

Touristic public management potential and challenges, Case of Souss Massa Draaⁱ region - Morocco

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Abstract. Touristic development in the context of globalization became a very competitive field: to sell one's "destination", it's no longer enough to communicate on one's territorial landscape, culture and infrastructures; one must see to the consistency and efficiency of its strategic planning. This article is therefore designed in an efficiency perspective of touristic management through a review of the related literature and theories of disciplines such as: governance, efficiency management, strategic planning... It then offers a brief historical review of the evolution of touristic public governance over time, in order to better understand the current state of touristic public management in the Souss Massa Draa region – Morocco. This portrait is designed using a method inspired from Balanced ScoreCard planning for territorial project management (work of Ioppolo et al. 2012) and enriched with multiple interviews with officials of touristic matter in the region. The resulting model reflects an ongoing incoherence of the different political ideologies managing the sector, and its effects on public management practices: overlapping of different administrations responsibilities and fields of action, competition between these administrations regardless on the effect of this competition on global performances of the sector, etc. Subsequent to situation analysis, we found inspiration in the work of some authors: Wolson (1987), Harty (1996), Solange (2008) to conclude with some of their best practices and improvement tactics as a way to better the public management of tourism and all other public management fields.

Keywords: Public management, Tourism, Managerial efficiency, Strategic planning, Souss Massa Draaa region, Regional development.

1 INTRODUCTION

Morocco is a country that has no petroleum resources; it therefore bases its devise reserve on phosphate and tourism. Good touristic performances income = 58,7 b Dhs¹, yet ranked 11th MENA region², far behind countries that underwent disorder of the Arab spring such as Tunisia. Though touristic development efforts are being made, cultural and natural potential are undeniable, the problem seems to go beyond. The World Bank states that the main problem with underperformances of the sector in any country is the inefficiency of tourism management. When we explored that possibility we noticed the resemblance with the public management of tourism in terms of lack of communication,

¹ Source: FMDT.ma

² Source: 4th Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, 2011

absence of hierarchy between the different administrations (Fabrice Hatem, 2007), incomplete perception of what performance is (Guy Solle, 2008)...

We held on to this hypothesis and tried to explore it by asking the question: **What is the current state of touristic public management, in particular the division of functions and responsibilities between the various stakeholders managing the sector in the Souss Massa Draa Region?** The objective is to determine whether or not there is a problem with the public management system of tourism, and if so, how to better the performances with optimized costs and efforts.

This article offers a revealing image of the state of public management of tourism in the Souss Massa Draa Region in the form of a matrix. It afterwards helps detect some of the most important challenges encountered by touristic management in the region. And finally, it provides a summary of some best practices in the public management in the form of a 4 point reform. We went through the history and evolution of tourism in Morocco which we analyzed from literature point of view. We presented the methodology we are to conduct our research with. Finally we put forward the basic findings and then suggest the potential (inspired from literature) to upgrade the management of the sector and better its performances.

2 TOURISM IN MOROCCO, HISTORY AND CONTEXT

As long as one remembers, Morocco focused its touristic strategies on infrastructure (construction of luxury³ hotels (Stafford, 1996)) and on Communication about the sunny destination! Simplistic strategies that became inadequate throughout time due to:

- The incompatibility of the "luxury" concept of the 30s with the expectations of the 21st century targeted clientele.
- The cliché of "360 days of sunshine" which is strongly challenged by the effects of global warming⁴.

Also, tourism in Morocco is, unfortunately, far surpassed by globally observed tourism trends: 88th on the use of ICTs⁵ (Information and communication technologies); Weak infrastructures and business environment^{6,7}... and because tourism is a priority field for Morocco (due to non possession of oil, tourism and MRE⁸ transfers are the main sources of foreign currency), many efforts are being made in the area but its performance remains very fragile in global economy marked by instability.

SMD region occupies the 2nd place at the national level with 5.8 million bed nights (33% market share), it displays an average annual growth rate of 4.2% yet it remains, like the entire national territory, subject to under taught actions and poorly distributed investments. This legacy of colonialism marked by a prevalence of seaside resorts impacted visibly the socio-economical development and resulted in various differences between cities as well as intra-regional imbalances.

This forces to have interrogations on the consistency of policies applied as well as the effectiveness of their appliance. These interrogations will make the object this paper: through exploration⁹, we will try to come up with a portrait of the current state of public management in the tourism sector at the regional level (study focuses on the region of Souss). This portrait will put light on the problems and shortcomings that may trouble efficient planning and strategic management of the field, and then conclude of some good governance tactics leading to administrative efficiency.

