentation are being requested;
- a form on the quality plan, which measures customer satisfaction and is processed by the local authority.

Several studies of tourist demand have been conducted:

- a study by the Province of Livorno, which includes data relating to stays in hotel accommodation;
- a case study by the municipality of San Vincenzo of the pilot project for awarding a quality label to rental property, called the ‘second home’ project. This study includes an evaluation of tourists’ expectations;
- consultants are conducting various market studies for the municipalities of Cecina, Castagneto, Carducci and Bibbona.

In 1997, at the initiative of the Livorno APT, the Centre for Tourism Studies set up a tourism observatory in order systematically to gather data on tourist motivation and satisfaction for the province as a whole (the island of Elba and the Tuscan coast). The observatory uses a sample of 800 tourists from all over the province. Questionnaires are distributed every year and then collected by the IAT network.

APT also asks tourists to fill out a questionnaire evaluating their degree of satisfaction with the destination. This makes it possible to find out, at least partially, what areas customers are dissatisfied with. However, there is very little follow-up of complaints made to the IAT, which sends them on to APT.

Satisfaction of local people

The municipality of San Vincenzo has recently commissioned a psychological survey among local people to evaluate the impact of tourism on local residents. There do not appear to be any marked or specific problems.

Positive impact on the environment

The impact of tourism on the environment of the Tuscan coast and on neighbouring municipalities was evaluated in a study carried out by IRPET (Tuscan regional economic planning institute), published in 1998.
A survey conducted by APT in 1997 on tourists’ perception of quality gave some indications of the results and objectives to be achieved.

The results given below are divided into two parts, the north (Rosignano, Cecina, Bibbona, Castagneto and Carducci) and the south (San Vincenzo, Campiglia Marittima). For each of the quality indicators, the percentage indicates customers’ level of satisfaction.

One of the main areas of action by the municipality of Cecina is an evaluation of the quality of tourist accommodation facilities.

Two projects are being run privately on behalf of the local authority:

- a study of the environmental aspects of tourist accommodation, campsites, agrotourism, holiday apartments, etc., so that an environmental quality label can be devised and extended to all the municipalities;
- a systematic study of quality in the destination and of training for public and private operators.

### RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index of Evaluation</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>South</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural events</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public gardens</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public transport</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Car parks</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signposting of roads and tourist attractions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
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<td>Entertainment</td>
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<td>Friendly attitude</td>
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<td>Banking services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleanliness of water</td>
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<tr>
<td>Museums</td>
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<td>Cleanliness of the town</td>
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<td>Theatres and cinemas</td>
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<td>Special facilities for children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
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<td>Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perception of the town</td>
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<td>61.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Global result</strong></td>
<td><strong>85.6%</strong></td>
<td><strong>47.7%</strong></td>
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The small seaside resort and spa of Damp was built in 1974; it is situated in the north-east of Schleswig-Holstein on the coast of the Baltic sea, 60 km from the border with Denmark. The resort is unique in Germany, firstly because the health and tourism sides of the resort are run by a private company, Ostseebad Damp GmbH & Co. KH, and secondly because the resort has the same rights as a municipality. The municipality of Damp spa is also part of the municipality of Damp, which covers a few farms and the old part of the village.

The port of Damp can accommodate 440 boats; 2,000 events take place there every year, including conferences. The resort enjoys a healthy and relaxing atmosphere, offering products related to leisure, well-being and health; it is an ideal place for the elderly and for families. The high season coincides with the school holidays, when its population consists mainly of families. However, people come to take the cure throughout the year.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?

The quality initiative was triggered by a desire to manage and conserve natural resources in order to offer a health and high-quality product consistent with a spa resort.

Damp 2000 seaside resort and spa has suffered from mass tourism and a non-rational use of natural resources ever since it was founded during the 1970s, with the result that the German public has a negative image of the resort. In addition to a concerted promotion and sales effort, the quality plan launched by Ostseebad Damp in 1992 implements a set of convergent measures to encourage environmental management and customer satisfaction.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?

Ostseebad Damp GmbH & Co. GK is a private company which runs the spa, health centres, hotels and holiday homes, shops and places to eat.

Kurbetriebe Damp GmbH is the sister local authority to the village of Damp. Management of the municipality has been assigned to the Ostseebad Damp company until 2023. The municipality in particular manages the leisure centres (swimming pools, Aqua Tropicana waterpark), conference centre, port, spa gardens, sports centre, roads, car parks and sewage.

Making the industry more dynamic

Ostseebad Damp was awarded the 1995 national ‘Environmentally Friendly Enterprise’ prize by the German association of hoteliers and restaurateurs and in 1997 it was awarded the Federal Prize for Tourism and the Environment, awarded by the Ministry for Economic Affairs and the Environment, for its traffic reduction scheme in the resort.
Analysis of current situation
The 1998 marketing plan demonstrates the professional approach adopted:
• analysis of the locality;
• market analysis: how often people travel, how they usually travel, how long they stay, how they book accommodation etc., what motivates them, target groups, etc;
• analysis of current and potential competition;
• product analysis;
• statistical data: overnight stays 1989/1998, reservations 1982/1997, turnover for each category in these groups;
• marketing targets: target markets, promotional targets;
• advertising budget for measures to be promoted;
• personnel available to put the marketing plan into practice.

Benchmarking
Ostseebad Damp exchanges its experience and data with other resorts of a similar size. Tour operators who sell Damp are also asked to produce an analysis of best-selling similar destinations.

Objectives and overall strategy
Ostseebad Damp launched an integrated quality management programme in 1992 in order to support and develop the resort. Since 1996, the accent has been on better use of existing potential, rather than on increased visitor numbers. Measures being taken to improve customer satisfaction include improving everyday services, preserving a high-quality environment, training staff and constantly listening to customers. Meticulous attention is therefore paid to monitoring the quality of services, products and facilities.
Environmental policy – Agenda 21

The environment is a central issue for Damp. An environment commission implements measures that are supported by local businesses. The commission consists of the director of technical services from the local authority, representatives from the health, waste collection, and countryside departments, and the director of public relations.

A special brochure for residents and tourists, Damper Umweltfibel, provides full information on environmental protection issues and on the resort’s objectives and measures.

With regard to traffic, measures which are helping to maintain the quality of the environment include the use of electric cars by the local authority technical departments, car parks located outside the village, and pedestrian and cycle priority.

Damp is keen to preserve regional flora by planting only local species.

Rational use of water: levels of waste water recycling have been among the best in Germany since 1993.

The rational use of energy in tourist accommodation is monitored; actual users pay for any excess consumption.

Visitors are made aware of the need to minimise the amount of domestic waste they produce during their stay. There are regular collections of sorted waste, and local authority technical departments sort the waste again. Monthly statistics are produced on the various categories of sorted waste.

Recycled paper is used by the resort’s businesses.

Sea water quality is measured regularly, and the results are published.

To attempt further to preserve the local environment, Damp has no plans for new building work.

Human resource policy

A training programme has made it possible to train 300 people in communication, management, motivation, customer-oriented attitude, visitor care, telephone etiquette and the laws regulating the industry.
Public services

The infrastructure, i.e. the port, beach, and road system, is subject to regular detailed quality control. This provides information on cleanliness, salubrity, quality of sanitary facilities, lighting, employees’ working clothes, etc. Grades are allocated so that weak areas can be addressed.

Services for industry professionals

Efforts are made to set up partnerships with tourism and spa organisations. The objectives of these partnerships are not purely commercial; they are also intended to foster exchanges of advice and information, particularly in the area of health care legislation. Some partners are also active in political representation and lobbying. These partnerships underline Damp’s commitment to environmental protection, health care and quality.

There is regular communication with partners both inside and outside the resort and with the local community, so that they can be involved in the strategy.

Damp is in direct contact with the main tour operators and travel agents selling the destination in Germany. Damp also belongs to a large number of organisations and associations in the tourism, economy, environment, health and spa sectors.

Tourist services

Damp has been given a clear identity, a logo and a slogan, ‘Frischer Wind an der Ostsee’. Promotion is strongly geared towards the resort’s sales strategy, and promotional schemes have been mounted through the press, public relations, mailings, catalogues, brochures and leaflets, an Internet site and through participation in trade fairs and exhibitions, etc.

Welcome signs have been put up, and the main attractions are clearly signposted. There are also information booths all around the area.

The director of the health board runs discussion forums for the resort’s regular hosts, to provide them with a whole range of useful information.

From the point of view of mobility, Damp is a paradise for pedestrians and cyclists. There are free, supervised, park-and-ride car parks linked to the resort by a shuttle service (‘whispering’ buses). Three short-term car parks have been built opposite tourist accommodation buildings so that visitors can unload their luggage. Major efforts have been made to improve mobility, especially for disabled people.

Damp organises some 2,000 annual events.

Improving service quality has been addressed in various ways:

- quality standards have been drawn up for target groups, and customer expectations and satisfaction are measured against these criteria;
- accommodation classification consistent with the German hotel classification;
- various labels have been awarded: a Blue Flag for the marina, recognition for Damp (Sea Health Resort and Spa certificate), environmental quality certificate, health cure centre, etc.;
- hospitals are being audited against ISO 14000.

DAMP’S ‘WHISPERING BUS’

2 Fresh wind of the Baltic.
Knowledge of markets and visitor satisfaction

One of the key points of Ostseebad Damp’s strategy is continuous comparison of levels of visitor satisfaction with the plan’s objectives.

A questionnaire is used to monitor visitor satisfaction levels. Regular monitoring is a necessary part of a quality approach. All sectors, all stages of work, all premises and all attractions are monitored and evaluated regularly (food, care, beaches, vehicle traffic, water, nature, shops, etc.) by means of questionnaires sent out to customers.

These frequent surveys provide Ostseebad Damp with key information on tourists’ habits, desires and tastes in areas such as visitor care, accommodation, catering, attractions, health care, etc.

Ostseebad Damp also tries to foresee tourist demand for 10 or 15 years through behavioural studies and forward analyses of changes in tourist markets.

All complaints are examined and followed-up immediately, where possible.

Ostseebad Damp supports medical studies on the various forms of treatment in the spa.

Positive impact on the environment

The environmental impact of all the measures taken is monitored and measured through monthly statistics (table).

Waste is measured and monitored after sorting.

The dynamics of evaluation and adjustment

Infrastructure is managed by Ostseebad Damp; since it decides on investment it has the flexibility to react rapidly to the vagaries of the market, to changes in fashion and to political decisions. For instance, after the social security authorities cut hospital capacity by 300 beds, these were recycled and refurbished so that they could be sold within the tourism industry.

Ostseebad Damp’s particular objective is constantly to improve the quality of the complete chain of tourist services:

- before departure: preliminary information and reservations for the journey;
- during the stay: visitor orientation, quality of services delivered, treatment of any complaints and departure;
- after departure: follow-up of customers, post-visit information, promotions, etc.;

A policy of continuing service improvement is pursued at each of these three stages by measuring and taking account of tourist satisfaction levels.

There is continuous improvement of the resort’s quality and constant development of new facilities and new services. The resort tries to take immediate action to respond to complaints and comments made by customers, and to incorporate them, where appropriate, into longer-term action plans.
Overview

The plan
- Triggered by a desire to meet the requirements of modern tourists
- Innovative plan in the context of Spanish initiatives, as it treats the tourist industry as a global entity
- Strong leadership from the private sector (professional federation)
- Good integration between the public and private sectors

Strategy and policies
- Preliminary analysis of the product and the demand
- Taking all aspects of service quality into account
- Integrated quality plan for the sector as a whole, which is both participatory and gradual
- Quality system takes account of SMEs' needs
- Public sector co-financing graduated over five years
- Training programmes and technical assistance with standards
- Measures to give more responsibility to personnel

Operations
- Refurbishment of urban areas and recovery of natural landscape
- Calitur labelling via a distinctive logo

Indicators
- Analysis of surveys conducted in similar markets
- Complaints system set up by enterprises
- Monitoring of the balance between the economy and the environment

Results
- System to evaluate the ability of enterprises to meet the plan's standards
- The industry has been revitalised and made aware of the need for a quality approach

T here is a long tradition of tourism in the Canaries. At the beginning of the 20th century, tourism was the third largest industry in economic terms, after coal mining and fruit production. In those days, tourists came because of the mildness of the climate and its health benefits, and for the beauty of the natural surroundings. Many hotels built before the First World War still bear witness to the Canaries' past.

Between the two world wars and after the Second World War, tourism decreased dramatically, and the type of visitor changed. During the 1960s, a combination of mass tourism, rampant speculation and a policy of urban expansion had damaging consequences on the environment of both islands: poor decisions about urban development, a massive increase in the density of urban centres, under-development of industries other than tourism, and so on.

Spain’s entry into the European Community in 1986, bringing with it an improvement of the Canaries’ tourist products and services, marked another stage in the growth of tourism.
The quality approach was triggered by a desire to meet the requirements of the modern market. From 1989 onwards, there was a recession in tourism caused by a number of factors, including heavy pressures on tour operators (foreign tour operators control the market), the Gulf crisis and its effects on the tourism industry, modernisation of the market, obsolescence of the hotel infrastructure, and tourists’ requirements in terms of activities and quality of service.

Faced with the globalisation of tourist markets and the introduction of quality plans in competing coastal destinations, the Las Palmas federation of hotel and tourism enterprises (FEHT) became aware that a quality plan was needed. FEHT therefore applied for a subsidy from the General Tourism Council. In November 1996, the Secretary of State for Commerce, Tourism and SMEs signed the resolution needed for the launch of the plan. Against this backdrop of recession, the Calituri plan is a project to set up a quality assurance system for services in tourism establishments in the islands of Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura.

The private-sector nature of this initiative can be explained by the history of tourism in the Canaries (very mature market, private sector know-how, close relationships with foreign tour operators), and by the political situation in the Canaries (complexity of the institutional structure with powers over tourism, little support from the public sector, very slow development of the regulatory framework and relative lack of planning).

