

# **HYPOTHESIS OF DESTINATION MANAGEMENT IN THE ALPS THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL TOURIST BOARDS**

**Mariangela Franch, Umberto Martini, Daniela Tommasini**

*University of Trento (Italy)*

*Department of Computer and Management Sciences*

*{franch, martini, tommasini}@cs.unitn.it*

## **ABSTRACT**

*The research covers 26 regions in the alpine territory of Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany and Slovenia (Liechtenstein and the Principality of Monaco have not been considered because of the slight portions of their alpine territory). The regional level has been chosen for a detailed analysis of tourism organisations informed by the pivotal role of public tourism organisations in promoting and co-ordinating the tourist destinations. The paper proposes a comparative analysis of the alpine Regional Tourism Boards, according to their functions, financing and legal form in the whole alpine arc. The goal is to provide a descriptive framework that highlights how tourism destinations are managed in the Alps, and to provide hints for further research in the planning and development of tourist products. Some considerations emerging from this study highlight that where the tourism organisation has a well-structured plan to stimulate activity in the sector, more positive results are achieved in terms of destination definition and destination management. The top-down approach guided by territorial entities might seem to provide positive results in terms of coordination of the offering and organisation of promotional activities in the alpine regions.*

## **1. THE CONCEPT OF DESTINATION AND SOME DEFINITIONS**

The frequent use in the literature of the term “tourist destination” should not lead to the automatic supposition that there is one unanimously accepted concept regarding its definition as well as its content. From a conceptual point of view, the most comprehensive approach would be one that allows for multiple perspectives when defining the destination and that also attempts to combine the geographical boundaries with the product content itself, as well as the demand (Manente e Cerato, 2000, Matzler e Pechlaner, 2000, Pechlaner e Weiermair, 2000). From a managerial point of view, the question regards which tools and which subjects are to be considered, in short, to what degree can the demand be directed to a destination and which kind of offering can this destination present to the market. The management of the destination essentially entails coordinating different decisions: in practice, this means identifying ways to facilitate shared decision making. This becomes necessary given the different levels at which decision making takes place within a destination, which can include the single hotel operator, consortia, public tourist organisations, commercial operators, as well as region-wide organizations. It is, as well, of the utmost importance to consider not only the tourists, travellers or excursionists who “partake” of the destination, but also the resident population whose participation in decision making represents a priority. Coordination also takes into account the relationship that the single destination has with competing destinations and with those that are hierarchically superior or inferior. Using the categories identified by Rispoli and Tamma (1995) to define the forms that tourist products take, we have three models for reference: self-regulating offerings, those having an *ad-hoc* management, and those with an operational network that facilitates cooperation. In the case of “point-to-point configuration”, the final tourist product is pieced together

by the user by means of a series of single contacts with the different actors of the location. The unity and coherence of the final product is completely defined by the user who, based on individual preferences and on the information available, gathers information deemed useful and interesting. The decision making that takes place at this type of destination is largely unorganised inasmuch as the individual relationships developed by the tourist play a more important role in assuring that the tourist receives maximum benefit from the vacation destination. On the other hand, the “weak links” that exist among operators of the destination hinder the emergence of a leadership that is recognized and able to take decisions on behalf of the community, and as a result many decisions are taken independently, without group input or consensus. In this sense the destination takes on a more geographic connotation and demand grows by means of individual contacts between tourists and local operators; a model of fragmented demand as well as offering prevails, often the fruit of individual spontaneity or entrepreneurship.

With a “package configuration” the tourist product is organised and assembled by one actor—usually a person or entity from outside the destination (tour operator, incoming agency). This actor works outside and in a sense “above” the individual actors and is therefore better able to coordinate the tourist offering. The individual actors of the destination delegate some decision-making authority to this outside entity regarding product promotion and marketing, thereby ceding some of their own autonomy. This is, in practice, a scheme in which decision-making powers are concentrated, representing a sort of separation of power and activity typical of some business management models. In this model the destination is the result of a combination of demand with an offering that has been pre-packaged by a third party, and the boundaries of the destination appear to derive from the offering that has been put together by a manager rather than those naturally resulting from the combination of territory, products and producers.

