

EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETING IN ITALY FOR TERRITORIAL BRANDS – EXPLOITING THE DRIVE OF THEME DISCOVERY AND PURCHASE TOURISM

Giacomo Primo Scortino
Pegaso International University, Malta
giacomo.sciortino@asi.it

Abstract:

A pool of academic, ICT, technical and marketing entities (UniPegaso / Pegaso International Naples www.unipegaso.it, Assocorce – Sistema Industria Rome www.assocorce.it, Eventi Telematici, Milan www.eventitelematici.com) started working last year in Italy, on 3 “probe” international tourist itineraries, respectively in the North, Center and South of the Country, to demonstrate how tutored tourism aimed at purchase and discovery can be an effective marketing leverage for territorial brands of local productions. More precisely, the benefits of one such tourism promotion system could be expected, besides the ordinary incoming tourism revenue areas (transportation, board and lodging) in the accessory areas of certified origin agro-food and beverage produce, handcraft and industrial products, thematic entertainment and activities connected to heritage and natural excellencies and landmarks, as well as in several sizeable other indirect aspects of international trade, exchange and finance.

The “concept” of this innovative scheme was introduced in abstract at the previous session of this esteemed Conference in Naples, where the main focus was the choice of Italy as the ideal test bed for the system, due to its unique “diversity” (bio-natural/historical/cultural), and on the applicability on a worldwide scale, as a model for territorial development policies. In fact, the global socio-economic context is becoming all the more favourable for such initiatives for a series of factors: the security crisis has progressively eroded the attractiveness of many exotic tourist destinations (Africa, Middle East, Latin America); the relative Euro devaluation is instead making Europe more competitive; as regards international trade, global environment concerns make it more advisable and convenient to move people than goods and therefore help the “0 mile” consumption concept; fast growing ITC technologies and especially fiber - like mobile connectivity can now support all kinds of social and economic interactions, no matter how remote the places.

Therefore, the advancement of the abovesaid model design is here illustrated, and especially the first accomplished step of selection, following a dedicated “call for ideas”, of a number of itineraries featuring their suitable discovery “rationale”, among which the 3 “probes”. An overview is also provided of the ongoing following actions: completion of phase one with the assessment of the identity and size of demand for the “probe” itineraries in terms of thematic tutored purchase and discovery tourism; start of phase two regarding the sustainability of the associative network approach, which has been chosen for the legal and economical organization of the promotional system, in one with the sustainability of the advanced technical and cultural requirements imposed on all of the potential association “stakeholders”; and finally the crucial involvement of Local Authorities expected to certify and support these models in their own development policies, and to use the system’s suggested measurements of success, to monitor the results in time at all levels, from the “core” of the tourism sector, to the accessory local “purchases”, to the indirect extended results in the export of quality goods and services, in the attraction of estate and industrial foreign investments, and finally in the downstream general benefit for the Balance of Payments and the Environmental impact of economy.

Keywords: international discovery tourism, territorial brands, 0 mile purchases

1.A SELECTION OF THEMATIC DISCOVERY AND PURCHASE ITINERARIES DESIGNED FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS – ITALY AS IN IDEAL TEST BED TO EXPERIMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT MODELS CAPABLE OF INCREASING PRODUCTION – AND EFFECTS ON THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS - FAR BEYOND THE ORDINARY TOURISM BUSINESS

After a cycle of seminars organized nationwide by Assocorce and UniPegaso (Assocorce, 2018) an open “call for ideas” was opened to the relative audience and concluded late last year with the selection of 3 itineraries, respectively in the North, Center and South of the Country, to launch as “probes” of an innovative approach to international tourism promotion. This new model, designed and managed by Assocorce – Sistema Industria (a private association of global trade professionals), aims at offering non profit associative assistance, with various available levels of virtual tutoring, to “scout-tourists” interested in treading short interactive itineraries - with a clear purchase and discovery content - inspired by stimulating and qualitative cultural themes. Italy seems to be the ideal test bed for such an experiment; it has for instance the highest number of sites in the UNESCO heritage list (UNESCO, 2019) and the highest biodiversity rate in Europe both animal and vegetal. Also, its historical and cultural heritage is unique in the world. It is very important to remark that, according to international standards, the definition of tourism applied here is relative to the limited length of a stay of persons in one Country (to avoid confusions with migration phenomena). Yet, although leisure is the prevailing motive, this definition covers all other forms of tourism, for health, education, business or other reasons.