Some figures (1997)
- 2,242,273 arrivals, 12.95% of tourists from Spain and 87.05% from abroad
- Package tours account for 90% of arrivals
- Holiday accommodation of 153,194 beds, 35% in hotels and 65% in apartments
- 49 million overnight stays
- Average stay: 11.5 days
- Turnover for the industry = EUR 3,580,250,000
- Tourism = 17.57% of GDP (1995)
- 35,000 persons employed in the industry = 20% of all jobs (1996)

Main attractions
- Optimum weather conditions making tourism feasible throughout the year: always mild, high sunshine levels, with 2,869 hours of sunshine a year
- Four different microclimates providing a rich and unique geographical, geological, botanical and zoological situation
- Good communications infrastructure in terms of ports, airports and roads
- Good level of general services (shops, accommodation facilities, conference centres, restaurants, banks, doctors, hospitals, etc.), cultural and recreational facilities (casinos, golf courses, discos, cinemas, theatres, fitness centres, etc.), high-quality natural environment (natural parks)

The plan is innovative for Spain because it treats the tourism industry as a global entity, and supplements the Excellence Plans for local tourism industry development, which concentrate more on refurbishing existing hotels and on urban renewal. In 1994, Gran Canaria (the municipalities of San Bartolome de Tirajana and Mogán) launched an Excellence Plan for tourism. In 1996, Las Palmas presented an integrated Excellence Plan for tourism under the Futures 1996–1999 plan to make the Spanish tourism industry more competitive.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?
- General Directorate for Tourism;
- Local authorities from both islands (local politicians and technical departments);
- Las Palmas federation of hotel and tourism enterprises.

The leader is clearly the Las Palmas federation of hotel and tourism enterprises.

A steering and monitoring committee and a body to promote the quality plan were formed.

The steering committee has representatives from the local authorities, the Las Palmas federation of hotel and tourism enterprises and participating enterprises.
This committee's responsibilities are:

- to create a system to identify service quality;
- to evaluate quality and provide certification;
- to disseminate information on the plan’s implementation to enterprises;
- to find new enterprises to participate in the scheme;
- to organise training programmes in participating enterprises;
- to draw up a promotion policy for the quality label;
- to manage resources.

The Calitur plan promotion agency is made up of local people from the worlds of politics, economics and culture. Its responsibilities are:

- to promote the plan in all social circles;
- to make people aware of the importance of this type of plan for the future of the islands as tourist destinations;
- to disseminate its results.

**The dynamics of design**

**Analysis of current situation**

A series of surveys were conducted as part of the analysis of what was on offer, before the plan was drawn up; this involved discussion forums with directors and managers of various enterprises, interviews with local travel agents and tour operators, and interviews with local politicians and opinion-leaders. Products and services offered were analysed by diagnosing the processes at work in the various branches and enterprises that make up the islands’ tourism system, changes in services supplied and opportunities for general improvements of tourist services.

Demand was analysed by measuring the level of tourist satisfaction with services delivered, and changes in demand.

The following were pinpointed from this first phase:

- quality factors for the industry as a whole;
- strengths and weaknesses of current services;
- discrepancies between what is on offer and customers’ expectations (quality gaps);
- corrective action;
- branches and types of services most in need of complete modernisation.

**Objectives and overall strategy**

The integrated quality plan aims to rehabilitate tourist services and products. It is one of the components of the Excellence Plans for local tourism which concentrate more on refurbishing existing hotels and on urban renewal. Its aim is to devise a quality system which can be applied to the whole of the tourism industry in order to improve tourists’ experiences and, by so doing, to make both islands’ tourism industry more competitive. Through a new management system, the various local tourism partners are invited to play their part in a process of ongoing adaptation to market requirements, and to take genuine account of a tourist’s whole experience from arrival to departure.

The plan is:

- **multi-branch:** all aspects of the quality of services (directly or indirectly related to tourism – private or public services) are taken into account;
- **participatory:** active participation by local politicians, representatives from municipal technical departments and managers of enterprises directly or indirectly linked with tourism;
- **gradual:** the aim is to introduce more dynamic management of tourist expectations through gradual learning about good practices, and to draw up minimum and desirable quality standards.

The quality system was developed for and by tourism enterprises (SMEs and others).

Its objectives are:

- to improve the quality of the environment;
- to find a better match between products and new trends in demand;
- to diversify and expand what is on offer.

Under the quality system, rules will be drawn up for the application of a system of quality standards, as well as procedures for drafting standards, an audit and quality control system and a system for managing the plan.

Design covers the following aspects:

- drafting of intermediate standards: drafting of the main multi-branch standards;
- self-assessment by each enterprise against defined quality standards (minimum quality level and minimum recommended quality level);
- schemes to promote and publicise intermediate standards and a symbol identifying enterprises complying with quality standards;
- creation of a quality structure within the destination to establish quality procedures and standards for sub-branches in the destination.
the form of the organisation managing the quality plan: an independently operating mixed organisation (public and private institutions working in the industry).

**Investment**

The plan provides for graduated co-financing by the public and private sector (participating enterprises): public sector financing will be 100% in the first year. This public financing will gradually decrease to 20% in the fifth year, by which stage the private sector will be providing 80% of funds for the plan.

**Human resource policy**

The 137 volunteer enterprises were invited to attend a customised programme of training in quality factors or standards. At the end of this training, they were given technical assistance in using the standard. Two hundred and fifty directors and managers received this quality training.

**The dynamics of implementation**

**Public services**

The Excellence Plans have made it possible to renovate urban areas of vernacular architecture and urban areas that have deteriorated; they have included incentive programmes for flower displays in towns and the rehabilitation of natural areas of major ecological importance. Drip irrigation systems have been installed. In addition, beach facilities have been redeveloped, and beaches and seafront promenades have been refurbished or redeveloped, as have urban parks. A local floral theme park has been set up.

The Calitur plan makes provision for evaluation of the conservation and refurbishment of establishments and their facilities, including aspects of decoration and appearance, and the cleanliness of facilities.

**Services for industry professionals**

One of the tasks of the agency managing the plan is to improve communication between partners and participating enterprises.

The promotional agency disseminates the results of the Calitur plan.

A distinctive Calitur logo has been created. Accredited enterprises can use this logo in their business and promotional documentation. The label is also to be promoted in tour operators’ catalogues.

**Tourist services**

In the area of mobility, Excellence Plans have made it possible to create pedestrianised areas, cycle routes, signposting for tourists and marking out of beaches.

Local transport enterprises (public transport and taxis) are participating in the Calitur plan.

Tourist information services have also been set up under Excellence Plans.
With regard to security, Excellence Plans have improved beach security through the construction of watchtowers.

The Calitur plan uses the following criteria to evaluate participating enterprises:

• provision of information in foreign languages, as appropriate for the customer;
• improvement of reservation systems;
• provision of better signposting both outside and inside facilities and shops.

Concerning quality of services:

• information about services and tourist resources on offer, including clear information about prices and a pricing policy which treats people equally;
• use of foreign languages, as appropriate for the customer;
• appearance of employees: good grooming and a uniform enabling tourists quickly to identify them;
• payment facilities (credit cards, foreign currencies);
• professional attitude of staff;
• how staff behave towards tourists;
• value added to a service: parking, at-home service, product presentation, customised services;
• reduced waiting times: speed and efficiency are achieved by training staff, and by appropriate procedures and equipment;
• better quality/price ratio: monitoring of prices and costs, financial audits and a variety of products and services in keeping with the demand;
• for shops, improvement in the quality of services (opening hours, price, personnel, infrastructure, etc.) and a wider range of local products;
• security of establishments, services and products.

The dynamics of monitoring

Knowledge of markets and visitor satisfaction

During the phase when demand was being analysed prior to the drafting of the plan, focus groups and surveys among tourists were arranged, as well as interviews with local, (mainland) Spanish and German travel agents and tour operators. Surveys conducted among tourists in ‘sun and beach’ destinations similar to Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura (Benidorm, Costa Dorada, Costa del Sol, Mallorca, Lloret del Mar, Palma-Magaluf and Tenerife) were also analysed.

The Calitur plan states that demand should be analysed continuously through customer surveys of each multi-branch factor. These factors, chosen for their relevance in measuring tourists’ perception of the quality of a product or service, include:

• technical ability of personnel;
• languages spoken and understood;
• attitude of employees towards tourists;
• physical presentation of employees;
• security of establishments, services or products;
• the environment;
• conservation and maintenance of establishments and facilities;
• cleanliness of facilities;
• information regarding services available on the islands;
• quality/price ratio;
• variety of products and services;
• additional services;
• reduction of waiting times to a minimum;
• opening hours;
• signposting.

Enterprises undertake to set up a complaints management system. The way in which complaints are expressed and dealt with is left to the management of each establishment.

Positive impact on the environment
Under the Calitur plan, the environmental friendliness of economic developments is evaluated to find out whether products and services can be better adapted to the environment.

The dynamics of evaluation and adjustment

Evaluation
Design of a system to evaluate how closely enterprises comply with the plan’s standards: devising action to control and improve the quality of what is on offer.

Results
One hundred and thirty-seven private tourist enterprises in Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura, mostly SMEs (hotels, restaurants, tourist sites, attractions, travel agents, tour operators, taxi companies, etc.) have already responded positively to the quality plan.

The tourist industry and the community on both islands have been made aware of the initiative.

A management body has been set up to ensure that the quality strategy is a long-term initiative.

The integrated quality plan has made it possible to revitalise and raise awareness in a sector which is traditionally managed by enterprises from outside the area (foreign tour operators). A promotional agency helps to ensure that the initiative is well-rooted in the local fabric.

The plan’s main objective is an ongoing effort to satisfy customers. The plan has led to a very clear definition of tourists’ expectations for each component of the tourist experience: transport, hotels, restaurants and cafés, shopping, sports and recreational activities, urban life, security, public services, etc. and has identified what is on offer at present for each of these. It is a valuable instrument for tourism management.
Overview

The plan
- Triggered by the crisis in the Balkans, and the need to redeploy the industry and extend the tourist season
- Cooperation between a number of partners from the public and private sectors

Strategy and policies
- Development of all-year-round tourism through the promotion of combined tourist products
- Annual marketing programme since 1991
- Increased protection for the environment
- Training schemes under several European programmes

Operations
- Improving tourist infrastructure and services
- Added value for package holidays
- Traffic management
- Communication with local residents
- Special plan for year-round tourism
- Common promotion for the whole region
- Plans for a computer link to network hotels with tourist information centres
- Research into and promotion of alternative forms of tourism
- Promotion of local food products
- Pilot epidemiological prevention programme
- Upgrading of public transport by sea
- Footpath signposting programme

Indicators
- Conferences and annual meetings with local residents
- Public statistics and private surveys

Results
- Integrated quality approach

Halkidiki consists of three peninsulas: Kassandra, Sithonia and Athos. Halkidiki is 90 minutes by car from Thessaloniki, the second largest town in the country, and has become a favourite location for second homes. In addition, many people from the Balkans and western Europe come with their families for the sea, sun and beach. Halkidiki has more than 500 km of coast and an impressive forest covering 40% of the 300,000 hectares of the prefecture. Three regions in Halkidiki are covered by the Natura 2000 programme: the Athos peninsula and the Itamos and Stratoniko areas.

The Athos peninsula, from beyond Megali Vigla, forms the territory of Mount Athos which remains, in accordance with its ancient privileged status, a decentralised part of the Greek State with full sovereignty over its territory. The peninsula, which can be reached by boat, is a major attraction for visitors. By tradition, women have not been allowed to visit Mount Athos for over a thousand years.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?

The quality approach was triggered by the need to redeploy the industry because of the crisis in the Balkans.

The war in the former Yugoslavia and the closing of roads to traffic have damaged the tourist industry in Halkidiki; the region suffered a sharp drop in tourist arrivals from the Balkans and Europe. Halkidiki then turned its attention to charter tourism, domestic tourism and, more recently, to alternative and sustainable forms of tourism.

For a long time, Halkidiki’s image has been one of a summer tourist destination, because of its geographical position in the north of the country. The tourist season was short and infrastructure was unused for several months a year. This situation led both the local authorities and the private sector to look for ways of extending the tourist season.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?

The prefecture governs issues concerning infrastructure and issues regulations.

The prefecture’s local authorities implement measures at local level through their tourism promotion committee.

The Halkidiki hotel association is responsible for promotion and marketing.

The Macedonia tourism development institute is a non-profit-making organisation set up recently by the hotel association. It has received official recognition as a training body and is in particular responsible for vocational training for tourism industry personnel in Halkidiki and Macedonia in general.

The Halkidiki Chamber of Commerce is cooperating with the quality initiative.

The driving forces behind the quality approach are the Halkidiki hotel association and the prefecture’s local authorities, through their tourism departments and tourism promotion committee.
Objectives and overall strategy

Halkidiki has always presented itself as an unrivalled coastal resort. Very recently it decided to implement a programme to achieve all-year-round tourism, through the promotion of combined tourist products.

The quality approach has concentrated on the following aspects:

• extending the tourist season;
• improving accessibility;
• protecting the environment;
• promoting existing alternative resources and attractions;
• developing cultural and natural resources;
• improving visitor security.

A marketing programme for the region has been implemented every year since 1991. Recently the programme has been co-financed by the Greek Tourist Board.

Environmental policy – Agenda 21

The programme pays increased attention to environmental protection, and a number of measures have been taken in the following areas:

• quality of beaches and bathing water;
• treatment of waste water, and water quality;
• quality of collection and processing of domestic waste;
• traffic, air pollution, noise pollution and climate;
• land use and protection of the countryside;
• rational energy use;
• promotion of tourism spread more evenly throughout the year;
• promotion of alternative tourism resources;
• specific information for visitors.

Halkidiki is participating in the European Blue Flag programme, and was awarded 42 Blue Flags in 1998.

Beaches are cleaned thoroughly at least once a year.

In association with local authorities and enterprises in the tourism industry, the prefecture has set up a private company to run and maintain water treatment plants on a paid service basis. The company has also set up a water quality control laboratory so that a water quality label can shortly be awarded.

The prefecture has rationalised discharge management throughout its territory by reducing the number of tips from 73 to 3. The first of these three tips came into operation in 1998; it is located on the peninsula of Kassandra and treats waste from 14 municipalities. The other two, for central and west Halkidiki and for east Halkidiki, will be operational from 2000.