In a “network configuration” the tourist product emerges from the integration of the offerings of a group of entities and organizations belonging to a specific territory. These entities engage in coordinated decision making and enforcement of specific standards of quality and service, thereby having a cooperative approach to management. This model, which gives birth to local tourist offering systems, is based on information sharing, cooperation, and recognition of a “natural” leadership that facilitates or takes informed decisions for the entire territory. Also for this model the offering itself plays a definitive role in establishing the destination boundaries, but it does so by establishing strong ties between the larger territory and the local community. This form tends toward a greater exploitation of the different competencies within a destination as well, resulting in an overall growth in awareness on the part of all actors. It is also possible that, initially, the management of the destination might be held by a public entity or a mixture of public and private actors, in cases where a natural leadership does not emerge from among the actors of the destination (Mistilis and Daniele, 2001).

It is impossible to establish *a priori* which model will ensure a more efficient management of the destination; it is possible and necessary, however, to have a clear understanding of the initial conditions of the destination and to adopt a management model that is coherent with these factors. By understanding the initial conditions we refer to the number of actors involved in decision making, the level of familiarity they have with the territory and the role they play therein, the number of decision-making centres existing within businesses and the rules governing relationships and professional exchanges among businesses.

## **2. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT IN THE ALPS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICATION AND ALTERNATIVE MODELS**

Taking a managerial approach, destination management can be defined as the strategic, organizational and operative decisions taken to manage the process of definition, promotion and commercialisation of the tourist product originated in the place, to generate manageable flows of incoming tourists that are balanced, sustainable and sufficient to meet the economic needs of the local actors involved in the destination. The very notion of destination, in fact, brings to mind the need to define planning and coordination activities which serve to optimise the service offering and tourist attractions. The true

sense of the activity of destination management is reflected in the nature of the coordination that takes place within the tourist destination itself, and can be illustrated as follows:

- a) in “point-to-point” configuration, destination management plays a marginal role and is limited to activities such as general institutional advertising or one-off activities related to specific services or tourist attractions;
- b) for “package” configuration a more structured role is given to destination management, which takes on professional management activities to manage flows of *incoming* tourists;
- c) in “network” configuration, destination management becomes more important in that it involves coordinating the different actors of the destination, the ultimate aim being to produce economic results beyond those possible with a less organized approach, according to a pure market perspective (see Della Corte, 2000, Chap. IV).

In the alpine region the concept of tourist destination, and the consequent notion of destination management, finds a vast area of application. Nonetheless, a correct consideration of these terms requires an analysis that takes into account the specific characteristics of tourist locations in the Alps, and to disregard them would mean to risk having a vague and meaningless evaluation. Thus, it is necessary to consider elements related to the nature of tourism development for that specific location and community; also important to consider are the size and style of management of tourist businesses, in addition to the nature of the tourist demand and the behavioural patterns of tourists who visit the Alps.

Firstly, with rare exceptions the development of tourist destinations in the Alps tends to coincide with the growth of villages, valleys or entire tourist regions. The tourist phenomenon therefore tends to have a typical home-grown development process wherein the offering of tourist services and attractions directly involves the resident population, triggering further social and economic development. This means that the ownership of tourist structures and infrastructures, as well as the related services and products, pertains in large part to local operators who in turn generate internal benefits in terms of distribution of the value added by the tourist activities. As a consequence the activity undertaken by the local public administration becomes more important both in terms of financing and directly offering services (structural and infrastructural), and in terms of management of promotional and commercial activities through public or private entities, or a mixture of both.

