



This collection of papers has been written by the international team of scholars teaching at the Master Course in Planning and Management of Tourism Systems of the University of Bergamo, while the Covid-19 emergency was spreading in all parts of the World and especially in the territory of Bergamo.

The main aim of the work is to face the topic of Tourism in the case of exogenous shocks, like the Covid-19 pandemic, reflecting on their impacts on territories, communities and heritage both during and after the crisis. The papers adopt different disciplinary approaches and methods, trying to give a multi-focused gaze to the complexity of a global phenomenon and to possible forms of recovery.

This collection is addressed to students and researchers studying in the tourism sector, who are in search of answers in this time of change and crisis. We believe that after reading this volume they won't have all the answers to their dilemmas, but they will reflect about them, they will receive proposals for specific approaches, methodologies, sources, references, examples, useful for the future of their own research.

FEDERICA BURINI is Associate Professor of Geography at the Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures of the University of Bergamo where she is member of the CST-DiathesisLab. Her primary research interests are participatory processes and collaborative mapping to promote territorial regeneration in a sustainable perspective.

TOURISM FACING A PANDEMIC: FROM CRISIS TO RECOVERY



edited by Federica Burini



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI BERGAMO

2020



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Università degli Studi di Bergamo

2020

Tourism facing a pandemic: from crisis to recovery / edited by
Federica Burini – Bergamo: Università degli Studi di Bergamo, 2020.
ISBN: 978-88-97253-04-4
DOI: [10.6092/978-88-97253-04-4](https://doi.org/10.6092/978-88-97253-04-4)

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Book's initiative:

Master Course in *Planning and Management of Tourism Systems*
Dipartimento di Lingue, Letterature e Culture straniere
Università degli Studi di Bergamo

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Progetto grafico: Servizi Editoriali – Università degli Studi di Bergamo
Università degli Studi di Bergamo
via Salvecchio, 19
24129 Bergamo
Cod. Fiscale 80004350163
P. IVA 01612800167

<https://aisberg.unibg.it/handle/10446/160699>

*To our students of the Master Course
in Planning and Management of Tourism Systems
of the University of Bergamo*

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Presentation and executive summary

This collection of papers has been written in April 2020 by the international team of scholars teaching at the Master Course in *Planning and Management of Tourism Systems* of the University of Bergamo, while the Covid-19 emergency was spreading in all parts of the World and especially in the territory of Bergamo.

The main aim of the work is to face the topic of Tourism in the case of exogenous shocks, like the Covid-19 pandemic, reflecting on their impacts on territories, communities and heritage both during and after the crisis. The papers adopt different disciplinary approaches and methods, trying to give a multi-focused gaze to the complexity of a global phenomenon and to possible forms of recovery. The first section is focused on the impacts of global shocks in travel behaviours seen from economic, marketing and legal perspectives (Peter Keller, Greg Richards, Andrea Macchiavelli, Roberta Garibaldi, Andrea Pozzi, Daniela Andreini, Federico Mangiò, Simon Taylor), followed by a second section which analyses territorial and environmental issues related to tourism sustainability and adaptation to global changes (Andrew Holden, Federica Burini, Jennifer Wells, Elena Bougleux). The third section investigates tourism discourses and imageries during and after a pandemic (Rossana Bonadei, Cinzia Spinzi, Stefania Maci, Milos Nacic, Sanja Iguman), followed by a fourth section focusing on behaviours and social impacts (Roberto Peretta, Gabriella Alberti, Domenico Perrotta, Kerstin Heuwinkel). The fifth section analyses survival strategies to a pandemic for art, culture and science (Terry Stevens, Iolanda Pensa, Gemma Tully, Raffaella Pulejo, Patrizia Anesa, Gloria Pastorino). The last section deals with tourism teaching during crisis by analysing the results of a survey (Stephanie Pyne and Federica Burini).

This collection is addressed to students interested in the tourism sector, who are in search of answers in this time of change and crisis. We believe that after reading this volume they won't have all the answers to their dilemmas, but they will reflect about them, they will receive proposals for specific approaches,

methodologies, sources, references, examples, useful for the future of their own research.