A study has been conducted and its results have been submitted to the Ministry of the Environment and Public Works for approval by government order; this study, one of the first of its kind in Greece, defines coastal zones between 5 and 10 km wide in which tourism development has to comply with rules that prevent any overcrowding as a result of tourist flows and any over-development of infrastructure.

In 1996–97, Halkidiki’s hotels launched an experimental programme based on the European EMAS regulations on environmental management. These hotels are regularly monitored.

Human resource policy

Many training projects were launched between 1991 and 1994, at the initiative of the Halkidiki hotel association. Since 1995, training schemes have been run under the European Youthstart (involvement of local young people in less common tourism activities such as acting as cultural guides; a pilot project to interest tourists in the region’s cultural and traditional features), ADAPT (further training for Eurotour managers) and Horizon (study of services for disabled people) programmes.
In concrete terms, the strategic development objectives are to:

- improve existing tourist infrastructure and services:
  - develop marinas,
  - create ‘nature trails’ for tourists,
  - treat waste water,
  - restore protected buildings,
  - improve roads,
  - implement a marketing programme;
- highlight Halkidiki’s comparative advantages by adding value to the package tours on offer.

Public services
During the summer season, a regulation prohibits lorries and agricultural vehicles from using main roads between Friday lunchtime and Monday morning. The police carry out random blood alcohol tests as a deterrent against drinking and driving. Lastly, on Fridays and Saturdays, traffic itinerary cones are put out on the main roads to increase the number of roads available for traffic to the most visited areas.

Services for industry professionals
With regard to internal communication, the hotel association has since 1996 distributed a newspaper to local residents containing information about tourist activities in the destination, the problems that have been encountered and the solutions found. Meetings have been organised to inform local residents about future developments in tourism and to give them a chance to express their opinions, in order to obtain a consensus, where possible, on what measures should be taken.

A special plan for all-year-round tourism in Halkidiki was launched in 1997–98. According to this plan, between 10 and 15 hotels and other tourist enterprises will stay open all year. Products will be developed for conference tourism, athletics meetings and even ‘nature’ tourism. This programme, costing EUR 350 000, will be promoted in 1998–99 and will come into force from 2000.

A marketing strategy has made it possible to develop a common tourism image for Halkidiki. The image used over the last five years in the German market is based on the theme of ‘Greece’s secret paradise’, and ‘Poseidon’s kingdom’.

Components of the destination’s products and image were chosen after consultation and are jointly promoted in national and international markets. As a result of this, Halkidiki is signing agreements with public relations companies working in important markets such as Germany, the United Kingdom and Russia.

Halkidiki Chamber of Commerce has launched a campaign among its members to improve the quality of products and services, and has published various leaflets.

A computer link programme launched in 1993, and co-financed by the European Union, has made it possible for hotels which are members of the hotel association to be networked to both tourist information centres, so that they can provide tourists with information about reservations, events and attractions in the region.

At the initiative of the Halkidiki hotel association, hotels in the region have been encouraged to enrol in a quality improvement and certification scheme.
The quality of rented room accommodation has improved since the Greek tourism organisation (HNTO) started to award a licence in 1995.

Tourist services
Halkidiki is represented at tourism trade fairs and exhibitions in Greece and abroad.

In parallel with the general promotion of the region, there is a special promotion to present alternative forms of tourism (mountain and walking tourism) in the German, Austrian, British and Russian markets. This promotional plan is based on brochures, posters and walking guides. The two main themes are nature and religious monuments.

Funds from the Leader II programme have been used to implement a development programme for agrotourism in the mountains.

A special programme has been developed to promote low-cost meals based on local products. A specially-designed poster gives the prices charged by members of the programme.

There has also been a study of all the region’s cultural and traditional activities and festivals leading to the publication of a specific tourist guide.

Two tourism offices managed jointly with the Halkidiki hotel association are located at Thessaloniki airport and at Kallikratia, on the main road to Halkidiki.

Many measures have been taken to provide tourist information, including a leaflet about security and protection of the environment prepared by the Chamber of Commerce and other organisations in the tourist industry. Tourists are given information on other issues such as participation in the Aristotelis local development programme, cleanliness of beaches (avoiding the use of plastic materials), recommendations on road safety and protection of forests and wooded areas.

During the high season, the local police force is increased.

Since 1998, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Halkidiki has been part of a pilot epidemiological prevention programme based on the HACCP system, with a mobile unit which monitors any health problems among visitors that may present a potential viral epidemic risk.

Following a special agreement with insurance companies, helicopter transport can be used to evacuate visitors rapidly to hospitals in Thessaloniki or to Macedonia airport for repatriation. This method of transport was chosen to avoid problems of traffic congestion.

Thessaloniki airport has recently been refurbished, and is the main point of arrival. The prefecture provides sea transport to and from the airport, which saves visitors a drive of more than an hour after their flight, frees road access routes and is an additional attraction.

Measures have been taken to improve tourist access to Mount Athos without disturbing religious rites.

A programme to signpost 20 footpaths (between 1 and 10 km long) covering 35 km and including 36 stopping points has been submitted to the Greek tourism organisation (HNTO) for aid under schemes to develop new tourist products centred on nature.
Surveys by travel agents and tour operators show that only 2% of visitors are dissatisfied with Halkidiki. The majority of complaints, received from fewer than 15% of the tourists interviewed, relate to:

- rooms (13.5%);
- entertainment available (12%);
- maintenance of infrastructure (8%);
- noise (6.5%); food (6%);
- quality of beaches (5.5%);
- prices (5%).

More than 80% of visitors would return to Halkidiki.

The hotel quality and certification initiative launched by the Halkidiki hotel association has led to certification and a better hotel classification system. Some hotels have been awarded environmental prizes by tour operators.

Apart from regular surveys by the Greek national statistical office, Halkidiki uses information provided by the seaside resorts themselves.

Customer satisfaction is measured by studies carried out by tourist agencies and tour operators.

Halkidiki's quality initiative has currently reached its implementation stage.

Close cooperation between the hotel association and the local authority has meant that Halkidiki has been a success as a product. The gradual establishment of new municipal structures in Europe, based on mergers of small municipalities, should pave the way for more integrated development.

The strategy of extending the season and increasing visitor numbers is still being monitored by the authorities. Falling tourist flows prompted local public officials to focus on national tourism and to try to attract people living in other regions, particularly Thessaloniki, the second-largest local market for Halkidiki. It is still too early, however, for definite results.

Halkidiki has developed a number of original tools, products and services to improve quality.
Heligoland is situated in the North Sea; it is the only German island in the open sea. The island enjoys very clear air and an iodine-rich atmosphere. People come for their health, attracted by the low level of dust particles and air pollen, combined with the beneficial respiratory effects of sea breezes.

Heligoland’s history as a tourist resort goes back to the 19th century. In 1826, the island, which was then under British rule, became a fashionable seaside resort. As all the buildings from this period were destroyed during the Second World War, the resort was rebuilt during the 1950s in the typical uniform style of the period. Between the 1960s and 1980s, the island was a favourite duty-free shopping destination for day visitors. Today, Heligoland’s charm and old streets have made it into a destination for high-quality and health tourism.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?

The quality initiative was triggered by a need to redevelop the island’s image and to restructure what was on offer. During the tourism boom of the 1960s and 1970s, Heligoland became a very popular destination for day visitors. The main reasons for visiting the island were the short ferry crossing (a few hours), walks on the cliffs, and above all, a chance to buy duty-free goods. During the 1980s, competition between the island’s retailers was so fierce that Heligoland’s main claim to fame was its ‘cheap booze’ outlets.

A 1988 study of tourism development led to the launch in 1992 of a marketing plan to revitalise the tourism industry. A new director for tourism was appointed at the local authority in 1993, a plan was put forward to restructure products and services and infrastructure, a new logo was created to symbolise the town, and an image campaign was launched on the theme of ‘High-quality and health tourism’. The development plan was then discussed with experts and local residents at consultation meetings.

A 1995 television programme about tourism in Heligoland provided the main incentive for a complete overhaul of the tourism industry. The programme was so negative about the island that regional and local politicians, the local authority and residents got together and decided to launch a quality initiative.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?

The Land of Schleswig-Holstein and Pinneberg District decide on tourism development plans and manage investment.

Heligoland’s local authority is in charge of administration.

The local authority’s health department is responsible for marketing, promotion and organising events.

The tourist board is responsible for answering tourists’ questions, booking accommodation, distributing promotional documentation and selling products, etc.

The maritime authority is responsible for improving the quality of the environment.

The Heligoland branch of the German association of hoteliers and restaurateurs is responsible for improving the quality of services.

A private agency in Hamburg is responsible for public relations, the media, brochures and marketing.
The dynamics of design

Objectives and overall strategy
Heligoland has a number of objectives:

• to change its negative image;
• to restructure what is on offer, concentrating on the themes of nature and health;
• to refurbish infrastructure;
• to achieve a better balance between day visitor and longer-term tourist arrivals;
• to extend the season, which is much too short at present (May to October).

Environmental policy – Agenda 21
Heligoland has built most of its reputation on the quality of its environment, and is aware of the need to preserve that environment:

• since 1972, drinking water on the island has come from sea water desalination plants;
• Heligoland has a waste water purifying plant and electricity station;
• sea water cleanliness is monitored regularly;
• waste is sorted before being transported to the mainland for processing;
• between 1996 and 1998, air quality has been monitored regularly as part of the ‘spa resort’ label scheme;
• zones where building is permitted are limited. Above all, the island is a nature and bird sanctuary. The protection of nature is a major political issue. The ornithological research institute runs and organises guided tours of a sanctuary;
• information on environmental protection is available at the bird sanctuary and at the Heligoland Biology Institute.

Human resource policy
Staff in the tourism office receive regular training on:

• telephone techniques, particularly for visitor care;
• complaint processing;
• customer service;
• the new information and communication technologies.

The dynamics of implementation

Public services
The cliff walk has been strengthened to prevent rock falls. Heligoland has been decreed a ‘car-free island’. Only certain services such as the fire, ambulance and refuse services are allowed to use vehicles. Electric vehicles are used to transport goods, luggage or disabled people. The local traffic regulations give priority to pedestrians. Cycling is prohibited on the island because of the narrow roads and the safety of pedestrians.

The Land, district and municipality have made major efforts to refurbish infrastructure; the museum, cultural centre and cliff walk are being refurbished. There are plans for further renovation work such as the modernisation and extension of a clinic, the renovation of power stations and water desalination plants, etc. Approximately EUR 50 million were channelled into renovation works between 1985 and 1995.

Services for industry professionals
A specialist private company has been given responsibility for promotion, public relations and press relations. In order to improve its brand image, Heligoland is trying to maximise some of its advantages, for instance the natural environment, and to promote closer relations with the media and industry professionals. A discussion forum for the press is arranged three or four times a year in Hamburg by the public relations company.

The tourism office takes an active part in many professional trade fairs and exhibitions (ITB Berlin, Boot Düsseldorf, Hamburg trade fairs, etc.).

The local authority collects press articles about the island and displays them on public notice-boards. As well as providing information for residents and visitors, this helps to build a positive identity.

Meetings are arranged on a regular basis between the mayor and the local residents in order to make them aware of issues such as hospitality towards visitors, and the objectives being pursued by the local authority.
Tourist services

Since 1994, a new logo associated with the slogan ‘Heligoland, my island’ has been used on all communications and promotional materials.

The tourist board takes an active part in many professional trade fairs and exhibitions.

A quarterly magazine containing tourist, cultural and environmental information (Der Helgoländer) is published independently. The local authority publishes a quarterly environmental newsletter.

Free promotional and information brochures and leaflets are available in German and in English for visitors on board ferries between the island and the mainland. They are also available in the information booths located around the island.

A calendar of events is published every fortnight.

There is a system which allows visitors to make instant reservations from any travel agent in Germany. There are also plans to make it possible to book from the Hamburg Tourist Office.

The local authority does not levy any taxes on ferries, in order to encourage new companies to provide connections with the mainland and improve access.

Toilets are provided for tourists everywhere in the island, and have been adapted for use by people of reduced mobility. Beaches on the island of dunes have been provided with toilets, showers, beach huts and public telephones.

For security purposes, beaches are cleaned and supervised, and information boards have been installed to show whether or not bathing is permitted.

Since 1996, Heligoland has developed a local quality label for tourist accommodation. Volunteer hotels and rented holiday accommodation have been inspected and certified by the health authorities. The label awards 1 to 5 stars. Criteria taken into consideration are furnishings, facilities, geographical location and view of the sea.

The health department offers novel combined holidays such as a ‘wedding package’. These products make the most of local traditions. Marriages take place in one of the small fishing cottages near the picturesque port. The health department also offers holidays combining health tourism and themed guided tours.

The dynamics of monitoring

Visitor satisfaction

The administration monitors market trends and statistics at national and federal level. Visitor surveys were conducted in 1995 and 1997.

In addition, between 1994 and 1997, the director of tourism for Heligoland held meetings with visitors every fortnight to find out how they felt about Heligoland, and what wishes, comments and criticisms they had.

All complaints are monitored and dealt with directly.

The dynamics of evaluation and adjustment

Two years after the quality label for tourism accommodation was launched, 15 hotels (50 % of all hotels on the island) and 44 apartments (25 % of the total number available) had been accredited and were listed in the 1998 directory. This shows the efforts that industry professionals are making to improve quality and take a more transparent approach towards customers. The number of overnight stays is increasing.

The quality of services has improved, and the media image of Heligoland is now better.

Investment in facilities has now been completed and is beginning to bear fruit.

Finally, thanks to the increasing number of visitors, ferry companies have become aware that the market is growing, and have begun to offer a better service.

Satisfaction of local people

The action plan proposed in 1993 was presented to local people and the main themes were discussed at two public meetings.