The substantial goal behind this system, apart from the obvious one of earning fair margins for the self sustainment of the envisaged “vehicle” association (TuTourItaly), is in the promotion of additional “incoming” tourist flows capable of generating currency returns locally, other than in the traditional accountancy items of tourism (i.e. transnational transport, board and lodging), and in sizeable terms, Let’s think of the benefits in terms of sales of quality / origin food and beverage, handcraft and industrial products, services for entertainment, culture, business, education, health, local transportation. Let’s also think of the image benefit in territorial competitiveness related to other indirect effects in the domain of foreign transactions: quality – origin export and services, attraction of estate and innovative industrial foreign investment.

Having all this in mind, as well as which could be the most favourable conditions to encourage a pioneering attitude, the “call for ideas” in question imposed a series of technical conditions, which are currently being doublechecked:

- Two days itineraries with one only night of stay departing – within a 100 miles range - from famous tourist destinations (art cities, international airports, ports, stations), so to offer a smart and intriguing option to an already existing travelling plan, and a chance of de-congesting crowded centers;
- A clear theme of discovery whether historical, natural, scientific, etc. in which the scout – tourist can identify, associated to high value added, and continuously updated, information supplied by the tutor, to make the scout – tourist the key player in the “game”;
- Each itinerary must contain at least one characterizing natural landmark, one historical and at least three interactive “stages” consistent with the theme, carrying elements of know how and heritage transfer related to the relative product or service, and performed in fluent english by be associated local host. A minimum 2 of these stages will be in the gastronomy domain and will typically present quality original food and beverage and the way to cook / prepare it;
- The overnight stay will be likewise only allowed in associated hosts’ structures complying with the theme and ensuring english fluency;
- All items enclosed in the itinerary’s purchase list must be of certified local origin
- All of the hosts (stages / stays) must supply at their sites a stable fiber – like web connection for free to the scout tourists and grant their access to at least one wired workstation. The hosts must also have a reliable e-shop website where all their products featuring in the TuTourItaly purchase list can be clearly selected and purchased at the established prices, inclusive of the relative discount options;
- The hosts hereabove must also ensure the scout – tourists right to ask them to validate with their credentials, in presence or remotely, the notifications of purchase generated in the TuTourItaly platform, along with the relative discount. Accordingly, the scout – tourists right is enforced to issue a “score” (counter ceilings are here applied to avoid distortions) on the platform about their experience. If it is not relative to purchases (see the case of sites evaluations), the host’s validation procedure is only possible on site.
- In case of hosts using proxy platforms to sell their services (Booking, Expedia, etc.), and limited to board / lodging / local services (transportation, museums, etc.) the discount can be agreed in other “values” than a rebate on price.

The synopsis of itineraries which generally fulfill the above requirements and out of which the 3 “probes” were selected, is reported here below.

Tab.1 TuTourItaly initiative (source Assocorce – Sistema Industria) – List of participating “ideas” to the 2018 call for itineraries in Italy