I wish to thank the colleagues from the University of Bergamo and the visiting professors from British, Canadian, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Serbian, Swiss, US universities for having accepted with great enthusiasm this challenge in a so difficult period of resistance. Their valuable contributions will undoubtedly be of great interest and demonstrate that a global phenomenon should be always analysed by a global network of researchers. I also thank the anonymous referees from foreign universities who dedicated their time to read and approve this publication.

The book is dedicated to our students of the Master Course in *Planning and Management of Tourism Systems* and to those of them who particularly suffered for Covid-19.

Federica Burini

President of the Master Course in Planning and Management of Tourism Systems, Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures University of Bergamo

The art & science of destination management

Terry Stevens*

Abstract: *This essay first appeared in an extended format in 'Wish You Were Here: The stories behind 50 of the world's great destinations' by Terry Stevens and published by GRAFFEG and is reproduced by kind permission of the author. Since then the world of tourism has been devastated and reduced to almost zero by Covid-19 pandemic. As this version of the essay is published, countries are beginning to emerge from the lockdown. This will take place on a staggered basis and recovery will take a long time. In these circumstances, destination management will become the most important aspect of tourism regrowth. The research and findings discussed below will be critical to the success of the future development of sustainable and resilient destinations.*

Keywords: *art and science, destination management, sustainable and resilient destinations*

1. Introduction

The destination has become the major focal point of interest in sustainable and resilient tourism development. A destination is, quite simply, a place where people want to visit; be it for pleasure or for business. At the heart of a successful destinations is a competent, well-resourced, destination management organisation (DMO). Despite the proven success of the destination management approach, it is far from being universally applied with the occurrence of effective and efficient DMOs being relatively rare. There are fine examples of internationally, well-respected, DMOs whose governance, activities and managerial models provide best practice information. This essay explores the shift from destination marketing to destination management following personal analysis of over one hundred DMOs around the world using a unique benchmarking instrument. The essay concludes by suggesting a modern agenda for sustainable tourism destination management with ideas for a new business model for DMOs and, in so doing, raising some important questions about the future nature and functioning of these organisations in the twenty first century in a post-Covid19 world.

* Terry Stevens, Stevens & Associates, terry@stevensassoc.co.uk.

2. Destinations and destination management: taking stock

A recent review of the 2019 release of Bob Dylan's 1975 *Rolling Thunder Revue* opens with the statement 'Oceans of ink have been spilt, entire forests felled, in pursuit of a subject we like to think we know, but that is, the wiser of us know and eventually discover, unknowable' (Cains, 2019). This observation can similarly be levelled at the cloudburst of publications on tourism over the past fifty years since it became a fashionable area of academic study. Within this canon of literature there has been some work focusing on destination marketing, management and, since 2012, literature specifically exploring DMOs (Morrison, 2013; Negruş, Coroş, 2016; Varhgese, Paul, 2014). Analysis of the literature on destination management shows that it has emerged as a focus of study since 2000, with almost 40,000 published papers appearing between 2000 and 2016 (68 percent of them published between 2010 and 2016). The more recent publications on the concept of the destination, including those by Beritelli, Bieger and Laesser (2014), Hristov, Zehrer (2015) and Pechlaner, Kozak and Volgger (2014), and those about destination management and marketing (e.g. Adeyinka-Ojo, Khoo-Lattimore, Nair, 2014; McKercher & Prideaux, 2014; Pike, Page, 2014), reveals a lively discussion taking place trying to define a destination and the role of the DMO. In particular, however, the work on destination management by Hölzl (Pechlaner, Hölzl, Tallinucci, 2005) supported by others (Klimek, 2017; Luštický, Kincl, 2012; Seraphin, Gowreensunkar, Ambaye, 2016; Zlatković, 2016) helped generate the innovative thinking behind the St Gallen Destination Management Model. These findings, together with the real-time benchmarking work by S&A (Stevens, 2018), raise fundamental questions about the usefulness of present definitions of destination management and the way we consider the future work of DMOs.