The health of the administrative structures and efficiency

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### Overview

**The plan**
- Triggered by the need to diversify the economy after industrial restructuring
- Financial assistance under the Resider programme
- Very closely integrated partnership between a regional planning office and an executive foundation

**Strategy and policies**
- Preliminary strategy to make the industry more professional
- Six action plans
- Goal of competitiveness and cooperation
- Agenda 21 on the political agenda

**Operations**
- Actions prioritised through a plan
- Infrastructure works – historical sites and ecological resources
- Seminars to encourage and motivate professionals
- Annual sales day for operators
- Launch (and monitoring) of a specific quality label
- Plans for package tours (monitored)
- Promotion plan

**Indicators**
- Local satisfaction study
- Perception study (SWOT analysis)
- Complaints system

**Results**
- Judicious coordination of resources for the regional economic rehabilitation plan
- Immediate grasp of the importance of quality management
- A signposting plan as a result of measurement indicators

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The region of IJmond lies on the North Sea, 25 km from Amsterdam. The area used to be an industrial zone and has one of the densest concentrations of inhabitants per square kilometre in the Netherlands. Intensive economic activity is generated by the North Sea Canal, which links the port of Amsterdam to the North Sea; the canal and the docks near Ijmuiden and Velsen used to house heavy industry, and IJmond was known for its steel and fisheries.

Tourism is a new departure for the area. The region has a wide variety of landscapes including the sea and low-lying areas and inland forests, arable land (tulip fields) and historic villages, making it a potentially important tourist destination for the Netherlands. The region appeals to families and to older visitors looking for peace and quiet and high-quality service. The development of tourism is also helped by the port facilities and excellent communications by train, river and motorway.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?

The quality initiative was triggered by the need to diversify the local economy. During the 1980s, restructuring in the steel and fishing industries exacerbated the region’s economic problems. IJmuiden joined the municipalities of Velsen-IJmuiden, Heemskerk, Castricum, Uitgeest and Beverwijk to apply for Structural Funds to revitalise the region’s economy.

With the help of European funds under the 1994–99 Resider programme and co-financing from the municipalities listed above, a regional planning office, Projectbureau IJmond-IJzersterk, was set up to stimulate new business and upgrade the region’s identity. Projectbureau IJmond-IJzersterk was responsible for launching SONTIJ (Stichting Ondernemers Toerism IJmuiden), a foundation of public and private partners active in the tourism industry.

Some figures (1997)

- Population of 170,000
- The region attracts nearly 11 million visitors, 92% of them day visitors
- 300,000 overnight stays
- Average stay of 3 days
- Nearly 70% of tourists stay on campsites, 22% stay in holiday centres and 5% in hotels
- 47% of tourists are Dutch, and 21% German
- Tourism has generated about EUR 3.13 million, with an average daily expenditure of EUR 10.44 (total turnover = EUR 54 million)

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?

Projectbureau IJmond-IJzersterk is a federation of public and private partners: IJmond Region, the provincial government of North-Holland, the municipalities of Velsen-IJmuiden, Heemskerk, Castricum, Uitgeest and Beverwijk, Hoogovens Staal, the Chamber of Commerce and other bodies directly involved in economic initiatives in the region. A supervisory committee monitors the implementation of action plans and the strategies and policies of new programmes, consults the Ministries for Economic Affairs, Social Affairs and Employment and is supported by Directorate-General XVI and Directorate-General V of the European Commission. European subsidies from the ERDF and ESF funds have totalled some EUR 17 million. The State, province and municipalities contributed approximately EUR 17 million and the other partners contributed approximately EUR 12 million in 1998 and 1999. Projectbureau IJmond-IJzersterk is responsible for administering, initiating and monitoring action plans, and for supporting and implementing projects.

SONTIJ, a mixed foundation, was established in 1997, and is being financed by Projectbureau IJmond-IJzersterk for the next three years. Its aim is to improve cooperation between partners in the industry for the benefit of both private partners and the region. Its tasks include product development, marketing, promotion, and quality improvement, starting from existing centres of attraction, as well as lobbying. It has about 150 members from enterprises in the tourism and leisure industry.

Projectbureau IJmond-IJzersterk is financing SONTIJ until 2000. After 2001 the foundation should be independent and will be financed by its members. The estimated cost of the SONTIJ project is about EUR 92,600 a year, of which some EUR 18,150 was contributed in 1998 by the private sector. The SONTIJ project began at the end of 1998.

Leadership in terms of tourism development in the region is clearly by Projectbureau IJmond-IJzersterk (financing). SONTIJ is responsible for project planning and management.

Main attractions

- seaside resorts, small ports and IJmond marina
- rich natural environment on the seashore and inland
- historic villages inland
- many sporting activities
- leisure parks and cultural centres
- industrial tourism (Hoogovens) and information centre on steel, fisheries and waste water treatment
- tourist train between Amsterdam and IJmond
- events like ‘Hiswa te Water’ at IJmond, Sail Amsterdam and Beverwijkse market
- pedestrian shopping areas in five local centres

The dynamics of partnership

The plan

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**Analysis of current situation**

Studies carried out in 1995 showed that the region had a good tourism potential and highlighted the importance of cooperation between local authorities and private enterprises in the region. As a preliminary, however, all the partners in the industry needed to become more professional.

**Objectives and overall strategy**

Projectbureau IJmond-IJzersterk is carrying out its tasks through six action programmes: improving business facilities, providing a logistics infrastructure, encouraging a spirit of enterprise, education, employment, tourism and leisure.

The ‘tourism and leisure’ action programme is aimed more specifically at strengthening the region’s tourism industry, stimulating the revenue that it generates and creating jobs. This is the responsibility of the SONTIJ foundation.

**Environmental policy – Agenda 21**

Political discussions about the adoption of a local Agenda 21 are in progress.

**The dynamics of implementation**

SONTIJ has drawn up an action plan with the following main priorities:

- internal communication within the network;
- quality;
- lobbying;
- reservation system;
- electronic media;
- marketing and external communication.

**Public services**

The region has much geographical interest and a wealth of historical and ecological resources. Major development work has been carried out to improve these assets:

- dredging work in the Uitgesteer and Alkmaarder lakes. These lakes had become very silted up, especially at the entrance to the port. The project cost about EUR 2 million, and was co-financed by the European Union, the national, regional and local authorities, and by private sector enterprises profiting directly or indirectly from this work;
- redevelopment of the Beeckesteijn gardens (approximately EUR 213 300, of which EUR 53 092 is being contributed by the European Union);
- redevelopment of Castricum’s beach area (approximately EUR 2.5 million, EUR 159 000 of which is being financed by the European Union).

**STRATEGIES AND POLICIES**

The region’s seaside resorts have to become known as tourist destinations before they can be really competitive on the national market. IJmond will be able to develop tourism in the region only through an effective strategy which prioritises cooperation between partners and improvements in the quality of promotion and services offered.

The strategy involves finding out what consumers want and identifying trends and then adapting services and products to close the gap between these requirements and trends and actual products and services. This means working in close partnership with the private sector, which is the main supplier of tourist products and services. SONTIJ is therefore trying to arrange partnerships, set up public and private funding packages and coordinate action.

**OPERATIONS**

**Services for industry professionals**

SONTIJ organises twice-yearly seminars for businesses in the region. The aim of these seminars is to make the industry more professional and to provide an opportunity to find partners. The programme includes visits to companies, conferences, courses, information briefings, joint promotion, etc.

A sales day is to be held once a year for tour operators and travel agents. The event is designed to help them find out about the region, its resources and its tourist products.

Quality of service is guaranteed by a quality label, the IJmond tourist quality vignette; the scheme is run by SONTIJ. Businesses are given strict guidelines on conduct in order to achieve a standard level of quality for the products and services offered. The aim is to offer the client a consistent product. Agreements have been reached between various partners on standardising reservation, payment and complaints procedures. Operators who achieve this level of quality in their procedures may be recognised to ISO standards.

There are plans for a special hotline enabling companies, VVV tourist board offices and local authorities to keep SONTIJ informed of events organised in the region.
Tourist services
SONTIJ is to arrange and promote package tours, each component of which has been monitored to ensure a satisfactory level of quality. These products will be sold directly to tourists or through tour operators and travel agents.

These package tours arranged by SONTIJ will be marketed via the electronic booking system in Dutch tourist board offices (VVV). From 1999 onwards, tourists should be able to make reservations directly over the Internet.

A promotion plan has been adopted. The plan reviews the strengths and weaknesses of the region’s image. The region suffers from a negative image associated with heavy industry. It has been decided to launch combined products focusing on a central theme (water, for instance) that can be used as a basis for publicity campaigns to improve this image. A series of tools and vectors has been produced: brochures, a tourist map, advertising inserts in the press and events.

In 1997 and 1998, the region’s five municipalities and 20 businesses took a joint stand at the Utrecht holiday fair to present IJmond as a destination. They distributed brochures and showed a promotional film.

A full range of tourist products and services for the region will appear in Automobile Club travel guides (Automobile Club is a Dutch tour operator specialising in holidays by car), at railway stations, and in VVV tourist board offices. Belgian, German and British tour operators’ brochures will offer combined products.

Satisfaction of local residents
A study carried out in 1997 showed that residents are satisfied with the development of tourism in their region. Tourism is providing them with new leisure infrastructure, as well as improving employment prospects.

The dynamics of monitoring
Knowledge of markets and visitor satisfaction
A study was carried out in 1997 among visitors and residents to find out what the people questioned thought about the region, and why they had come there.

Interviewees also gave their opinions on the positive and negative points of the region, by choosing from a set of opposing adjectives such as: adventurous/boring, safe/dangerous, natural/artificial, dirty/clean, etc.

The study showed that reasons for the visit included the region’s natural landscape and beauty, peace and quiet, and cleanliness. Nearly two thirds of visitors felt that the region offered good opportunities for walking and hiking, and for watersports. Two thirds of them, again, would recommend the region to their friends or family. Finally, more than half of them felt that the ports and industrial infrastructure could be profitably developed for tourism. More than two thirds of the visitors commented favourably on signposting along footpaths and roads.

The dynamics of evaluation and adjustment
All the municipalities have complaints procedures for use at concerts and festivals.

The innovative aspect of the IJmond Region plan is its judicious coordination of resources – European, national, regional and local funds, and also of public and private partners in the industry – to support plans for the economic rehabilitation of a region where tourism was still very marginal and lacking in management.

SONTIJ has ensured that quality management has been an important aspect of the project from the outset. As the customer is the starting point for any approach of this kind, it is planned to carry out regular studies of what visitors want.
Knokke-Heist is a fashionable holiday resort on the Belgian coast, not far from the border with the Netherlands and about 20 km from Bruges. The town has a population of 32,000, with 15,000 second homes belonging mainly to Belgians who like to spend their weekends and holidays by the North Sea in a 'cosmopolitan' environment.

Knokke-Heist is easily accessible by train or motorway from the urban conurbations of Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, the Ruhr and the southern Netherlands. Knokke-Heist is also a popular destination for excursions organised in particular by German and Dutch tour operators.

The destination’s main attraction is its 12-km beach of fine sand. Visitors like the length of the beach and its safe bathing areas. The Zwin nature reserve, the dunes and the polders are also important assets. The resort has a dual image, which it would like to maintain. Knokke suggests luxury and elegance, while Heist is perhaps more redolent of the town's tradition of folklore.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?
The quality approach was triggered by a decline in the number of visitors to the resort. Although Knokke-Heist’s market share has remained stable for long stays (seven or more nights), its market share of medium and short stays (four to six nights and one to three nights, respectively) fell between 1991 and 1996. Turnover from tourism also fell by 35% over the same period, despite a traditionally good position in this market.

This fall in visitor numbers prompted Knokke-Heist to change its strategy. In 1994, the local authorities therefore set themselves the objective of improving product and service quality in order to improve revenue from tourism rather than increasing capacity. This strategy, which is in its initial phase, is focusing chiefly on improving infrastructure, with an investment of some EUR 62 million, and on diversifying the products offered in order to attract tourists throughout the year.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?
In Belgium, each province finances its own tourism federation. In the Flemish community, Toerism Vlaanderen has overall responsibility for tourism and its aims are to ‘improve the quality of the tourism product by means of new products and investment’ and ‘promotion and publicity in order to encourage tourism’.

At local level, Toerism Knokke-Heist is responsible for policy, strategy and marketing of the destination. It is a nonprofit-making association financed by the local authority. The association carries out various types of action and programmes. It manages and coordinates promotional activities, and is actively working to improve the town’s image via the Internet, magazines, newspapers, exhibitions, radio and television (national and international). It looks for new market segments, manages a database, coordinates research, plans festivals, welcomes tourists and provides them with information and runs a hotel reservation service.

The Tourism Commission has 40 members from the private tourism industry and has a consultative role, offering advice to policy-makers. The Commission’s working groups study specific problems related to tourism policy and put forward suggestions. The Commission works with the local authority within an effective grass-roots partnership.

The local authority is the clear leader of the quality approach, through Toerism Knokke-Heist. Since 1994, prompted by local authority departments which wanted to improve what they could offer tourists, Toerism Knokke-Heist has pro-

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Some figures (1996)</th>
<th>Main attractions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 1.26 million recorded overnight stays</td>
<td>• 12-km beach and dunes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Domestic tourism accounts for 89.7% of arrivals. The remaining 10.3% is divided mainly between the Netherlands (37%), Germany (31%), France (14%), Luxembourg (12%) and the UK (4%)</td>
<td>• windsurfing and sailing facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The resort’s main target market are families with children under 18</td>
<td>• 1200 luxury shops, 80 art galleries and antique shops open on Sundays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rented holiday homes and second homes make up 89.9% of available accommodation, residential caravans 5.4%, campsite pitches 0.8% and hotels 3.5%. Rented holiday homes and second homes account for most of the domestic tourism market</td>
<td>• casino, discos and many restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 53% of the working population and 97% of the self-employed are aware of the financial benefits of tourism</td>
<td>• beauty centre, sports facilities, two 18-hole golf courses and 2 riding schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 9 cycle routes and numerous cycle hire services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• renowned carnival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• many festivals: photography, cartoons and Kniestival</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• parks and gardens</td>
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<td>• an art trail</td>
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gressed from a passive attitude (providing information to visitors) to a more active and more professional role in the market. The promotional budget has also risen from EUR 173 525 in 1991 to EUR 594 944 in 1997. Cooperation with the private sector has also improved, through the Tourism Commission.

### The dynamics of design

#### Objectives and overall strategy

The seaside resort has set itself the objective of **improving the quality of tourism** rather than increasing tourist arrivals. The long-term goal for Knokke-Heist is to devise high-quality tourist products and services that will appeal to specific groups, in order to spread arrivals throughout the year.