³ Luxury at the time was defined by magnitude of the buildings and the number of staff. Attributes that became no longer valid to define luxury decades after.

⁴ Morocco is ranked 125th on the "environment" criterion by The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index TTCI. Source: World Economic Forum.

⁵ Source: World Economic Forum.

⁶ In Europe, the natural and cultural heritage is invested by in-site interactive platforms to improve the performance of their sites in accordance with their authenticity.

⁷ Source : Rapport DEPF « Secteur du tourisme : Bilan d'étape et analyse prospective ».

⁸ MRE: Moroccans' livings abroad (Marocains résidents à l'étranger)

⁹ Document study and analysis. Interviews with executives from the public administration.

It is obvious that the tourism sector in Morocco rose from improvisation to organization over time, yet we cannot talk about strategic planning or effectiveness if we do evaluate the quality of the touristic matter decision making process. This leads to questioning about the organizations management model: who is managing the touristic sector at the national level? At regional level? Is there a form of cooperation between the two levels? How do the various administrations interact with each other? (Figure 1 - Tourism Management Map).

For a long time, we couldn't talk about a customized touristic management for different districts of the same country; the central state was responsible for investment, marketing the touristic offer... Privatization has, afterwards, strengthened the decision making processes region wise, but still offer an unbalanced advantage pressing regional disparities. Furthermore, privatization has weakened the state control over the sector (the power of private capital influences the management axis and goals of the Ministry of Tourism) and compromised the coherence of the image of Morocco as a destination (huge gap and inconsistency between the image promoted and quality of services perceived by tourists). That's where the need to develop local management organizations came from: We needed strong decision making entities for each district, city, and province in order to better control the investors, communicate adequately on the product and enhance the overall performance of the sector. was the first signs of regionalized management of tourism.

This new conception will be reinforced by the political commitment to apply "advanced regionalization"^{10,11} to the whole country as a strategy to insure sustainable and fair economic development via decentralized decision and benefit from all what it could bring to tourism. Advanced regionalization is a very rewarding vision if done properly and given the right amount of thought and time. Unfortunately, the poor application of regionalization dogma resulted in: Overlapping of the missions of different public entities which disrupt the touristic product competitiveness¹², it also affected negatively the managerial processes and the output quality. If we take communication as an example: it is carried by several national and regional organizations, there is no coordination upon communication axis neither upon the logistics needed to carry it out efficiently. The same scope of action is covered by several actions of communication by multiple organizations at the same time for the same purpose; those actions are taken without coordination or communication between the various organisms.

Such irrationality affects both the image of the product and the transparency of public action: there is a questioning of the actions and their proportionality to costs incurred, to the completion deadlines and especially to the big difficulty controlling achievements. There is therefore no way the government can be accountable to the public. Furthermore, auditing becomes impossible since responsibility division is obscure, in case of failure or shortfall in results it is virtually impossible to blame any of the stakeholders or determine the source of the shortfall.

Prior to validate or refute this hypothesis of actions encroachment, it is important to test the field to see if there are real indicators of managerial inefficiency. Based on this assessment, improvement tracks may eventually be considered. The field test consists to retracing the history and evolution of tourism strategic orientations, managerial model and performances throughout time. The summery of more than a century of touristic management strategies in morocco is summarized in the following diagram:

¹⁰ English for : الجهوية المتقدمة.

Advanced regionalization is a new governance model that Morocco adopted as part of the reforms spurred by by HM King Mohammed VI. The Moroccan model of advanced regionalization takes into account regional specificities along with the requirements of economic and social development. <http://www.moroccoworldnews.com>

¹¹ Royal speech of January the 03rd 2010 on advanced regionalization. For more information:

http://www.regionalisationavancee.ma/PDF/Rapport/Fr/L1_ConceptionGenerale.pdf

¹² Source: Regional delegation of tourism – AGADIR. Internal working document "Vision 2010: assessment and prospects."