As a result, the UNWTO's definition below of the tourism destination is regarded as being symptomatic of the shortcomings in dealing with the challenges related to destination formation, operation, and its impact measurement:

A local tourism destination is a physical space in which a visitor spends at least one overnight. It includes tourism products such as support services and attractions, and tourism resources within one day's return travel time. It has physical and administrative boundaries defining its management, images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness. Local tourism destinations incorporate various stakeholders often including a host community and, can nest and network to form larger destinations. (UNWTO, 2002)

3. 'The Times They Are A-changin': from destination marketing to destination management

In 1994, Gunn recognized the need for destination management, describing the need for a more integrated destination-wide approach involving all stakeholders in order to deliver a better matching of supply and demand in order to maximise the use of destination resources (Gunn, 1994). Subsequently, Laws (1995) produced one of the earliest references to include destination management in the title of a book whilst acknowledging that others had previously alluded to the need for a destination management approach and going beyond destination marketing activity (Gunn, 1972; Inskeep, 1991; Leiper, 1979).

It took a further ten years to legitimize the idea of destination management when, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) produced a management framework for the 'complex and multifaceted nature of all the factors that affect destination competitiveness'. Four years later, the UNWTO (2007) established a platform to promote destination management. It was clear that established destination organisations were coming under increasing pressure to evolve (Presenza, 2006) and, specifically, to move away from marketing to become management focused (UNWTO, 2011) with inclusive stakeholder engagement, more robust governance and stronger private-sector leadership (Gretzel, Fesenmaier, Formica, O'Leary, 2006; Hristove, Zehrer, 2015) and with greater consideration for the overall quality of life of local people (Pike, Page, 2013; Timur, Getz, 2008). These factors have immense prescience given today's issues associated with so-called 'over-tourism', concerns

about the quality of visitor experience (NECSTOuR, 2018), the need for more innovation (Hjaglar, 2015; UNWTO, 2019) and creating shared community value and wealth (Porter, Kramer, 2011; Serra, Font, Ivanova, 2016).

In 2009, the British Chambers of Commerce argued for DMOs, their concerns directed at Visit Britain (VB) and the UK Government in a hard-hitting report about the inadequacies of the structure of tourism, especially below the sub-regional level (BCC, 2009). Two years later, Robinson (2011, pp. 4-5) argued that:

The spotlight is on destinations, as the key entities to implement the Government's tourism strategy....Tourism growth needs much more than marketing, but few DMOs have embraced tourism management. The Government's Strategy prescribes that DMOs cover tourism management, and be private sector led. This means that DMOs must be formalised and strengthened.

Despite this unambiguous call for change, there was little evidence of a shift away from marketing towards a management focus and, with destination management appearing as an agenda item in international tourism-related conferences throughout 2011, British Chambers of Commerce continued to bemoan the absence of destination management, directing criticism in particular towards Visit Britain (Visit Britain, 2010).

Clearly, destination management is not an easy job. Success is based on the complex combination of the stewardship of tangible and intangible assets within a defined geographic area (Neçruşa, Coroş, 2016). In order to assist destination organizations to deal with their 'new' role as managers, a library of advisory materials has emerged to help make the shift in a systematic way. The advice takes the form of: simple checklists (Brooks, Forman, 2003); detailed guides on destination management (Australian Government 2016; Scottish Enterprise, 2008; UNWTO 2007; Visit Wales, 2019); reviews of international best practice (The Communications Group plc., 2018); and large compendiums covering all aspects of the subject such as Morrison's *magnum opus* (2019) built on his earlier work (2013).

Neçruş and Coroş (2016, p. 267) concluded that:

Destination success is a combination of tangible and less intangible attributes... All these factors determine the visitor experience. While some of these are beyond the control of the DMO, for a large-part, organisations can assure their managerial process. The DMO managers have a strong influence on destination success (and) through DMO performance evaluation, there can be identified areas for economic improvement, efficiency, capacity and effectiveness in achieving strategic and operational needs, which can further increase the destinations competitiveness.