Knokke-Heist has set itself two targets for the period 1998–2003:

- to recover its former market share by defending its domestic market position with regard to long stays, and by improving its international market position with regard to short stays;
- to enhance its appeal as a tourist destination by developing themed products every year.

Knokke-Heist has adopted the following policies to achieve these objectives:

- **market**
  - improve penetration of target groups such as young people, and families with children,
  - try harder to attract visitors staying longer than a week, especially in the case of rented holiday homes,
  - pay more attention to short stays all the year round,
  - attract more seminars and conferences,
  - increase the quality of what is on offer to tourists and improve customer satisfaction to ensure loyalty and recommendation by word of mouth;

- **product**
  - improve the tourist product so that it matches the requirements of the main target groups,
  - introduce themed months and step up the theme of ‘children’ during the summer;

- **prices**
  - use price differentiation more effectively;

- **promotion**
  - make promotion more effective,
  - step up internal communication.

At present, the quality strategy has reached the initial stages of implementation, i.e. improving infrastructure. Investment stands at about EUR 62 million.

### Environmental policy – Agenda 21

Knokke-Heist has future plans to improve the quality of the environment and of all aspects of life and is trying to find a better balance between the resort’s economic and ecological interests.

### Human resource policy

There is a training programme to help Toerism Knokke-Heist staff to be more effective and more welcoming to visitors.
Public services
Knokke-Heist is trying to reduce car traffic inside the town as much as possible. Two underground car parks have been built, as well as cycle routes.

Public buildings and facilities have been developed and refurbished. The promenade along the sea wall has been completely refurbished to improve the appearance of the resort, and shopping centres have been built to keep window shoppers happy. Plans for a second golf course and a ‘tropical swimming pool’ are being examined.

Services for industry professionals
In the area of internal communication, the Knokke-Heist Magazine reports on activities and developments within the resort. The magazine is aimed at owners of second homes in Knokke-Heist and residents; it is also available in hotels and holiday apartment rental offices.

Tourist services
Toerism Knokke-Heist is responsible for promotion; it has acquired a logo and a graphics image which are used in all information, as well as new information media such as video cassettes, promotional gadgets, postcards, brochures, etc.

Since 1995, the objective of promotion campaigns has chiefly been to attract short-stay visitors during out-of-season periods. Toerism Knokke-Heist has entered into a number of agreements with hoteliers to develop themed holidays such as ‘photography and film’, ‘sports and health’, ‘art’, ‘gastronomic holidays’ and ‘Christmas shopping’. To make these campaigns more effective, there is no promotion of the resort during the high season.

Knokke-Heist’s tourist office has been refurbished so that it can meet visitors’ requirements more effectively. Staff have been issued with a uniform.

Toerism Knokke-Heist runs the resort’s web site.

Several electronic information terminals have been installed at a number of locations in the resort to make it easier to obtain information.

Standards have been drawn up for dealing with information requests.

Toerism Knokke-Heist provides a reservation service for hotels, restaurants, guided tours, transfers and transit journeys.

Toerism Knokke-Heist is hoping to introduce a quality grading system for accommodation which will guarantee quality levels for the resort’s customers.

Hotel quality has improved because of the new fire protection regulations. However, the hotel sector still needs a real boost, and this will only be possible if occupancy levels reach 60%. Knokke-Heist is trying to achieve this objective by promoting conference tourism. A special brochure has also been designed to encourage seminar and conference organisation.

Knokke-Heist is making concerted efforts to prevent car traffic in the town. A special programme has been devised for tourists arriving by train, under which they can take a taxi at a reduced fare from the station to their hotel or other accommodation. A map of cycle routes has also been produced.
Knowledge of markets and visitor satisfaction

Toerism Knokke-Heist is producing a statistical database containing data on:

- accommodation capacity and facilities;
- stays of more than one night, by type of accommodation and by tourists’ place of origin;
- number of visitors and average spend.

Toerism Knokke-Heist has installed suggestion boxes, and visitors are invited to give their opinion of quality of performance in areas of interest to tourists. Toerism Knokke-Heist’s market research department is in the process of setting up a complaints unit.

Toerism Knokke-Heist is planning to set up a monitoring system to measure the quality of the tourist product. Visitors to festivals are asked about their stay and their visit to the festival.

Satisfaction of local residents and integration into the community

A study has shown that 76% of residents feel that they enjoy a holiday atmosphere all the year round. Half the population (51%) feel that they benefit from sports facilities and other developments. Forty-five per cent feel that they benefit from more public services than other less tourist-oriented Belgian towns. Almost all residents also felt that, in terms of quality of life, Knokke-Heist is a pleasant town (28%) or a very pleasant town (71%).

Ninety-six per cent of them would agree that tourists are welcome. Only 14% of residents feel that the disadvantages of tourism outweigh its advantages.

The dynamics of evaluation and adjustment

The measures taken to revitalise the tourist industry are already bearing fruit. A number of measures have been taken to consolidate tourist and leisure infrastructure, reinforce the public domain and protect the natural environment:

- cooperation between public partners and the private sector has improved;
- the resort now has a clear logo and its own graphic style;
- building work has improved the resort’s appearance;
- a wider range of facilities is available for seminars and conferences;
- events likely to attract visitors are organised all the year round.

In addition, a number of holiday packages have been launched or improved:

- Vakantieplus, a special package for families with children;
- Project T+, combining train and/or taxi and hotel costs;
- more frequent events for young people;
- suitable accommodation for cycle tourists;
- a wider range of opportunities for business visitors (seminars, etc.).

A survey among residents has identified the main areas in which the product could be improved. The resort’s residents feel that Toerism Knokke-Heist should concentrate on the following areas:

- stepping up police surveillance (92%);
- reducing traffic on the sea wall during weekends and holiday periods (61%);
- prohibiting car access by tourists (61%);
- reducing traffic in the town (46%);
- finding a solution to the parking problem (27%);
- maintaining and renovating monuments (19%);
- following up traffic regulation infringements more rigorously (14%);
- improving the resort’s infrastructure (13%).
Overview

The plan

- Triggered by a desire to boost economic activity while working towards sustainable development
- Many partners and steering by different combinations of partners
- Good level of cooperation between the public and private sectors keen to pool their activities
- Creation of a tourism award to reward public and private local initiatives
- Nairn won the Seaside Award prize in 1998 for its central beach, and the Thistle Award in 1996 for its seafront management plan

Strategy and policies

- Networking, partnerships and cooperation
- Seafront Tourism Management Programme
- Participation in the Scottish green tourism business plan, through a pilot project
- Participation in the Investors in People programme

Operations

- Improve accessibility
- Set up a security group
- Establish a new identity
- Produce a specific town guide for young people
- Dual reservation system for accommodation
- Quality assurance system for accommodation, attractions and restaurants

Indicators

- Survey of levels of staff satisfaction throughout the industry
- Processing of complaints, and inspection
- Study of survey methods used
- Detailed measurement of visitor volume and revenue generated
- Extensive programme of consultation with local people
- Environmental audit of hotels

Results

- Supervision of plans by a tourism and environment task force

Nairn

Nairn is a small town on the coast of the Moray Firth near Inverness, in the Scottish Highlands. It has had a tourist industry since the middle of the 19th century, when a doctor persuaded a number of his rich patients to go to Nairn for the quality of its air and water, which the town still prides itself on today.

Over and above its traditional seaside activities, Nairn is recognised as the golfing capital of the Highlands. It has two championship-level courses with very high-quality facilities.

The airport and a good east-west railway line enable Nairn to attract many visitors from the UK and from abroad.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?

The quality initiative was triggered by a desire to boost economic activity while working towards sustainable development.

Tourism is increasingly important to the local economy as traditional industry is in decline. This situation has been recognised by both the local authority in Nairn and the local civic affairs society, and a number of local organisations have been set up to optimise the town’s tourist potential.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?

A number of partners are involved in the process:

Nairn Council, the local authority.

Inverness & Nairn Enterprise has direct responsibility for development initiatives in the area of Nairn. Members of Inverness & Nairn Enterprise sit on many committees and local development groups. Their help often takes the form of advice or grants.

Highlands & Islands Enterprise regularly conducts research into the impact of tourism and runs training and environmental improvement programmes.

Nairn Initiative is working to revitalise the local economy, in close cooperation with the association of hoteliers, Nairn traders’ association and Inverness & Nairn Enterprise. Its objectives are to improve the industrial and commercial base in the Nairn region, to make retail outlets more profitable, to identify uses for disused premises in the town centre, to optimise the potential for tourism in the region and to improve the town’s appearance. Some projects related to tourism development are: QUEST (Quality, Education Service & Training) which includes training in tourism, business plans for rural tourism, summer markets, an out-of-season tourism programme, upgrading of golf courses, a community security group, environmental improvements to the town centre, diverting parts of the main A96 road and lighting important buildings.

The Nairn hoteliers’ association is actively working to promote particular aspects of the town and the range of accommodation there. Specific leadership depends mainly on the project and the partnerships created to carry out the project (‘variable geometry’ management by a varying number of partners) but it usually falls on the local authority. For Nairn Initiative, management is provided by Inverness & Nairn Enterprise and the Highland Council. In general, many groups are working to improve the services and products offered. There is also a strong commitment on all sides to integrate all sectors of the industry into this initiative.

Making the industry more dynamic

Nairn Initiative has recognised the importance of tourism in the local economy and has created a tourism award to reward public and private local initiatives which have a positive impact on the industry. In 1997 the BBC reported on the award, for the second year running. The event is organised by the Nairn hoteliers association and the Nairn traders association. In 1996, Nairn won the Scottish Tourist Board’s Thistle Award in the category ‘Tourism and the environment’ for their Seafront Tourism Management Programme (TMP).

1 Statistical studies on visitors cover these two areas. There is no separate analysis for Nairn itself.
In 1998, the beach, Nairn’s main attraction, won the Tidy Britain Group’s Seaside Award. This is awarded to a coastal destination which offers a high-quality seaside environment. The other criteria for the award are: a long beach at low tide (no pollution by sewage, no accumulation or decomposition of seaweed, no pollution from crude oil), security (lifeguards, first aid, monitoring, records of incidents occurring on the beach), management (emergency plan, easy and safe access, beach divided into different zones for different types of use, dogs not allowed on the beach, drinking water, public telephones, toilets, parking), cleanliness (beach cleaning and litter bin emptying), information and education (public emergency procedures, indication of protected sites and species, laws, and bathing water quality).

### Analysis of current situation

A visitor survey carried out in 1992 showed that Nairn’s main assets were the beach and the seafront. Two studies were subsequently carried out, one on the development of the port and the other on Nairn’s image.

### Objectives of the quality approach and strategic plan

As the various partners are aware of the advantages of networking and partnerships, many of them are working together on a large number of projects.

One of these local initiatives is the Seafront Tourism Management Programme (TMP) drawn up in 1998. The Nairn TMP was launched at the initiative of the Scottish Tourist Board. Nairn’s TMP team includes Nairn district authority, the Highlands regional authority, Inverness & Nairn Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Forest Enterprise, Scottish Tourist Board, the Inverness, Loch Ness & Nairn Tourist Board, the local authority and town traders’ representatives. Two working subgroups were set up, one on visitor orientation and the other on traffic and parking.

The Nairn TMP is based on sustainable development. Under the plan, existing assets are to be upgraded, without radically transforming the environment, in order to improve Nairn’s appearance. The 10-year objective is to consolidate the seafront as a popular attraction through a number of measures such as:

- extending the tourist season and diversifying services and products, thereby diversifying target markets;
- improving the quality of the location for families and day visitors, with regard to facilities, basic infrastructure and the environment;
- improving the quality and number of activities and attractions for other target markets. For instance, building on the popularity of golf to develop short themed holidays focusing on nature, history, open air activities, the environment, etc.;
- paying special attention to the seafront’s residential nature and obtaining the community’s commitment to the implementation of the plan;
- giving priority to improvements to the seafront.

These clearly defined objectives make it possible to identify and evaluate potential projects and actions to be included in the action plan.

### STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

The strength of Nairn’s chosen approach lies in partnership and cooperation, involving active participation by local residents and approximately 15 organisations, including non-governmental organisations, and representatives of the public and private sectors in a steering committee.

The district authority welcomed the concept of the Nairn TMP very warmly and contributed to its financing (around EUR 110 000); financing was completed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and private enterprises in the industry.

In parallel with this plan, the Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board launched the first tourism strategy for the Highlands in 1988.

Although these two initiatives emerged independently of each other, the eventual objective is to formulate a tourism strategy for Nairn which is consistent with the general strat-
Public services

The TMP aims to improve accessibility in the widest sense. It has provided a framework for studying the layout of roads in the port, carrying out a beach access project, managing traffic along the seafront, and building a car park. It has also led to signposting for Culbin and a feasibility study for a network of country routes.

The Nairn community security group was set up in 1994. It put forward the idea of installing security cameras in the centre of the town, adopting regulations prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in public and selling a security kit to prevent bicycle thefts.

Human resource policy

The United Kingdom, and particularly Scotland, is very active in the area of human resource management and training. Britain has set up a national programme called Investors in People (IIP). Based on the practical experience of the most effective companies, the programme encourages and supervises enterprises which run training schemes and individual development schemes for members of their staff in order to improve their profitability and levels of performance. In Nairn, the programme is widely favoured by public agencies and bodies involved in developing tourism in the area. In spring 1997, one of Nairn's tourism and accommodation facilities had already been IIP accredited.

Environmental policy – Agenda 21

A tourism and environment task force was set up in 1992 in Scotland. The force's task was to put into practice the proposals contained in the report of the Scottish tourism coordination group. This report, entitled 'Tourism and the Scottish environment: a sustainable partnership', opted for a realistic approach to tourism management. Local tourism management programmes are drawn up and link local and national priorities.

One of the task force's initiatives is a green tourism business plan, under which tourism professionals specify their environmental responsibilities and are helped to take day-to-day account of the environment. Nairn is one of the five Scottish areas selected to take part in the pilot programme, in respect of accommodation.

Tourist services

As part of its promotional campaign, Nairn has adopted the image of a dolphin and the slogan 'Nairn naturally' as its new identity.