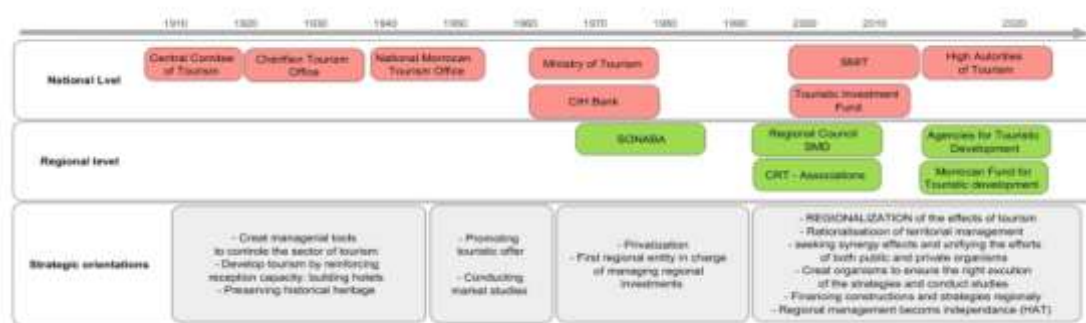


Figure 1: Touristic management Map

3 METHODOLOGY

The basic idea was to work with a balanced scorecard method¹³ (Kaplan&Norton, 1992) to evaluate the performance of the various public authorities acting onto the tourism in the SMD region. However, the implementation of the BSC to public administration management scheme constantly gave very low results and did not reflect the real performance of the evaluated administrations (Chan&Ching, 2004). For that reason, the method was revised by Iopollo&al. (2012) to meet the particular character of public management and provide a tool for the territorial projects comparison.

To adapt Iopollo's matrix to the objectives of our article: we replaced the territorial projects by the various public administrations in charge of managing tourism in Morocco and in the SMD region. We also changed the comparison attributes from comparing the basic diagnosis axis; we listed instead the most important characteristics for managing the sector. This adjustment provided us a new matrix to which we gave the name "Organizations/Functions Martix". The enforcement of that matrix will provide a portrait that:

- Clearly defines who does what: which administration does what in terms of planning, promotion and public action.
- Presents a color-coded visual managerial map that allows to "Seeing" the co-occurrences in the duties and responsibilities of the various administrations.
- The matrix adds a third dimension to the mix: in addition to defining the basic tasks by organism, one can easily identify the depth of the said tasks. A different color is provided for different types of functions according to whether they are city/region-wide, nationwide or worldwide.

The matrix is mainly fed by a literature review: scientific articles and various working documents¹⁴. The study is completed by discussions with managers or administrative agents working for: SMD Regional council, Regional Delegation of tourism, Regional council of tourism, among others ... This investigation provided the necessary data to fill out our square matrix crossing 19 and 19 organisms with the essential functions of touristic management at the regional level (see appendix).

4 RESULTS DISCUSSION: TOURISTIC PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN THE SMD REGION, CHALLENGES

At first glance, the matrix reveals an imbalance in the distribution of functions between the different organisms:

At times we detect a **high concentration** of organisms on strategic issues of tourism management, more than a few administrations are in charge of the same strategic attribute(s) both national and regional wise such as strategic intelligence, conduct of market studies, promotion of the touristic offer. At other times, we are facing lack of

¹³ Balanced ScoreCard, BSC or Prospective Instrument Panel: a strategy performance management tool. It is one of the best tools used to measuring the activities of a company in four main prospects: training, processes, customers and finances. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>

¹⁴ material intended for internal use of the various organisms

stakeholders and therefore a managerial failing in some important functions (ensuring public interest, investment making, controlling private investments). This explains the gap in performance between different organisms and can reduce the average performance of the sector: the failure of some actors absorbs the success of others.

Moreover, the existence of "**competition**" over attributes such as promotion tends to endorse rivalry of the organisms which can participate to improving the quality of services but is mostly a hardship to the effectiveness of the action itself and its consistency with strategies previously formulated. This inconsistency may find an explanation in the evolution of administrative building over time¹⁵. Different organisms have been created by different political ideologies to fulfill various (and perhaps fleeting) needs with no revision of the preexisting system, that translates in the absence of complementary logic between old and new entities both national and regional wise. We are facing a problem of structuring logic of the sector management; the same problem is emphasized by the work of Frederickson&Smith (2003).

With hindsight, observing the evolution scheme of the sector and the different strategies and developments through time can be revealing: For most, actions and visions are meant to **developing the product**, its quality and potential (Zimmer et al. 1996). However, very few efforts were intended for the managerial component, especially ones about reorganizing the managerial processes efficiently. Evolution of the public management in tourism is often made by incrementing (adding new organisms, associations, councils) whenever needed regardless of their **consistency and correlation** with existing ones.

Thus, it becomes more difficult to effectively materialize a strategy or to achieve the objectives established. The difficulty comes in many forms at different levels, that is:

The complexity to distribute budgets between the various organisms:

- Do we make it even for all organisms? They don't all have the same responsibilities.
- Do we divide it according to the number of duties of each organism? Each organism has different costs according to its size and staff qualifications, moral responsibility ...
- What about the budget for the same attribute or function? Dividing it at all is going to reduce the return on investment of any action, not dividing it is worst because there will be a number of organisms with responsibilities and no money to meet those responsibilities.