Yet, despite a decade of advocacy for change, the emergence of DMOs has been slow to take place and destination management is still in its infancy with only few competent DMOs. Nevertheless, the UNWTO (2019) recognises there has been increasing awareness of the need for management of tourism destinations, with DMOs having a broader mandate that includes strategic planning, coordination and management of a full range of activities within an adequate governance structure that integrates different stakeholders, including the community, and operating with common goals: 'These developments stem from the urge to achieve an optimal management of the destination and a collective vision in pursuit of a common goal, the competitiveness and sustainability of the destination' (UNWTO, 2019, p. 1). The main goal is a strategic approach to link-up the complex and, often, very isolated, fragmented and occasionally diverging elements for the better management of the destination.

Yet, much of the literature implies that there has been no real break-through in terms of the application of a consensual approach to destination management, with some concluding that there is a distinct lack of DMOs (Adeylinka-Ojo, Khoo-Lattimore, Nair 2014), and pointing to a shortage of empirical evidence about impact of destination management in creating competitiveness. Stevens & Associates' (S&A) research addresses these concerns, revealing a significant number of DMOs with a competent managerial approach bravely forging ahead with new dynamic models of governance, getting to grips with contemporary issues by breaking the rules associated with collaborative working in order to drive new forms of partnerships and innovation. The

experiences of these exemplar DMOs are now discussed illustrating that their approach is based on science and art: the alchemy of destination management.

4. Benchmarking successful DMOs: revealing the art and science of destination management

S&A's destination benchmarking embraced this holistic, symbiotic systems approach in the analysis of destinations of all types and locations from around the world. In addition to examining performance and process measures of the destination, S&A deployed a specially designed Simple Multi-Attribute Rating Technique to assess the opinion of key tourism and community stakeholders about the reputation, competency and efficacy of the way their destination was managed using a Likert technique to derive an overall score for the destination with sub-scores for different dimensions of the destination and its management.

This model was based upon the pioneering research developed for the evaluation of winter tourism destinations in Canada by Crouch and Ritchie (1999), subsequently refined by Hudson in collaboration with Ritchie and Timur (Hudson, 2000; Hudson, 2003; Hudson, 2004; Hudson, Ritchie, Timur, 2004). Using this approach, in discussion with Hudson, S&A now has data for over one hundred destinations collected between 2003 – 2018, making it possible to benchmark these destinations both at a particular point in time and / or at a particular stage of their over an extended period of time and permitting destinations to objectively benchmark with their competitor set.

In 2018, the results from the benchmarked destinations were anonymized and collated into a set of graphs revealing some obvious, consistent patterns, showing that the destinations are doing the same things well and the same things badly. This was surprising considering that the information reflects a large number of destinations, each with unique settings, different assets and characteristics and surveyed over a fifteen-year period. The results illustrate how the management of the destination is perceived by their key stakeholders:

The activities they all do particularly well are:

- Visioning with strategy and action plan

- Clear positioning
 - Strong leadership with a well-resourced, well-governed, private sector led DMO
 - Innovative approach to market-focused product development
 - Dynamic funding models
 - Regular reviews of competitors
 - Investment in market research and trend analysis
 - Good community engagement
 - Commitment to sustainable and ethical development
- The activities they all intend to improve upon in the future are:
- Human resource development
 - Accessing new sources of capital investment
 - New methods of harnessing social media for marketing
 - Enhancing local access and transport for residents and tourists