INTERNATIONAL “THEME” DISCOVERY AND PURCHASE TOURISM - 2018

Region – Departure hub	Theme	Abstract	Notes - Itinerary
Valle d’Aosta - Aosta	Val d’Aosta, an ethnical community, guardian of openness	Discover this land not from the Mountain hights but the crossing points that made her history as a hinge between French, Italian and Swiss culture, through the ages	Ivrea (TO) – Pont S.Martin – Bard – Saint Vincent – Fenis – Courmayeur – Saint Pierre. Medieval handcraft (iron, ore), modern industry, food produce and cuisine interactive experiences and purchases
Lombardia - Milano	Tourism with my pet	Innovative Milano proposes to get away from the crowds and discover its green plains at the South, together with your dog, cat, horse Optional horse trekking available on the Po river banks; dog agility paths; pets beauty contests; tour to Parma and the Princess perfumes collection and lab	Casalpusterlengo (LO) – Cremona - Belgioioso (PV) – Pavia – Vigevano – Morimondo (MI) Interactive and purchase experiences in the universe of pets in the fabulous natural settings of fluvial parks and farmhouses
Veneto - Venezia	A Maritime Republic’s back country	The splendor of Venice could not have lasted one millennium if the maritime republic hadn’t an effective and productive backcountry with skilled workers and plenty of raw materials Optional trekking in the subsidised fluvial area of Taglamente and the river’s underground springs “Scuola Veneziana” musical entertainment	S.Michele al Tagliamento (VE) – Aquileia (UD) – Grado (GO) – Valvasone (PN) – Sacile – Treviso. Handcraft, industry (naval, iron) food produce and cuisine interactive experiences and purchases
Friuli Venezia Giulia - Trieste	Trieste - The middle European vocation of a harbour	In rivalry with Venice, and especially during the Austrian empire, Trieste has always been a thriving port city, with unique intercultural and ethnical mixes International Itinerary – implies crossing Slovenia and Croatia borders	Porec (HR) – Piran - Koper (SLO) – Prosecco (TS). Accross three countries and a complex pre and post war history discover, through interactive experiences and purchases, the unique blend of tradition and innovation toghether in food produce, cuisine and handcraft - industry
Toscana - Firenze	The Sea and the Mountains experience of historical Florence	Trace the Tuscan excellence tradition in culture and production	Viareggio (LU) – Lucca – Pisa (PI) - Ponte a Buggiano (PT) – Collodi –

		around Florence richest and proud back country from mountain hights to the Versilia shores	Fucecchio (FI). Marble, textile tradition, weaponry, food production, olive oil and wine traced in their evolution from oldest times to nowadays interactive experiences,purchases
Lazio - Roma	From Rieti to Rome on the footsteps of San Francesco	For lovers of middle age mysticism and nature. Treading the pilgrims' paths (biking and wilderness trekking options). Medieval musical entertainment	Greccio – Rieti – Valle Santa – Turano Lake – Farfa area and its gorges. Medieval handcraft (hemp, glass) and cuisine, Sabina olive oil interactive experiences and purchases
Lazio – Roma (Civitavecchia)	Health and fitness the Popes'way	An itinerary accross the volcanic mysteries of turf and hot springs; the millenary signs of Etruscan, Roman and Modern civilization	Viterbo – Lago di Vico (VT), Vulci, Tarquinia, Tolfa. Old handcraft, cuisine, food produce (truffle, chestnut) modern water “industry” interactive experiences and purchases
Lazio - Roma	From hard to soft rocks and the sea	A geological and historical interpretation of the passageway from the mountains to the sea North of Rome, from Goethe's travel diaries Optional wilderness tour in the Barbarano Canyon with discoveries dating 30.000 b.c.	S.Oreste (RM) - Civita Castellana (VT) - Sutri, Oriolo e Barbarano Romano (VT) - Tarquinia and its Lido. Ancient and old handcraft from clay tradition to modern production, food produce and cuisine interactive experiences and purchases
Lazio - Roma	The fatal shores of Rome	An insight in the history and changes of the coastal lands South of the Eternal City from heritage to innovation in agriculture and hi-tech	Sperlonga (LT) – Terracina – S.Felice Circeo – Norma / Ninfa – Latina and seaside – Aprilia industrial area. Old handcraft and hitech production, local produce and cuisine interactive experiences and purchases
Campania - Napoli	The heritage of the (former) Kingdom of Naples	For the industrious and curious, a plunge into the rich and homogeneous productive and cultural tradition of the former Kingdom of Naples, from roman times until Italy's Unification in 1860 (the “dark side of tourism” option available). “Scuola Napoletana” musical entertainment	Caserta Reggia – San Leucio (CE) – Capua (CE) - S.Armino (NA)Archeo Park – Capodimonte terrace (NA). Hi tech (aircraft and drones), handcraft (silk, clothing, musical instruments) and cuisine (i.e. Bufala mozzarella) interactive experiences and purchases
Campania - Napoli	A discovery of the Mediterranean Diet	The ideal itinerary for a 2 day full immersion in the territories, produce and cooking skills .. and become a Mediterranean home cook ! Sea wilderness option available	Marina di Camerota (SA), Palinuro, Pollica, Paestum, Vietri (SA). Food related and cuisine interactive experiences and purchases