Discomfort as to dealing with shared responsibility projects, two problems may occur:

- Either the various organizations in charge of the same attribution try at once to achieve the ministry strategic objectives by having each their different planning (where they might be redoing the same thing or similar actions). This redundancy weighs quite heavily on the government budget which is a waste of public funds.
- Or those organisms who share the same functions could simply discard some of their strategic objectives and not make efforts into the realization of some of the actions required to succeed them (that is for lack of funding, time and resources); assuming that the "others" will in a spirit of responsibilities sharing. However, this intended complicity is not implemented by channels of communication, if there is no dialog to determine who does what the complicity often translates into anarchy.

In summation, the touristic public management faces structural strategic deficiencies¹⁶ that arise mostly from the difficulty endured by public organizations to make all elements of the territorial context interact with one another and harmonize territorial management practices in order to successfully put into practice the strategic objectives of these organizations¹⁷.

In fact, the inability to ensure the integration of different development strategies (strategies meant for tourism with those meant for other sectors, strategies of the

¹⁵ For more details refer to Figure 1

¹⁶ F. GVERNA. « Le développement local des zones fragiles ». Revue de géographie Alpine (En ligne), 96-3 | 2008, mis en ligne le 04 mars 2009, Consulté le 13 juin 2012. URL: <http://www.rga.revues.org/541>; DOI: 10.4000/rga.541.

¹⁷ Article : « Paradoxes et management stratégique des territoires : étude comparée de métropoles européennes », Solange, 2008

different territorial organisms) or at least to confront them and open channels of dialogue between them is manifest in the proliferation of initiatives, strategies and programs for the territory that are ambitious but where there is no place to any useful multiplier effects: every project, every organism stands alone.

Moreover, territorial management models are employed without comparison/benchmarking of what happens outside of the territory, each region makes its plans autonomously from the other regions of the country, autonomously from what is done in the competitor regions. This lack of common references costs a lot to the territory in terms of responsiveness and efficiency: since the government does not benefit from the experience of others to identify processes related to performance, it may repeat errors that could otherwise be avoided.

5 CONCLUSION: TOURISTIC PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN THE SMD REGION, POTENTIAL

To overcome the challenge of public management efficiency, public administration must see to the success of the actions taken by them (managerial consistency) in compliance with the relevant frame in which they are embedded (coherence with the policy of the other organizations working in the same territory).

Undeniably, these organizations have certainly the skills to manage their "touristic action territory", yet not all the skills required to succeed it all. The challenge is to make the most of the areas of expertise of each organism by working together in a scientific organization of work:

1. Objectively define for each organism what can they do properly and successfully, at minimum cost and energy (theory of public administration¹⁸, Wilson, 1987).
2. Provide a central steering entity¹⁹ with the ability to input and enforce this well taught efficient division of responsibilities, permanently coordinate work processes, provide sustainable communication channels and monitor the results.
3. Compare the different organisms on this basis and assign functions based on their pre identified performances.
4. Parallel to step 3, design special systems for cooperative actions, this system is intended to make possible the accomplishment of assignments that couldn't be divisible or which need the expertise/resources of more than one organism. Each organism can as a result undertake an action or step of work he is best fitted for.

Once the skills, roles and responsibilities of each defined, communication channels established, it is time to:

- Name measurable objectives for each organism in proportion with the responsibilities and lines of work assigned to them on one hand. And in coherence with the overall development objectives of the country. These objectives must be outlined with a realistic timeframe in consistence with the magnitude of these objectives.
- Evaluate perpetually the work processes and their effects in order to modify the actions plan in case of any conjuncture changes. This flexibility involves active monitoring upstream, and effective spreading of information among the different organisms but also intra-government downstream. Overtime, the current step will translate into well meditated plan and optimized actions during planning and execution.
- Identify and report in real time perverse side effects, and train the managers to being operational and reactive to moderate these undesired effects once the source of the anomaly detected. Reactivity is a great strategy to bring the organism closer to achieving the objectives set.
- Report on a regular basis the explanatory variables of effectiveness: quality, programs productivity and actions (Nyhan&Martin, 1999). It is a continuous and systematic process for monitoring public management services (Hatry, 1999). To

¹⁸ Public administration theory: the most important aim of administration is "first determining what it can do in a proper and successful way and then doing them with the lowest cost and energy but with the most effective method".