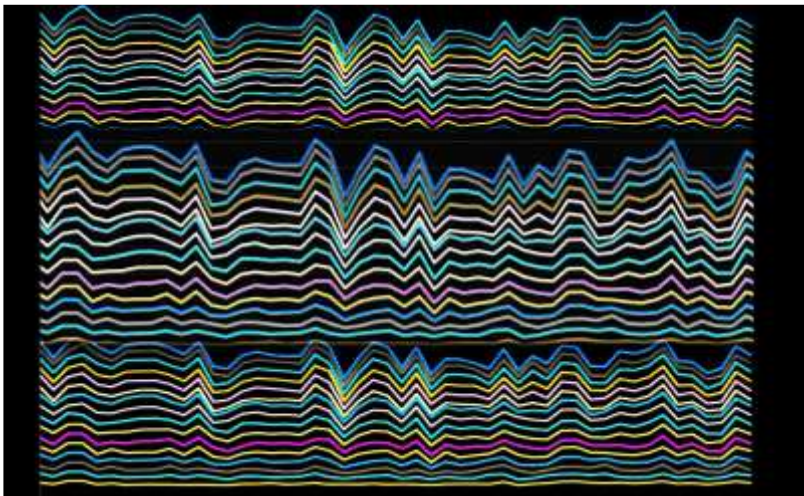


Figure 1 - The Collective Results if Fifteen Years of Benchmarking International Exemplar Destination Management Organisations.
Source: S&A, 2018©

In many ways the conclusions from studying these DMOs can be summarised as follows; interestingly, these findings are comparable to the conclusions of the 2018 '*St. Gallen Consensus on Destination Management*' and their five 'domains of destination management'. They are:

- (a) the need to reconsider and to review the prevailing definition and geography a destination;
- (b) the importance of destination management and a well-run DMO;
- (c) the need to regularly review the role, function, organisation and funding of DMOs;
- (d) destination success is highly dependent upon the clarity of its positioning, the nature of its tourism offer, and sustainable and ethical foundations;
- (e) commitment to innovation creating sustainable experiences for the visitor and quality of life for the residents in line with the United Nations Development Program's *Sustainable Development Goals* (UNWTO / UNDP, 2017; also NECSTOuR, 2018).

It is now possible to draw some conclusions about the success factors for destinations. A discussion of some of these factors follows together with reflections of the likely future agenda for destination management and DMOs.

5. Successful, sustainable destination management: some reflections

Destinations are places where people want to be for whatever reasons and motivations. The destination must be accessible, there must be a critical mass of things to see and do as well as places to stay and, for the destination to work successfully, it must be professionally and competently managed. This means that a 'managerial' approach involving a DMO should be adopted, taking into account the size and scale of the destination's geography, its tangible and intangible assets and resources, its stakeholder base and its visitor experiences. These simple truths resonate with Vanhove's (2005, pp. 132-138) observations that the fundamental product of tourism is the destination experience. Competition, therefore, is centred on the destination and for most tourists this

experience takes place in a rather small geographical area - an entity which, from a tourism management point of view, is managerial.

The analysis reveals ten shared, dominant, managerial characteristics:

- (i) *Compact*: the destinations are relatively small in scale averaging between 1,800 – 2,500 km² kilometres in size and all less than 3,000 km² but having the flexibility to expand and grow geographically on a temporarily according to the strategic needs of a particular visitor experience, event or product promotion - an approach that is defined as the dynamic geometry of destinations.
- (ii) *Coherent*: the destination's geography, geomorphology, topography, natural and built heritage and infrastructure makes them coherent from visual, social and cultural perspectives creating a strong sense of place and form that is easily understandable to the visitors;
- (iii) *Customer focused and contemporary*: destination managers are well-informed, through systematic research, annual benchmarking and frequent customer engagement, about tourism trends, visitor behaviour, perceptions and expectations allowing them to develop dynamic strategies responding to this market intelligence on a frequent basis;
- (iv) *Cohesive*: the destination makes sense as a logical construct for all stakeholders as perceived from different dimensions (topographical, territorial, cultural and historic, political, economic and strategic);
- (v) *Critical Mass*: the destination must have a clear vision, strategy and costed action plan ensuring the development of an appropriate, competitive, sustainable and balanced range of products, experiences, facilities and infrastructure to reflect its brand position and meet the needs and expectations of its residents and its visitors;
- (vi) *Competent*: the destination must be competently managed by a dedicated, well-resourced, well-organised and committed team of local people. These teams tend to be structured and functioning as an efficient, a not-for-profit company with community intent, led by a board of private sector and

community representatives with a strong leadership ethic operating collaboratively with strong networks and communications channels driving investment using innovative methods of raising capital and revenues;