Calabria – Costiera Amalfitana	Old Calabria adventure	Stray away south from the borders of the Costiera to relive the suggestions of Norman Douglas among wilderness, ethnical and historical unmatched extremes Local music (Albanian) and mountain wilderness (wolf howling tours) options available	Scalea – Lungro – Civita – Pollino - Parco del Cilento – Salerno – Angri. Old arts and trades', historical cuisine and linguistic (Albanian communities) diversity interactive experiences and purchases
Puglia – Bari	The other Puglia – Pride of Salento	A journey across the southern region of Salento, its cultural pride and ethnical origins, the new challenges facing Eastern Europe Optionally available a dark side of tourism tour at ILLVA premises Taranto	Taranto – Porto Cesareo (LE) – Otranto – Calimera – Lecce. Various territories (see i.e. the greek speaking communities south of Lecce) offer their industrial, handcraft, food produce output and cuisine for interactive experiences and purchases
Sicilia – Palermo	The Archimede's idea	An alternative to Palermo and its composite heritage comes from the greek city of Syracuse and its surroundings, all the way to the Etna volcano Trekking to the Etna "fumaroles" optional	Siracusa – Catania – Acireale – Motta di Camastra (ME). Various offers -interactive experiences and purchases in food produce, cuisine, handcraft
Sardegna – Costa Smeralda	Sardinia mountains	World known as a spectacular seaside place, Sardinia will surprise you with its stunning inland scenery and millenary history Optional Montiferru bike or horse ride	Villagrande di Stisaili (OG) – Cuglieri (OR) – Pattada (SS) – Arzachena Capighera Olbia - Poltu Quatu. Various offers -interactive experiences and purchases in food produce, cuisine, handcraft

2. THE ASSOCIATIVE APPROACH CHOSEN FOR THE LEGAL AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT – TECHNICAL AND CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS IMPOSED ON TUTOURITALY'S STAKEHOLDERS

The envisaged propulsive engine of TuTourItaly, when phase two will start, is in an Italian based non profit association with a completely independent web platform, to ensure various levels of purely virtual interaction, with the aim of covering the costs of long term legal and economical sustainable management. The main working principles are the following, regarding each type of members and their roles:

- An accurate value added on update info is provided by the Tutor members, which carry the administration of the platform, and are, especially, individually responsible for each territorial itinerary available online by the scout tourists and the other members;
- Passionate scout tourist members join worldwide choosing their favourite discovery and purchase tour. The "unlimited production" requirement imposed to productive itinerary host members (stage managers) make the "game" suitable and attractive also for business oriented "buyers" (moreover some itineraries are mainly designed for these travellers); scout tourists can subscribe membership / memberships only by single itinerary, becoming their territorial guardian and mentors. This can happen at three fee levels, from the simplest and cheapest (only timely - yearly browsing online privilege of the itineraries), to the medium (having in addition a chatmail assistance on the itinerary), and finally to the full level (inclusive of teleconference tutoring). The association offer comes with a flat right of

discount on all chartered itinerary purchases and the right of issuing an evaluation score on the same or just on the sites, to be uploaded in the in the platform (discounts and scores must be validated by the hosts with their credentials into the platform);

- The host members (managers of stage structures and sites) subscribe a higher – yet absolutely affordable – association fee and incur in a yearly surcharge proportional to the amount of their sales tracked on the platform and the quality of the scores received. They have to grant the highest standards of hospitality and assistance and have and extended access to all platform services:
- Finally, the Local Authorities have a dedicated member status with free access to the platform services and receive basic training support to implement their development policies at best, plus discount rates for additional network assistance.

It is worth noticing, in general, that all of the Members, and even more those involved with operational services, must ensure a special “reactivity” to the innovative “stimuli” implied by this system, and particularly from the technical – virtual and language point of view. They won’t be able to clear phase two and move into the final launch if they are not compliant. Technical requirements will be assessed both on their possession of suitable virtual infrastructure, as well as the related advanced know how skills, in terms of robustness, strategies and continuity. Cultural requirements are mainly based on english total fluency and the motivation to be authoritative ambassadors of italian heritage to the world.