¹⁹ PESQUEUX, Y. (2006). « Le nouveau management public ».

succeed the quest of efficiency, it is important to redefine work processes²⁰, this definition further facilitates any future administrative reform:

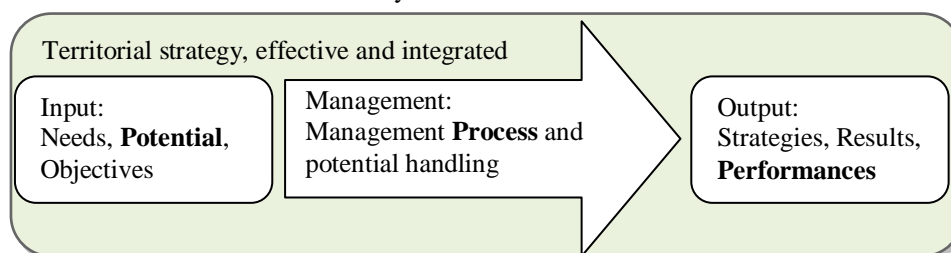


Figure 2: for an integrated and effective territorial strategy. Ammons (1995)

Nevertheless, efficiency can be challenging, it requires a reform of public administration, in the sense that we must seek an optimal number organisms to manage tourism especially at regional level. This will result in an optimal managerial flowchart, of course the amendment on the number of entities must be done to optimize rather than to minimize. This will have a direct effect on the costs and the operational expenses of the government, and it will positively reflect the overall performance of the sector and the government since there is spare money to be thoughtfully spent.

6 FIGURES

Figure 1: Touristic management Map..... 308

Figure 2: for an integrated and effective territorial strategy. Ammons (1995)

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²⁰ This approach aims to describe the processes of an organization to clarify the activities and practices to be implemented to achieve the objectives of the process and achieve the expected output elements. Ensure effective ownership rules and practices of the process to implement.

Source: <http://pacpme.tudor.lu/pacpme/pdf/organisation/comment-decrire-un-processus.pdf>

7 APPENDIX: ORGANISMS/FUNCTIONS MATRIX

	Promotion	Studies	Strategic intelligence	Accompaniment – Assistance	Supervision Follow-up	Public/private partnerships	Piloting	Financing	Layout conversion	Management	Training	Planning	Providing info to professionals	Seeing to the public interest	Providing info to tourists	Control of establishments	Execute projects	Coherence National/ regional strategies	Conceive/execute regional programs
National organisms																			
ONMT ⁱⁱⁱ	I	I																	
Ministry of tourism MT ^{iv}		N	N	N	N	N	N											N	
Observatory of tourism	I	N		N		N	N												
Investment Funds								N											
SMIT ^v		N		N	N	N											N		
National federation of tourism FNT ^{vi}	I		I			N						N							
CIH ^{vii} Bank								N											
Regional organisms																			
SONABA ^{viii}									R										
Regional council SMD	N	R	R	R	R	I	R	R		R	R	R						R	R
Regional Council of Tourism	I	I		R	R	R					R	N	R						
Provincial Council of Tourism (Regional rep. of MT)		R	R	R	R	R	R											R	
Regional Delegation (Administrative rep. of MT)			R		R	R									R	R			
Regional center of Investment			R	R	R			R			R	R							
Local authorities / Communes														R					
Local associations	N									R	R								
Private investors	I								R	R	R								
2020 Vision (not yet established)																			
High Authorities of tourism			N		N													N	
Agencies for touristic development	R		R				R												R
National Fund for touristic Development FNDT ^{ix}						N		N											
Total	8	8	8	7	8	9	5	5	2	3	5	4	1	1	1	1	1	4	2

Key:

Intervention of Regional dimension.

Intervention of National dimension

Intervention of International dimension

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Abbreviations

ⁱ SMD: Souss Massa Draa region: one of the administrative regions in South Morocco. Study is conducted in Agadir city, Capital of the SMD region.

ⁱⁱ ENCG: Ecole Nationale de commerce et de Gestion. French for National School for Trade and Management

ⁱⁱⁱ ONMT: Office National Marocain du tourisme, French for Moroccan National Office of Tourism.

^{iv} MT : Ministère du Tourisme. French for Ministry of Tourism

^v SMIT: Société Marocaine d'ingénierie Touristique. French for Moroccan tourism engineering company.

^{vi} FNT: Fédération Nationale du Tourisme. French for National Federation Of tourism

^{vii} CIH : Crédit Immobilier et Hotelier. French for Real estate and hotel credit.

^{viii} SONABA : Société Nationale d'Aménagement de la Baie d'Agadir. French for National Company for Development of the Bay of Agadir

^{ix} FNDT : Fond National de Développement du Tourisme. French for National Fund For Touristic Development