Nairn Initiative has just launched a project to help a group of young people to publish a guide to Nairn for teenagers. The guide is called 'It's the Biz' and offers information to teenage visitors on activities and attractions likely to appeal to them, such as the beach, leisure complex, amusement arcade, golf course, horse riding, cycling, and, of course, nightlife. In addition, Nairn Initiative has produced the first Nairn shopping guide and directory.
The guide was published in 1997 and distributed to all households and traders in the region.

TMP initiatives also include a seafront visitor orientation project and improvements to the visitor centre, a Culbin educational centre, a brochure about Culbin and its surrounding area (35 000 copies), an environmental improvement programme and, lastly, a commercial approach to green tourism.

The various partners working in Culbin, especially Forest Enterprise, have improved visitor orientation facilities and management of leisure activities in the forest. This has been supported by the TMP in order to strengthen the links between Nairn, the seafront and Culbin. There are also plans for a visitor centre on the seafront, offering visitor orientation.

Over the last few years, the Nairn hoteliers association has taken part in many innovative marketing campaigns, including the 'Great Scot' Roadshow in the United States.

Two reservation systems are used by the tourist information centres: a local (Highlands) accommodation booking system, and the Scottish system called 'Book-a-bed-ahead'. This system enables information centre staff to make bookings for accommodation in Scotland or elsewhere in Britain. It also enables visitors from outside the Highlands to plan accommodation inside the region.

Accommodation in the reservation system database has to be part of the Scottish Tourist Board quality assurance system. This new national classification system is widely promoted at local level by public-sector agencies in Glasgow. Campsites and caravan sites are also inspected and classified at national level.

In 1989, the Scottish Events Association introduced the first national system for accrediting attractions in the United Kingdom. Since 1995, this association has had an agreement with the Scottish Tourist Board to manage a system of quality assurance and inspection of attractions. The system involves all aspects of attractions and pursues three main objectives:

- providing the public with the means to identify quality attractions;
- helping people marketing attractions to sell themselves more effectively by providing them with official recognition of their attraction;
- encouraging and recognising improvements in quality standards in the industry.

The Scottish Tourist Board is piloting a quality assurance system similar to the system for accommodation and attractions, by awarding stars for service in restaurants in Nairn.

Hoteliers and the holiday park are organising themed package holidays in cooperation with coach companies.

The dynamics of monitoring

Staff satisfaction

As well as providing training, the Investors in People programme also monitors staff satisfaction through satisfaction surveys among industry employees and businesses accredited by the programme.

Knowledge of markets and visitor satisfaction

The Highland Council has drawn up a complaints handling guide for tourism professionals; it sets out responses to complaints, complaints investigation, a standard complaints form, a register of complaints and an information brochure for the public explaining the procedure to be followed if they
wish to complain, the procedure for dealing with complaints, and a complaints and comments form. Neither tourist boards nor industry professionals can become members of the Highland Council unless they are operating a quality assurance system. If there is a complaint, an inspector visits the location. If the problem is serious, the member may be excluded, or their operating licence may be withdrawn.

In 1996, Highlands and Islands Enterprise carried out a survey methodology study among visitors in order to formulate recommendations on the most appropriate methods.

In 1997, the consortium made up of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Highland Council and the Highlands Tourist Board carried out a major survey among visitors to the Highlands. The main objectives of the study were to obtain an estimate of the volume of visitors and of revenue generated both in the Highlands and locally, and information on visitors and their stay to be used in formulating tourism-related strategies.

In addition, Nairn carried out an interview survey in 1992 among 995 visitors.

Satisfaction of local residents
An extensive consultation programme was established within the framework of the TMP. It involved face-to-face discussions, a questionnaire sent to a representative panel of local residents and a letter sent to all residents. It was also sent to local traders on the seafront or neighbouring areas, telling them about the study and inviting them to make their opinions known. A series of articles appeared in the local press asking for residents’ opinions.

Positive impact on the environment
The business plan incorporated into the TMP made it possible to carry out an environmental audit of fifteen hotel establishments. These audits were completed in March 1997; they incorporated analytical criteria such as decisions about energy-saving and improvements in how waste is dealt with. It is still too early to evaluate this project, but some very interesting ideas have been put forward, such as the possibility of buying electricity from a number of different companies in order to reduce costs, while applying energy-saving methods. As a system for evaluating the quality of the impact on the environment, the green tourism business plan is the first of its kind in the UK.

During the tourist season, samples of bathing water are taken at least once a week and analysed by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency. Results are published.
Pelion is a small peninsula situated near the industrial town of Volos, in the prefecture of Magnesia. The region is accessible by road, train, boat and aircraft, and is fairly close (3–4 hours) to the conurbations of Athens and Thessaloniki. It has been known since ancient times as the land of the Centaurs and the birthplace of Jason and the Argonauts; historical legends and myths abound in the area.

Pelion is made up of 34 hamlets along the coast and further inland, where the landscape is mountainous and hilly. The Sporades islands are part of the prefecture. As well as nature tourism, the region offers opportunities for activity holidays such as cycling and horse-riding, touring, diving, and water skiing. Tourism is distributed unevenly throughout the area, with a greater concentration in the villages on the coast. Practically all accommodation (about 150 units) is in the form of family establishments. They offer a personalised service and stay open throughout the year, but experience large seasonal swings in occupancy levels.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?

The quality approach was triggered by the need for economic reconversion and the strategic redeployment of tourism. Tourism development policies in the region have always taken account of the natural and cultural environment.

The prefecture regards tourism as a very important economic activity, especially as the region has been hard hit by industrial decline.

Pelion faces two challenges with regard to tourism: to increase tourist flows, and to achieve a better distribution of arrivals throughout the year and throughout the region. The region suffers from traffic congestion on roads which are too narrow to cope with a mass influx of tourist coaches. The majority of tourism enterprises are SMEs which find it very difficult to make a living from the irregular tourism resulting from the highly seasonal pattern of arrivals during the year.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?

The prefecture, through its tourism commission and its tourism promotion committee. The tourism commission is responsible for planning and implementing tourism-related developments. It benefits from the support and cooperation of tourism organisations in the region. Planning and strategy are supported by a number of ongoing studies, covering various aspects of tourism development.

The Magnesia hotel association is the prefecture’s most active partner in developing regional tourism. The 170 or so tourist accommodation establishments in the region of Pelion are members of the hotel association. A programme to develop the region’s tourist product is currently at the implementation stage, following studies of available capacity, environmental preservation, cultural heritage and other regulations. There is general agreement about the presentation of the product. A promotional programme has even been drawn up for the region’s small villages.

The hotel association has also established a tourism development centre (KETAM), which deals with tourism-related problems and issues in the region.

Among other things, the Pelion local enterprise company manages the Leader II programme for the region, and is trying to establish a prototype tourist board for alternative tourism.

The Magnesia enterprise company, ANEM, provides scientific support (studies and advice) for local authorities and other development agencies in Magnesia. In the tourism sector, it is running a number of national and European projects including, for instance, creating walks and traditional stone roads in Pelion, developing a Pelion winter sports centre, environmental management projects (LIFE programme), projects to enhance tourist resources (Recite programme), and the promotion of local quality and accreditation systems.
Analysis of current situation
Planning and strategy for tourism issues have been supported by various studies:

- a Magnesia development study (based on the economic and social development plan);
- a study of the accommodation capacity of tourist products;
- a study of environmental preservation;
- a study of the cultural heritage and legislation on building construction.

Objectives and overall strategy
The Magnesia prefecture’s economic and social development plan (PDES) was adopted by the prefecture council in 1995 and is still at the implementation stage. The plan’s objective is to reduce the level of unemployment and to improve the natural, social, economic and cultural environment. It should gradually allow Magnesia to become:

- a region with an environment which offers an excellent quality of life;
- a major industrial region;
- a major centre of attraction in terms of tourism, culture and leisure activities;
- an important regional centre for research and education;
- a centre of excellence through its quality of education and research.

To achieve this objective, the PDES adopted and proposed seven areas where active intervention was appropriate. These included the development of tourism, to which particular attention was paid.

The strategy has three goals concerning tourism:

- all-year-round tourism;
- improvement in quality at all levels: infrastructure, facilities and services;
- environmental protection.

Environmental policy – Agenda 21
The region’s natural environment and historic monuments and the unique traditional character of several of the villages all point to the need to develop tourism in ways that preserve the region’s natural and architectural environment. Other forms of tourism such as agrotourism, ecotourism, cultural or religious tourism and conferences are also to be developed to support this strategy.

As a further step, the prefecture is drawing up an annual tourism plan which takes both aspects into account, i.e. tourism development and improved quality of facilities and services.

The region has prepared and carried out a range of tourism development studies on issues such as land development, the environment (covering areas included in the European Natura 2000 programme), and traffic control. These studies were part of the 1995–98 plan (not yet completed) for infrastructure development and the European SMART and LIFE programmes in the region.

The European LIFE programme includes a study of the tourism accommodation capacities of certain natural resources.

The prefecture has prohibited any development of fisheries in the region.

In order to protect the mountain environment, quarrying is regulated.

The European Natura 2000 programme classifies the whole region of Pelion as a protected zone. General measures will therefore be applied to protect and maintain Pelion’s natural environment:

- cleanliness and security of the sea and beaches: Agios Dimitrios has started to clean the beach every day. The beaches of Agios Giannis are patrolled by a lifeguard. Nine Blue Flags were awarded in 1997;
- water quality: in order to resolve the local water supply problem, a small dam has just been built at Makrynitsa to collect rainwater;
- quality of waste water, collection and treatment of waste: a waste management programme was drawn up in 1995 and is currently being extended to all the villages in the region of Pelion. Individual tips will be replaced by a single waste landfill site;
- coastal pollution: the prefecture has voted to prohibit coastal fisheries. In addition, as the region has a large number of olive plantations, sea water was being polluted by residues from olive processing to make olive oil. Regulations have been approved by the prefecture and special measures for the collection and landfill of residues have been introduced;
Public services

A ‘local employment pact’ has recently been signed. There are plans to redevelop the Karla lake region in the mountains in order to develop ecological tourism. These plans include the construction of two small dams.

Services for industry professionals

A number of methods are being used for internal communication:

• the hotel association publishes a monthly journal, the ‘Tourism Journal’, which is distributed to its members and to tourism professionals;
• the prefecture committee and hotel association regularly organise discussion forums to discuss the various problems facing the industry, and to study possible solutions;
• a tourism conference is organised every year, at which delegates (independent tourism organisations and enterprises, local authority representatives) raise problems, discuss possible solutions and reach a consensus on action to be taken. Recent conferences have dealt with the following subjects: new directions in tourism development, various forms of alternative tourism in the Pelion region, and promotion of tourism;
• aspects of quality and the problems raised by tourism are discussed during the periodic meetings of the prefecture committee. The committee has also held special meetings to discuss service quality improvement at various times and in nine different localities;
• in 1995, the prefecture’s tourism committee circulated a directive containing suggestions, requirements and measures to be implemented by enterprises in the industry in order to maintain the destination’s general level of quality.

The prefecture has produced a product manual. It gives detailed information on all the region’s natural, historical and cultural resources and on cultural events, traditional crafts, local cuisine and tourism and leisure infrastructure.

The hotel association has produced and manages a database of tourism resources and attractions in the region. Tour operators can consult this database to obtain information to help them design their package tours.

There is a consensus on image policy; Pelion and the islands will retain their own identities. The policy has been discussed at regular meetings and annual conferences, and is reported in the media and the press.

Study trips are organised for the trade press in order to promote the region. In 1997, the prefecture of Magnesia hosted a conference on the subject of the regional media’s role in promoting tourism.

The hotel association decides, in cooperation with the training centre run by the prefecture, on an annual training programme for managers of small businesses offering tourist accommodation. Between 1995 and 1998, the programme trained between 80 and 90 industry professionals a year. In addition, a vocational training programme is linked to tourism development activities.

• preservation of biological species: the local flora (more than 2 000 different species identified) and fauna are protected;
• policy for land development and preservation of the countryside: there are specific regulations to preserve the traditional villages, and restrictions on the refurbishment or building of new apartment blocks.

Many studies have looked at the links between land use and tourism development.

The dynamics of implementation

OPERATIONS

• preservation of biological species: the local flora (more than 2,000 different species identified) and fauna are protected;
• policy for land development and preservation of the countryside: there are specific regulations to preserve the traditional villages, and restrictions on the refurbishment or building of new apartment blocks.
Tourist services

The prefecture of Magnesia is particularly active and effective in promoting tourism. General brochures on the region are published in 10 languages. There are also brochures dealing with specific products (steam trains, winter sports, etc.). It will soon be possible to consult a GIS map of the Pelion region on the Internet, as part of an interactive information system.

The prefecture takes part in many international tourism trade fairs.

Reservations may be made via a computer network which offers about 1 000 beds in different establishments.

Various initiatives have been implemented to improve mobility and encourage tourists to use other modes of transport:

- renovation of traditional stone roads for pedestrian-only use;
- a special train providing tourists with easier access to attractions;
- a cable-car network linking villages which are some distance from the coast;
- restoration of the traditional narrow-gauge railway between Volos, Lehonia and Milies. The section between Lehonia and Milies is already operating;
- some villages are designating areas as pedestrian-only in the tourist season; these include the whole beach area at Agria and the historic centre of Makrynitsa;
- 29 different paths have been mapped, covering a total distance of 190 km. Some have been marked out, signposting installed and stopping and rest areas set up. Some funding for the project has come from the European Union’s Structural Funds.

The Euro-Argo-Project — an ‘Argonauts’ Trail’ — is one of the projects which has grown out of Pelion’s quality initiative. The trail follows the voyages of the Argonauts; it will retrace their eventful journey around the Mediterranean, Black Sea and on the Danube.

Ski resorts are currently being renovated so that winter arrival numbers can be increased, but still with an eye to alternative tourism.

Notice boards for tourists have been put up in the region, and villages have installed a local signposting system for attractions in their area.

Under the Leader II programme, a project has been approved to create a network of six or seven tourist information centres in the Pelion region (with a budget of approximately EUR 600 000) to which a local tour operator will add their four offices, thereby creating a network of 10 or 11 centres. The centres will have computers and will be networked.