- (vii) *Consistent*: the destination must ensure that the 'promise' made, implicitly or explicitly, to visitors through its marketing are delivered on a consistent basis. The complicated, multi-faceted nature, of the tourism system makes the co-ordination and management of the components the most challenging aspects of destination management;
- (viii) *Creative and innovative*: creating an environment that stimulates, fosters and supports innovation and creativity is, as will be discussed in greater detail later, of increasing importance to achieving successful, sustainable destinations;
- (ix) *Competitive*: driving success is the need for a destination to be competitive in a national and international context over-time. Creativity and innovation are key factors of competitiveness and DMOs need to be acutely tuned to recognising and applying innovative thinking to all aspects of their work;
- (x) *Collaborative and co-created*: 'together stronger' is oft used to encourage a collegiate, open, inclusive and transparent approach to destination management characterised by common trust and a shared set of objectives.

6. Fu(turism)o: The future agenda shaping the work of DMOs

There is no shortage of information, advice and evidence about tourism futures and changing market demands (Arsenault, 2016; Yeoman, 2012) making it relatively straight-forward to predict that DMOs are going to have to carefully consider how they deal with increased demand for customised experiences, the shared economy, increased desire for authentic, ethical and wholesome local experiences and how to harness social media to connect with local stakeholders and the global market place.

What is less easy to forecast is what tourists will want from the destination with expectations that go beyond the basic satisfaction, requiring researchers to revisit models of behaviour as they relate to tourism (Šimková, Holzner, 2014; Yousaf, Amin, Santos, 2018). At the same time, the host-guest relationship needs

to be re-evaluated in order to gain a better understanding of what the resident wants and expects from its tourism industry and how tourism is managed in respect of their quality of life (Alonso, Nyanjom, 2016; Uysal, Perdue, Sirgy, 2017). In other words, a new agenda for managing destinations is rapidly emerging that will change the way DMOs function and fundamentally challenge how success is measured, where reputation is becoming more important than performance. A recent collection of essays (Lois-Gonzales *et al.*, 2014), opens-up this discussion by exploring the cultural elements of 21st century tourism, suggesting new product developments that will be linked to reappraising the landscape, heritage, nature and spirituality in a destination. In exposing these scenarios, the authors start questioning tourist typologies, re-thinking destination positioning and challenges the roles, responsibilities and, maybe, the very existence of DMOs.

Tourism is increasingly about finding larger purpose in our lives and in the world. It is changing mindsets. According to a SKIFT (2019) report:

Experience development is key and an essential and highly sought-after part of the travel eco-system, but the concept has spread so widely that experience tourism as we know it today has lost its edge. To compensate we need to start going deeper towards the transformational value and how it helps the traveller become the person they aspire to be. It is all about customer centricity delivering personalisation and personal fulfilment.

These trends are creating new types of opportunities for destinations, and we are now on the threshold of the emergence of a new generation of DMOs which must become more 'responsible' organizations, not simply being reactive. Symbolic acts and doing what is right, not just in narrow terms for the tourist and the destination, but for society as a whole will become ever more important (Mendiratta, 2013). These are big responsibilities indeed for the humble DMO.

7. Concluding remarks

The 'responsible' challenge for DMOs has very strong echoes of the optimism of the early luminaries of our tourism experiences,

such as William E Brown (1971) who, in *Islands of Hope*, discussed the importance of the visitor experience and the intersection with responsible environmental management:

...to move from (simply) managing the resource itself to managing the people who use it. First and foremost, the experience that the visitor gets (in a destination) is the critical thing – not from the political administration approach, size or the way it is organized but from the dimensions of life that visitors can experience such areas (Brown, 1971, pp. 7-8).

