



THEME 1. MEASUREMENT AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL TOURISM

Modeling economic monitoring systems of tourism impacts at sub-national level

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Abstract

This paper aims to describe and to share the experience of South Sardinia as a new regional destination based on the issues of sustainable tourism.

The recently published WTTC's reports and forecasts on the value of Travel & Tourism's contribution to GDP and employment in Italy seems to agree with Prof. Yeoman affirming that "The Italian market is very mature, which leaves little prospect for significant growth. However, Italy's diversity of cultural product, whether fine art or excellent food, cathedrals or beautiful cities give it the opportunity for growth in specific niche markets." (p. 46 Yeoman, I. (2008)). As a consequence, regional and local governments have to develop distinctive approaches to target marketing more precisely. To accomplish this aim economic monitoring of tourism impacts are needed at the regional and local level in order to develop effective policies and investment initiatives to support local tourism industry.

The experience of South Sardinia is significant, involving the different stakeholders of the tourism system, gathering data and providing economic evidences. This is particularly important in such context as Italy where the tourism system is composed by public and private players and where private player are mainly represented by SME with a family business model.

The research is focused on two main aspects at local level: the measurement of the economic impacts of tourism and the examination of tourist's consumer behavior in tourism.

Concerning the first aspect, the research has realized a Regional Tourism Satellite Account, which is a very important tool given the Italian lack, at a local level, of fundamental economic tourism data, such as tourist daily expenditures and the contribution of tourism to the GDP. The creation of the RTSA is the base to estimate indirect and induced effects of tourism not only through traditional models based on Input-Output analysis but also through the construction of Computable General Equilibrium Models, which can be used to explore the impacts of external shocks or policy changes affecting the tourism industry.

Referring to the tourist's consumer behavior, the research has integrated economic information with market information gathered by surveys that provide insights on tourists' decision making. In order to understand and forecast demand for products and services the research has developed a methodology based on discrete choice models that have been only recently introduced in applied research (Train 2003).

The approach proposed is currently a work in progress and it could be driven to realize a model that might become a prototype able to be extended to any Italian regional district. International best practices as the Tourism Domain Plan adopted in New Zealand for improving the Government's Tourism Dataset and the Tourism Research Australia's Regional Overview could be considered as a valuable starting point for the realization of a research strategy that best fits Italian regional tourism peculiarities.