During the annual tourism conference (1998) and following a study and proposal by the Larissa Technology Institute, it was agreed that a quality certification system should be introduced for Pelion’s restaurants. The certification system will be implemented on a voluntary basis by restaurants and run by the prefecture.
The dynamics of monitoring

Satisfaction – human resources
A study carried out by hoteliers in the region showed that 20% of them were aware of their training needs and of the lack of resources available to them to resolve the problem.

Knowledge of markets and visitor satisfaction
The network of information centres (currently expanding) and individual tourism enterprises monitor and respond to complaints. Statistics show that this procedure is effective.

Although there is no specific complaints survey, the various studies conducted have looked at complaints.

The dynamics of evaluation and adjustment

New products are being developed on the basis of the findings of studies conducted among visitors. For example, the network of walking itineraries has been divided into long and short walks, with relatively easy access, in order to attract urban visitors spending a long weekend in the region.

Cooperation between public authorities and professional bodies is exemplary, not just from the point of view of cooperation on joint action, but also in the design and implementation of supplementary activities and the provision of assistance for the industry’s many SMEs.

INDICATORS

Satisfaction of local residents
Social impact studies are currently being conducted, covering both employment and economic impact (the latter under European programmes).

Studies show that there are few complaints.

RESULTS

Satisfaction

Human resources

Knowledge of markets and visitor satisfaction

Social impact studies are currently being conducted, covering both employment and economic impact (the latter under European programmes).

Studies show that there are few complaints.
Quiberon is a peninsula, virtually an island, on the coast of Morbihan, one of Brittany’s most popular tourist areas (ranked fifth in the list of France’s most visited tourist regions), with very heavily visited sites such as the menhirs at Carnac and the resorts of La Trinité, Locmariaquer and Vannes. The Quiberon peninsula is connected to the coast by a sand bar wide enough for a road; this natural corridor is several hundred metres long and carries a road and a railway. It also divides the landscape. On one side, the Côte des Hommes opens into the Bay of Quiberon, one of the best stretches of sailing water on the Atlantic coast, and home to the French National Sailing School. On the other side lies the Côte Sauvage (Wild Coast), a stretch of coastline administered by the Conservatoire du Littoral et des Rivages Lacustres since 1991.

Quiberon is a rare example on the French Atlantic seaboard of a natural site which has been preserved intact. The peninsula has two municipalities: Quiberon, which has most of the facilities and accommodation, and Saint Pierre Quiberon.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?

The quality initiative was triggered by the need to improve visitor flow management in order to preserve the environment.

Since 1924, Quiberon has been classified as a ‘seaside health resort’, thanks to the efforts of the mayor at the time, who undertook major development work. However, Quiberon and its peninsula only really concentrated on tourism during the 1960s, to compensate for the decline in sardine fishing. At that time, Quiberon was the first tourist resort on the Morbihan coast. The site was further developed in 1964 when a thalassotherapy institute was opened and an aero-drome and a large marina built. Quiberon is, however, synonymous with the group of resorts running from the Bay of Quiberon to the Breton Islands which has led to very heavy tourism-related traffic flows. Since the 1970s, Quiberon has therefore had to deal with the problems of overcrowding of access roads, infrastructure and available parking space. As the volume of visitors attracted by the resort’s reputation was continuing to grow and maritime traffic to the island was continuing to increase, Quiberon launched a tourism quality plan in 1994.

This was the first initiative to rally local politicians, industry professionals, representatives of associations and local personalities; it identified the factors responsible for Quiberon’s overcrowding and set up three committees:

- A ‘Development and lifestyle’ committee;
- An ‘Events’ committee;
- A ‘Services, visitor care, and quality/price ratio’ committee.

Although the first plan was abandoned following a change of team on the council, it did make it possible to identify problems clearly and to mobilise the various partners in the industry.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?

The mayor of the town is responsible for implementing the tourism quality plan.

The municipal tourism office is situated in Quiberon. Saint Pierre Quiberon does not have a tourism office, but supports the Quiberon tourism office financially out of revenue from its tourist tax and has an information point. The Quiberon municipal tourism office will eventually serve both municipalities.

The quality plan also covers all the local partners, including fishermen, businessmen from the fishing industry and managers of the transport companies providing transport to the islands.

In 1994, the tourism quality plan was launched in partnership with AFIT, the Region of Brittany and Morbihan’s Departmental Directorate for Infrastructure.

In 1995, on the basis of the lessons learned from the first initiative, the mayor of Quiberon launched a more ambitious project for global management of quality and the environment called ‘A better quality of life for the municipality and resort of Quiberon’.

### Some figures (1994)

- Quiberon has a population of 4,647 and Saint Pierre Quiberon has a population of 2,174 (1995)
- 2,042,000 visitors, 85% of them from France
- 811,166 overnight stays; average stay of 10 days
- Tourism has grown at a rate of 3 to 4% a year since 1991
- Tourist accommodation capacity is 63,700 beds, mainly in second homes
- The ‘Corkscrew’ train carries about 100,000 travellers a year
- Instant indicator of tourist rate when visitor arrivals on the peninsula are at their peak = 15
- There can be more than 80,000 visitors a day

### Main attractions

- Situated on a peninsula which is virtually an island
- Sailing ports and marinas (1,090 berths)
- Sports activities and watersports
- Natural setting

### The dynamics of partnership

**The plan**

Although the first plan was abandoned following a change of team on the council, it did make it possible to identify problems clearly and to mobilise the various partners in the industry.

**Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?**

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In 1995, on the basis of the lessons learned from the first initiative, the mayor of Quiberon launched a more ambitious project for global management of quality and the environment called ‘A better quality of life for the municipality and resort of Quiberon’.
Analysis of current situation

Surveys carried out among members of the public in 1994 showed that vehicle traffic saturation levels and the frequent overspill from car parks were the main sources of dissatisfaction for both tourists and residents.

Benchmarking

Thirteen resorts on the French coast have embarked on a quality plan in cooperation with AFIT. The findings from the preliminary surveys, conducted before the plans were started, were compared in order to highlight some of the specific problems and major areas of dissatisfaction, and to put some of the results obtained at Quiberon into a wider context. Some of the findings for Quiberon and Saint Pierre Quiberon were also compared to identify the most significant aspects or differences.

Objectives and overall strategy

The main priorities of the ‘better quality of life’ plan are:

- to improve management of tourist flows and mobility;
- to achieve significant improvements in the municipality’s quality of life by enhancing and protecting natural areas;
- to ensure the development and prosperity of the various economic activities which are now almost all related to tourism, while preserving the environment.

The municipality considers that the crucial issues are:

- the image of the resort and the region;
- the development of target groups of customers interested in nature and health;
- filling the available accommodation, whose customers by their nature have no particular loyalty to any one provider;
- loyalty-building schemes.

Environmental policy

Since the 1970s, the heavy pressures of tourism have prompted the municipality to preserve its natural areas by installing a waste water purification plant, drawing up a land use plan, making its coastline into a compulsory purchase zone for the French Conservatoire du Littoral et des Rivages Lacustres and joining the ‘Gavres-Quiberon’ Major Site project. The aim of this project is to protect the extensive area of dunes which is joined to the mainland by a sand bar.

Human resource policy

Some 60 seasonal jobs (for between two and seven months) are to be created by the ‘better quality of life’ plan. These jobs are in areas related to public transport, roadside parking and transit car park management, better road and pavement cleaning and improved services in the transit car park.
The dynamics of implementation

Public services
One of the tourism office’s objectives is to persuade local residents to take part in action plans under the ‘better quality of life’ plan through a policy of overall and village and neighbourhood awareness. The tourism office has recruited a liaison officer to help the local authority to step up **neighbourhood awareness**. This liaison officer provides a focus for local residents and acts as a channel for internal communication within the destination.

The local authority also uses various leaflets, brochures and general, cultural and recreational information magazines for communication purposes.

New signs were put up in 1998.

Tourist services
The two objectives of the ‘better quality of life’ plan boil down in practice to concrete measures to implement a **global plan for managing tourist mobility**. The aims of this plan are to organise parking and restrict the use of personal vehicles in the town centre, in the Port Maria district and along the Côte Sauvage coast. Various forms of transport are being coordinated to provide a viable alternative to the car on the peninsula itself and for reaching the other islands.

The following action plans are currently in progress or planned.

- Developing a transit car park. The park has been landscaped to fit into the surrounding countryside, and is designed to take 1 200 light vehicles and 18 tourist coaches on a disused site of 5 ha. The development includes a reception and information booth in the passenger embarkation and disembarkation area which is also accessible to people of reduced mobility.
- Setting up a public transport link between the transit car park and the harbour terminal. This will be a very high-quality service, with six journeys during peak hours, i.e. a maximum waiting time of 10 minutes. Three urban buses have been purchased, with specially lowered floors and room for between 95 and 105 passengers.
- Establishing a public transport network to serve the area as a whole.
- Redeveloping the harbour terminal. This redevelopment has become necessary as a result of the introduction of a high-capacity public transport link with the islands which obtain their supplies almost exclusively from Quiberon. As well as redeveloping car and passenger access, there are plans for a park for vehicles waiting to embark as well as a goods lorry park and a container handling and storage area.
- Managing parking. Regulations have been introduced, in the form of colour-coded parking zones. Illegal parking is penalised and a car pound has been built.
- Pedestrianising some areas. There are plans to extend the pedestrian promenade on the seafront and to redevelop the main road crossing the town centre. Pavements are to be widened in these places. It is also planned to install posts to deter car parking on pavements.
- Roads will be laid out to encourage bicycles and mopeds, with protected lanes for cycles and mopeds laid out in the town centre, marking out of specific routes and the addition of a cycle path along the causeway to the mainland.
- Information is to be provided for tourists to encourage them to restrict the use of their cars in Quiberon and throughout the peninsula. Specifically, this information will be displayed at the entry point to the town (information on the transit car park and the parking system);
• Developing intermodal transport. Complementary systems using various forms of transport are to be developed to provide a comfortable and effective shuttle system for users, while protecting the environment:
  – railway/public transport/sea transport;
  – car/public transport/sea transport;
  – car/cycle/sea transport.
This complementary approach will operate using a single ticket system.

A hotel and health care establishment in Quiberon is developing a system of quality and specific guarantees. The guarantees incorporate specific types of data, e.g.:
• sea water quality guaranteed through compliance with regulations on the use of the marine environment;
• personalised visitor care;
• medical supervision of all health-related care and services;
• rigorous choice of treatment products selected for their wealth of active ingredients;
• continuing customer service training for professionals;
• strict hygiene standards and controls.

A further aspect of the plan is to improve customer loyalty through a more active environmental policy and the development of more leisure infrastructure and facilities (swimming pool and conference hall).

Tourist satisfaction
In 1994, a survey among visitors, residents and industry professionals was carried out by AFIT to identify the key areas of dissatisfaction. A flow study was carried out in the same year.

The tourist office records complaints. Complaints are dealt with directly by the director of the tourism office or by the deputy mayor in charge of tourism when they involve settling disputes.

Results indicators have been devised in order to measure the real impact of the project. These include:
• flows: time taken to absorb traffic from boat arrivals, parking capacity;
• financial: global marketing costs, communication costs;
• impact on the environment: reduction of vehicle numbers, traffic flows, reductions of polluting emissions, air quality, restrictions of parking spaces, etc.

The dynamics of evaluation and adjustment

It is hoped that the initial impact of the ‘better quality of life’ plan will be to resolve traffic and parking problems on the Côte Sauvage coast and in the port and town centre.

Plans to revitalise the area have had varying effects: a friendly atmosphere and pedestrian-only zones in key parts of the town at certain times, an opportunity for better management of events and shows organised under the ‘resort’ policy and the launch of initiatives in villages and neighbourhoods.

The cost of the whole ‘better quality of life’ plan will be EUR 6 402 861 for 1997–99.

The innovative nature of the plan lies in the fact that intermodal transport systems have never been used before in France in a municipality of 5 000 inhabitants; previously, they have been used only in large conurbations (with populations over 100 000).

The experiment is interesting as it attempts to solve the problem of car saturation which is a problem for most European coastal resorts during the high season and to find such solutions under institutional and local conditions that are, by definition, not the easiest.
Overview

The plan

• Triggered by the issue of seasonal peaks and concentration
• Cooperation between a wide range of partners from the public and private sectors (round tables)
• Group dynamic provided by the combination of regional, provincial, municipal, local and private sector partners

Strategy and policies

• Construction of an exhibition hall
• Policy of innovation and expansion of what is on offer
• Attempts to reach a consensus among residents

Operations

• Internal communication campaigns to raise customer awareness
• Organisation of discussion forums and product clubs
• Both compulsory and optional standards for quality of hotel services
• Plan to extend labelling (hospitality) throughout the province
• Promotion and loyalty-building campaign among tourists
• Specialist campaigns (see ‘segmentation’)
• Welcome pack
• Major infrastructure projects

Indicators

• Permanent monitoring by the province’s tourism observatory
• Annual progress report
• Two-yearly survey of satisfaction and motivation
• Panel of members of the ‘Friends of Rimini’ club
• Key indicators for the province published monthly
• Water quality tested daily

Results

• Analytical study by the University of Rimini on the extent of conference tourism
• Improvement of hotel quality

The Province of Rimini is situated at the southernmost end of the Po Valley, where the Apennines border the sea. The province includes 20 municipalities and its economic centre is concentrated along a 40 km long sandy coast. This narrow strip of land (8 % of the total area) contains the municipalities of Rimini, Riccione, Bellaria-Igea Marina, Cattolica and Misano Adriatico, where 70 % of the population live. The tourist boom of the 1960s and 1970s made Rimini and its province popular throughout Europe as a holiday destination. Tourism is the main economic activity. Fashion and production of machinery for the timber industry are other important industries.