3. THE INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN SUPPORTING THE INITIATIVE IN THEIR TERRITORIES AND IN MONITORING ITS OUTCOME THROUGH THE MANY AVAILABLE AND RELIABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROWTH INDEXES

The last “probe” launch phase requires the involvement of Local Authorities, to act as stakeholders in the associative framework. The geographical scale of the initiatives makes Municipalities (Comuni in italian), or clusters of them, the elective target. All of the Municipalities whose territories lie along the itineraries with their natural, heritage or stage / site places, should be aware of these “assets”’” productive interest. This does not only involves the traditional items of tourism accountancy (trans national transportation, board and lodging) but also, and massively, the remaining areas of the so called “tourism satellite accountancy” (OECD, 2008), that is local transportation, services related to entertainment, culture, business, education and health, purchases of quality food and beverage, handcraft and industrial products. The latter represent the series of items included in the incoming “tourism” performance’s figure included in Italy’s Balance of Payments. Moreover, these Authorities should become aware of their territorial image attractiveness in even wider and indirect terms, that is regarding all levels of global socio – economic interchange: from the trade balance to the foreing current accounts, to conclude with the balance of payments and its monetary and financial section. More precisely, and respectively, this consciousness, should be a guiding principle with the aim of increasing exports in quality services and goods, as well as flows of foreing estate and innovative industrial investments.

A series of statistical tables, drawn from the study presented at the seminars early in 2018, can clarify these connections, with some examples. Firstly, see the implementation of similar coherent system policies by Regione Lombardia at the time of the Milano Expo in 2015, which proved to be the leverage for this “Regione” to take over the leadership from Regione Lazio (Rome’s Region) – the former traditional longtime top scorer - in the standings of Italy’s incoming tourism. In fact, the pivotal role of the “purchase” item in the tourism accountancy breakdown, is obvious, and to some extent also is likewise the related “board” item (restaurant and non hotel similar services).

Tab.2 Trends of Tourism Italy – See «Viaggi all’Estero» item in the Current Accounts Tab.5 – Source: Bank of Italy – Enquiry on international tourism 2016 – M€

Year	Incoming	Outgoing	Balance
2008	30.090	20.922	10.168
2009	28.856	20015	8.841
2010	29.257	20.416	8.841
2011	30.891	20.583	10.308
2012	32.056	20.512	11.543
2013	33.064	20.309	12.755
2014	34.240	21.713	12.572
2015	35.765	22.040	13725
2016	36.359	22.547	13.812

Tab.3 Trends of Tourism Italy – See «Viaggi all’Estero» item (Incoming) in the Current Accounts Tab.5 – Item breakdown in some Regions - Source: Bank of Italy – Enquiry on international tourism 2016 – M€

	Campania		Lazio		Lombardia	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Number of nights <i>in milioni</i>	15,765	17,676	50,546	46,402	48,832	52,916
Total expenditure <i>in M€ of which</i>	1800	1834	6367	5739	6099	6553
Purchases	339	299	1176	946	1676	1740
Lodging	784	883	2616	2392	2263	2346
Board	338	333	1480	1352	1248	1373

A sample of meaningful provincial (Metropolitan areas) insights from the above Table confirms the Lombardia Region trends. Cremona (not far from Milano) positive performance was helped by a very efficient territorial brand policy (musical instruments and culture, the Stradivari craftsmanship, the Po river heritage, etc.) that also more than doubled the lodging revenues. One can also notice the coherently negative example of Caserta (Campania Region), which could not oppose with similar policies the sharp drop in lodging revenues caused, among others, in transportation improvements which made in the last years its typical Royal Palace visit just a short daily trip from Naples.