The future success of DMOs will require fresh thinking about all aspects of their work. In 2018, S&A identified a new model of successful destination management which represents a significant shift from the traditional reliance on the five Ps of tourism development) to the five Rs (Stevens, Associates, 2018) comprising:

- **Recognition** – recognising the importance of tourism to the destination and the rural/urban economy and communities.
- **Relationships** – the building of relationships (vertical and horizontal integration) ensuring a shared vision and strategy for tourism based upon common trust and common values.
- **Relevance** – of products, experiences and the destination to the interests and needs of emerging markets and the host communities.
- **Responsibility** – the development of a sustainable, empathetic, sensitive and responsible approach to tourism development respecting the assets of the destination, its environment, socio-cultural interests of the tourists and capacity of the host community.
- **Respect** – for the interests and wellbeing of all parties including the host community, business community and the visitors to the destination.

In the pursuit of destination competitiveness, the destinations that excel go their own way with a bespoke, objective, mission and vision and clear management strategy. The DMOs that

are succeeding are open minded. They are willing to innovate and to try new ways of working. They adopt the adage, 'change your thought and it will change your mind', and they apply the relevant elements alchemy to their work once the destination leaders understand that the job to be done is doing what is right for the wealth of their community and the visitors.

In summary, therefore, DMOs are about creating the vision, implementing a dynamic strategy and managing the reputation and performance of tourism by delivering the promise across their destination by adopting a clear leadership role, driving collaboration through internal and external networks, normalising innovation and creativity in all aspects of the work of the organisation, delivering exceptional visitor experiences using tourism to create shared values and wealth across the resident community. So, if vision, strategy, positioning and co-ordination are then the key and the key to co-ordination is the establishment of a well-resourced, competently managed destination management organisation.

DMOs are the lodestars of twenty first century tourism. The destination is the key to the future. The destination is a managerial unit and now, more than ever before in the history of tourism, there has to be an integrated, collaborative and collective view taken as to what type, nature and scale of tourism is both sustainable, resilient and acceptable within a community. This will involve every voice within a community contributing to the debate about the destination's carrying capacity at different times of the year. It is no longer about the tourism and visitor economy versus everything else.

It will be based on a COMMON VISION, COMMON SENSE, COMMON VALUES, COMMON INTERESTS, COMMON HONESTY, COMMON RESPONSIBILITY, COMMON RESPECT AND COMMON TRUST.

COMMON RESPECT AND TRUST are two-way concepts that are shared not just within the destination amongst all the stakeholders but also with the visitors intending to visit the destination. In April 2020, the Secretary-General of the UNWTO, Zurab Pololikashvili, announced that "trust is the new currency of our new normal. And tourism is ideally positioned to be the vehicle

to channel trust". Just as the visitor will expect the destination to respect and trust them and their demands so too should the destination expect the visitor to respect and trust the interests of the host community. In these three SIMPLE words we now have the beginnings of a new concepts and with it a new language - a fresh lexicon and glossary of terms - for the tourism industry..... some of we may have seen before but have never given them the RESPECT AND TRUST they deserved.

Here is a selection of the fresh perspectives to help design the new future for tourism:

1. **THE INVITED GUEST** - We are moving away from traditional marketing to a situation where destinations will INVITE guests to be part of their community based on analysis of safe markets, tested markets, testing and tracing technologies and other metrics to find the best mix
2. **THE TOURIST CORRIDOR** - The development of agreed routes or specific geographies for tourists to travel that are based on agreed border crossings and controls, strategically managed travel networks and roadside service stations becoming health testing centres and potential field hospitals
3. **THE ADMIRER AND DESIRED DESTINATION** - These and other ways that a destination commands **respect and reputation to be places that people believe in**
4. **THE DESTINATION CARRYING CAPACITY** - The need for a full destination asset audit and a collective decision within the destination as to its carrying capacity viewed from the perspective of evidence, data, discussions and intuition measured from the perspective of these different dimensions of capacity: environmental, physical, economic, touristic, health, psychological, perceptual, cultural, linguistic, value v price and managerial competency.
5. **COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY TOURISM** - putting all of the above together.

In short it is time to re-set all the buttons on the tourism control system.

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