The town of Rimini, founded by the Romans in 68 BC, contrasts ancient monuments with the infrastructure of modern tourism. The destination’s main resource is its fine-sand beach, which is 15 km long and up to 300 m wide in places. The various beach concerns, the oldest of which was set up in 1843, are situated on the beach.
What was the impetus for the plan and who is leading it?
The quality approach was triggered by the issue of seasonal peaks in tourism

The very high seasonal concentration of tourism during two months of the year is not enough to breathe life into the six towns situated along the 40 km or so of coast which also suffer from the adverse effects of this intense concentration. Population density in the narrow coastal strip, covering some 6.7 km², reaches about 14 000 per km² in August (residents and tourists) which is close to the typical saturation levels of the world’s major capitals. The demand for health services in local hospitals increases by about 60–80 % in the high season. This influx means that the budget for local authority public services may need to be increased by up to 25 %. A few concrete examples show the impact of the summer influx of tourists: 10 times more public transport services to the coast, waste collection and water consumption up by 67 %.

The Region has therefore drawn up a plan to use the riviera’s leading destination to extend the tourist season by promoting conference tourism. The Region is intending to use this plan to develop the local economy and increase employment and to make optimum use of available resources and infrastructure which are under-used for 10 months of the year.

Who are the main partners, and how are they linked?
The regional government of Emilia Romagna is responsible for the following activities:

- planning and coordination of tourist activities and initiatives;
- promoting the image of tourist resources and accommodation in national and international markets; publicity and marketing;
- financial incentives (grants) to suppliers of tourist services in the region;
- developing and maintaining a regional tourist information system;
- organising and developing the provincial tourism observatory to provide permanent monitoring of the market, in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and other interested parties (private and public organisations).

The regional agency is responsible for assessing and deciding on overall strategy to promote tourism and commercial activities in the region. Decisions are taken by a steering committee which includes representatives of the regional government (tourism council), the provincial authorities, the Chamber of Commerce and tourism enterprise associations.
Objectives and overall strategy

The resort’s strategy can be summed up as ‘reducing seasonal peaks and spreading tourism throughout the year by promoting cultural events and an increasing number of conferences, by increasing the number of hotels open all year and by improving their quality so as to achieve an occupancy rate of more than 50%, and by obtaining public investment in facilities likely to attract out-of-season tourists (conferences, etc.) rather than in the construction or adaptation of infrastructure’.

The municipality of Rimini has recently invested nearly EUR 7 million in the construction of the new Rimini Fair complex in order to support the development of conference tourism. This strategy is typical of a mature market, where innovation is essential to avoid a resort’s decline.

Policy on tourist products and services is now to offer a range of attractive events and high-quality local accommodation and to improve key public infrastructure.

The main priorities are:

- to change the traditional mentality of small businesses (particularly proprietors or managers of small hotels), in order to disseminate a culture of quality (through ‘product clubs’);
- to obtain a consensus among residents on public decisions. Investment in medium-term projects (such as the construction of the building which will house the new fair complex) sometimes has to be made at the cost of short-term investment (such as road maintenance).

\(^1\) Province of Rimini.
\(^2\) IAT offices.
Services for industry professionals

In an effort to address any potential conflicts between residents and tourists, the Province of Rimini has launched an internal communication campaign (posters, advertising on local television, etc.) to improve the local atmosphere and hospitality towards tourists.

Discussion forums are held regularly to prevent any potential conflicts between the institutional partners—particularly between the municipality and the Province of Rimini. Efforts have been made to forge close cooperation between the public and private sectors through round tables which bring the partners together in order to translate strategy into action.

A further step has been to set up ‘product clubs’—independent groups of partners from the public and private sectors who share a common view of the region and market combined products. These product clubs rally public bodies and private businesses and are currently increasing in number throughout Emilia Romagna’s tourism industry. These instruments help to ensure that there is always a shared vision of objectives and strengthen cooperation between the partners.

An important initiative by Rimini Turismo to improve the quality of tourism services has been to set up product clubs for small hotels in Rimini (those with fewer than 50 beds). Hotels wanting to join have to prove that they comply with 34 compulsory standards and at least 6 of 19 optional standards and are regularly monitored.

The Province of Rimini is to introduce a similar scheme next year, to be called the ‘accommodation quality label’ scheme, which will then apply to the whole of the Riviera. The aim of the project is to include a wider range of tourism businesses, including hotels (irrespective of capacity), beach concerns and campsites. There are plans to launch quality branding, training programmes, selection methods, evaluations of quality standards, continuous monitoring and complaints management systems.

Tourist services

Rimini Turismo has launched a promotion campaign called ‘11 steps to the sun’ covering all aspects of tourism in the resort. It has also set up a project called ‘Friends of Rimini’ under which an information letter is being published and a website set up. The function of the club, which has attracted 6,600 voluntary participants to date, is to maintain contact with tourists throughout the year.

The Province of Rimini has taken the initiative for specialist campaigns, such as ‘Children’s Riviera’, which targets the market segment of families with small children. It also publishes an occasional newsletter.

Rimini Turismo has launched the ‘Welcome to Rimini’ initiative for which some 160 hotels have volunteered. Tourists are now given a pack when they arrive at their hotel, containing practical information and a membership card for the ‘Friends of Rimini’ club.

The main ways in which product and service quality is being improved include specialist campaigns under marketing projects drawn up by the two bodies responsible for promotion:

- Rimini Turismo offers suggestions on how to promote Rimini’s small hotels in Germany and Austria (and for example, highlights those extra services which tourists from these market segments most appreciate);
- the Province of Rimini is organising promotions among other tourists such as families with children, disabled people, tourists with pets, and green tourism (developing itineraries within the region).

These projects generally encourage the creation of special product clubs helping participants to adjust the services and products that they offer to the standards required by their target markets.
Three major infrastructure projects will soon enter the implementation phase:

- a remote computer network;
- moving the Rimini Fair out of the town centre into a new complex constructed near the Rimini North motorway exit;
- in 2001, the construction of a new wholesale food and fish market complex.

Knowledge of markets and visitor satisfaction

The provincial tourism observatory constantly monitors trends in the tourism market. Trademark Italia runs the monitoring service, which is based on a sample of more than 650 tourism and accommodation operators.

An annual report gives details of changes in several categories of destinations: coastal, urban, mountain and spas.

A study of customers' motivations and satisfaction, carried out every two years, makes it possible to monitor various aspects such as loyalty, segmentation by age, origin of domestic tourism flows (external flows being covered by official statistics), type of accommodation, distinctions between groups of tourists (individuals, families, groups of friends, etc.), motivations, levels of satisfaction and opinions on strengths and weaknesses of destinations.

Rimini Turismo also makes use of a panel from the ‘Friends of Rimini’ club to measure satisfaction with the services and products offered by Rimini.

Key performance indicators, such as numbers of arrivals and overnight stays classified by country of origin, are collected and published every month by the Province of Rimini’s statistics unit, for every destination on the Riviera, including Rimini. The Province is planning to produce regular statistics on the information requested by tourists at IAT offices and on complaints.

Positive impact on the environment

Sea water quality is tested every day by the regional laboratory. A report on sea cleanliness is sent to editors of local newspapers and tourism information centres which may be contacted for up-to-date information.
A recent study by the University of Rimini looked in detail at a factor that is very important for Rimini as a destination – the extent of conference tourism. Conference tourism is clearly part of the tourism diversification strategy that local partners have been actively pursuing since the 1980s. According to local partners, there is a real ambition to improve the quality and number of conferences. The goal is to achieve an equal proportion of conference and leisure tourism in Rimini.

Hotel grading schemes (in Rimini and throughout the Riviera) have been successfully run for 10 years – from 1987 to 1997 – and hotels classified as 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5-star.

<table>
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<th></th>
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</table>

A recent study by the Province of Rimini analysed the reasons for tourist stays and customer satisfaction, both on the Riviera and in the town of Rimini:

Motivations for choosing the Rimini Riviera

1. Good overall organisation (20.9 % of the sample),
2. Usual choice (19.5 %),
3. Guaranteed leisure activities (19.4 %),
4. Wide range of reasonably-priced options (17.4 %),
5. Ease of access by car (17.2 %),
6. Courtesy of local people (15.3 %),
7. Quality of accommodation (11.5 %),
8. Facilities very suitable for children and families (8.4 %),
9. Good food (7.9 %),
10. Easy to meet people and make friends (6.8 %),
11. Environment (6.1 %),
12. Security (4 %).
Annex: Glossary and references

Glossary of terms related to integrated quality management (IQM) in tourist destinations

The purpose of the glossary is not to provide all the official and standard definitions but rather to help the reader who is not familiar with some of the issues related to integrated quality management (IQM) of tourist destinations to be clear about the meaning of some of the words and expressions, with a short explanation.

ABOUT TOURISM

Tourist

A tourist is a person who is travelling and spending at least one night away from the area where he usually lives or works, whether for private or professional reasons.

Tourism

Tourism covers all activities undertaken by a tourist during his/her travel and stay away from the area where he usually lives or works, whether for private or professional reasons.

Tourist destination

A tourist destination is an area which is separately identified and promoted to tourists as a place to visit, and within which the tourism product is coordinated by one or more identifiable authorities or organisations.

Coastal tourist destination

A coastal tourist destination is an area which attracts tourists who come to enjoy the seaside and seaside-related activities as a primary motivation.

Rural tourist destination (with reference to agrotourism)

A rural tourist destination is an area which attracts tourists who come to enjoy the countryside and countryside-related activities as a primary motivation. In this type of destination, agrotourism covers the provision of small scale tourist facilities, especially accommodation, on an agricultural holding or equivalent private rural property, conveying an experience of the countryside.
**Urban tourist destination**

An urban tourist destination is an area which attracts tourists who come to enjoy towns and cities and related activities as a primary motivation.

**Visitor management**

A process of seeking to influence the movement, activities and impacts of visitors and associated traffic in an area.

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**ABOUT QUALITY AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TOURIST DESTINATIONS**

**Quality**

The quality of a product or service is its ability to satisfy the needs of the consumer. In a tourist destination, the tourist must be regarded as a consumer.

**Quality standard and certification**

A quality standard identifies a level of quality for goods or services. A certification is a document delivered by an official body proving that a product or a service complies with a quality standard.

**Quality management**

Quality management covers all the activities achieved to satisfy the needs of the consumer.

**Integrated quality management (IQM) of a tourist destination**

IQM of a tourist destination is an approach which simultaneously takes into account and has a favourable impact on the activities of tourism professionals, on tourists, on the local population as well as on the environment, (i.e. the natural, cultural and man-made assets of the destination).

The IQM strategy implemented by destinations has the requirements of tourists as one of its major considerations.

**Tourism strategy (with a view to IQM)**

A clear written statement of objectives for tourism development, marketing and management, with identified targets, which forms the basis for an action programme.

**Leadership**

One or more organisations providing a focus for activity, which is clearly recognised by all players, and which communicates effectively with them.
**Local community**

The local residents of an area, as individuals or groups.

**Local produce (including handicrafts)**

Food and other natural materials grown or produced within the identified local destination. Handicrafts are not strictly included within local produce but are associated with this term.

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**ABOUT ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND IQM**

**Environment**

The natural resources and cultural heritage of an area, including water, air, soil, space, landscape, natural sites, biodiversity, built heritage, historical associations, arts and crafts and local traditions.

**Sustainable development**

Sustainable development is a broad political objective, encompassing an intention to avoid activities that will cause long term damage to the environment and a desire to ensure an adequate quality of life for present and future generations. Sustainable development involves economic, social and environmental dimensions.

**Sustainable tourism development**

Sustainable tourism development is about keeping a balance between the needs of the visitor, the environment and the host community for current as well as future generations. Tourism can contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development as follows:

- **in economic terms**, sustainable tourism development can improve the competitiveness of the enterprises, in particular SMEs, directly and indirectly related to tourism, and bring benefits to the local economy;

- **in social terms**, sustainable tourism development can enable at the same time to meet the needs and to encourage a responsible behaviour of the tourists, of the people working in tourism enterprises and of the local population;

- **in environmental terms**, sustainable tourism development can ensure the protection and rational management of natural and cultural resources.

**Link between environment, sustainable development and IQM**

In brief, these three concepts are not identical but cannot be dissociated. Sustainable development is a broad concept of which environment is one dimension beside economic and social dimensions. Integrated quality management is an approach focused on consumer satisfaction but based on the three dimensions of sustainable development.
References related to IQM in coastal destinations

The purpose here is not to present an exhaustive list of references but to mention documents referred to in this publication as well as some documents about tourism, quality and sustainable development helpful in relation to IQM. Some Internet addresses are also given.

Documents referred to in this publication

Chapter 1

2 European Commission, OGM, Quattro: Quality approach in tendering/contracting urban public transport operation – Fourth Community R & D programme, Contract UR-96-SC-1140.
3 EFQM, European Quality Award, 1997.

Chapter 2


General documents about tourism

• European Commission, The role of the Union in the field of tourism, Commission Green Paper, COM(95) 97, 4 April 1995.

Documents about quality and quality management in tourist destinations

• AFNOR, NF Service: 3 offices de tourisme certifiés, Communiqué de presse, juillet 1997.
• Charte de Qualité pour les Villages de Vacances – UNAT.
• Keller, P., WTO News 97-05.
• *La lettre de l’AFAQ*, No 15, October 1996.
• Lane, P. and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, *Resort generation pilot project – Tourism & Resort action plan guidelines*.
Documents about environment and sustainable development

- Charter of cultural tourism (Icomos), 1976.
- Germany: Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, Sustainable tourism as a development option – Practical guide for local planners, developers and decision makers, Eschborn, 1999.
- Spain: Ministerio de Economía y Hacienda, Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Spain – A sustainable tourism (in English and Spanish), Madrid, 1999.

Some Internet addresses helpful in relation to IQM

- AEIDL/Leader
  http://www.rural-europe.aeidl.be
- Cenorm (European Committee for Standardisation)
  http://www.cenorm.be
- European Commission, DG XXII.D, Tourism Directorate
- Council of Europe
  http://www.coe.fr
- EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management)
  http://www.efqm.org
- ISO (International Standardisation Organisation)
  http://www.iso.ch
- United Nations, Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)
- United Nations Environment Programme, Industry and Environment (UNEP IE)
  http://www.unepie.org/tourism/prog.html
- WTO (World Tourism Organisation)
  http://www.world-tourism.org
- WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council), including the ECoNETT site
  http://www.wttc.org
European Commission

Towards quality coastal tourism – Integrated quality management (IQM) of coastal tourist destinations

Enterprise Directorate-General — Tourism Unit

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2000 – 154 pp. – 21 x 29.7 cm