Tab.4 Trends of Tourism Italy – See «Viaggi all’Estero» (Incoming) item in the Current Accounts Tab.5 – Breakdown in some Provinces - Source: Bank of Italy – Enquiry on international tourism 2016 – M€

Type of index	Cremona		Viterbo		Caserta	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Total expenditure of which in M€	24	37	11	15	30	23
<i>N.nights person</i>	256000	456000	179000	233000	419000	353000
<i>Various purchases of goods and services</i>	5,64	7,82	2,18	1,97	5,82	6,33
<i>Lodging</i>	7,38	15,82	4,43	4,99	15,81	7,56
<i>Board</i>	5,32	6,47	2,33	3,16	4,19	5,30

The figures of Satellite Tourism Accountancy (Viaggi all'Estero item in the next Table), within the frame of the Current Accounts section in the Balance of Payments shows, in general terms, how important this sector is to maintain a surplus despite the poorer performance the Italian "invisible" transactions, compared with the good trend in "visible" transactions'. And even more so if we consider the potential increase of quality and specialised / original export of goods and services directly connected to the policies designed here. Not to mention that the financial and monetary section of the Balance of Payments, which is not showed here (reporting a slimmer surplus margin) could in the same way benefit from higher and stabler flows of estate and innovative industrial investments in Italy. Enlarging on the latter subject, there are dedicated statistical indexes at provincial level that can represent in a meaningful way the hereabove relations: on quality food and beverage export, on innovative industrial export, on the number of registered patents, etc.

Tab.5 – The Current Account section from Italy's Balance of Payments – Source: Bank of Italy

Voci	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Merci (Fob-Fob)	16.829	36.099	47.407	50.728	59.931
Servizi	-123	443	-1.017	-2.750	-3.187
Trasporti	-8.223	-7.934	-8.286	-8.406	-8.306
Viaggi all'estero	11.543	12.755	12.528	13.544	13.813
Altri servizi	-3.443	-4.377	-5.259	-7.888	-8.695
Redditi primari	-3.012	-3.035	-46	-9.217	2.772
Da lavoro dipendente	3.677	2.988	3.579	4.284	4.314
Da capitale	-9.704	-9.332	-7.523	-15.667	-4.246
Altri	3.015	3.309	3.898	2.166	2.705
Redditi secondari	-19.516	-18.101	-15.861	-15.028	-16.761
Amministrazioni pubbliche	-13.597	-15.405	-13.692	-11.715	-14.019
Altri settori	-5.918	-2.697	-2.170	-3.313	-2.742
di cui: Rimesse dei lavoratori	-6.347	-5.059	-4.729	-4.608	-4.428
Conto corrente	-5.822	15.406	30.482	23.734	42.755

Fonte: elaborazioni Ice su dati Banca d'Italia

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this system, which is hopefully proceeding toward an effective implementation and with the wider aims of growth of territorial production in the improvement of foreign exchange indexes, there are two cross cutting postulates: the belief that economies must be global; understanding and implementing the algebraic equation between importing consumers and exporting goods and services, as regards currency international exchange balance.

The times and contexts seem in fact to welcome a shift in favour of the first side of the said equation (importing consumer – tourists or at least fidelising their remote purchases when returned home). Moving people across the planet is getting increasingly simple and cheap, and ultimately, relatively speaking, more beneficial to the environment than moving goods and service providers. Let's only think, if not the immediate relief given to overcrowded tourism hubs in enhancing their surroundings attractiveness, of the pollution effect connected to terrestrial, naval and airborne cargo transportation. Along with the widening access of people to transportation means, other "highways", those of easy, handy and personal digital information open up to accelerate and support the transition in question. Moreover, the "0 Mile" paradigm seems to enlarge perspectives of equal development chances for every single Territory, provided they take up the challenge of getting organized to enhance their excellencies, their competencies, their global "brands", and therefore become attractive for these human flows. The global impact of these new open, qualified and welcoming territorial policies will be positive in all the other indexes of their international socio-economic performance, from the qualified export of goods and services, to the increase of innovative estate and industrial foreign investments.

REFERENCE LIST

1. Assocorace. (2018). *Worksops Assocorace UniPegaso*. Retrieved from www.assocorace.it: Experimental projects of international marketing in Italy for territorial brands – Exploiting the drive of theme discovery and purchase tourism
2. OECD. (2008). *Tourism Satellite Account*. Retrieved from Recommended methodological framework: <http://www.oecd.org/tourism/tourismsatelliteaccountrecommendedmethodologicalframewor.htm>
3. UNESCO. (2019). *World Heritage List*. Retrieved from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>