Secondly, the tourist businesses that operate in the *accommodation* sector, including restoration and other products or services connected with tourism, are typically small, family-run operations. This characteristic can on one hand provide several advantages (management flexibility, ability to adapt to changing market conditions, personalization of service) and on the other hand have some limits (limited willingness to cooperate with other operators, highly simplified organizational structure, limited openness to organizational as well as management and technological innovations). Specifically regarding the management of flows of *incoming* tourists, the small size of the average hotel poses further difficulties when dealing with groups of tourists and when attempting to establish relationships with intermediaries (tour operators), limiting the operative choices regarding promotion and commercialisation of the tourist product of the destination.

A third important consideration is the fact that the demand for alpine tourist destinations is composed principally of “do-it-yourself” tourists (individuals, families, small groups) who generally organize their own mountain holidays—that is, they choose the destination, gather information and plan the journey (usually with their own transport). This element combines with the existence of a double season in alpine regions to result in a tourist offering that includes an on-the-snow product in winter and a mountaineering product in summer. Substantial differences exist between the composition of the demand for summer and winter products in terms of expectations, activities, and the personal as well as behavioural profiles of the two groups.

In light of these elements, the activity of destination management in the Alps has particular connotations that provide the foundation for the research hypotheses in the field:

- a) the need to consider the regional environments as an important point of observation so as to identify the presence and nature of destination management activities at this level;
- b) the need to analyse local public tourist organisations and their role in promoting the structures or activities of destination management;

- c) the need to give particular attention to the coordination mechanisms through which destination management activities take place.

### **3. RESEARCH IN THE FIELD: OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS**

The goal of the analysis of tourist organisations in the Alpine territory was to verify the hypothesis that the quality of the tourist supply depends upon the presence of co-ordination of activities carried out by the individual actors. An examination of the private or public activity relating to policies and coordination within the various tourist resorts in the Alps was therefore of fundamental importance. Three different levels of observation were chosen for this reason:

- level I: National Tourism Board;
- level II: Regional Tourism Board;
- level III: Local Tourism Board.

It was necessary to determine the organisational set-up throughout the alpine area in order to identify the level at which tourism policy decisions are made, and the ways in which these different levels interact. It was especially relevant to note that there is no sufficiently structured documentation available on this subject, not even in the form of a comparison between all the centres in the alpine area. Hence, the construction of a map that describes and compares the organisation of tourism within the alpine territory was already an innovative result of the research.

The objectives of the analysis can be summarised as follows:

- a) the identification of possible organisational models for destination management;
- b) the comparison of the different models in respect to their legal structure (public/private), their organisation (dimension, articulation), and their ways of financing activities;
- c) the identification of relationships (cooperation, integration, conflict, antagonism) between public and private sectors in the various local realities.

The first step of the research project was to analyse the structural and normative framework in which destination management policies are formed and put into practice. The aim of this desk-analysis was to determine whether the environment in which businesses and tourist organisations operate in a given region can foster the emergence of a viable destination. Competencies were considered and analysed at the larger regional level as well as at the sub-regional and local levels. The choice of the regional level for a detailed analysis of tourism organisations in the Alps was informed by the pivotal role of PTB in promoting and coordinating the tourist destinations. The elements considered also took into account the norms of the sector, the tasks assigned to different levels of infrastructure, financial flows, information exchange, the role of public entities and the level of computerization. In-depth personal interviews were then conducted with representatives of regional tourist organisations, during which the research project was discussed. Throughout the analysis particular attention was given to the process of developing the destination itself as well as to the consequent activities of destination management, the aim being to determine if this was the result of top-down policies (a strategic design pursued at a governmental level that would result in the development of a structure for destination management), or bottom-up activities (spontaneous emergence of collaborative initiatives among actors).

The research project covers Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany and Slovenia. Liechtenstein and the Principality of Monaco have not been considered in the analysis. As regards Italy, the regions considered are Valle d'Aosta, Piemonte, Lombardia, Trentino, Alto Adige, Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia. For Austria, Burgenland, Kärnten, Niederösterreich, Oberösterreich, Salzburg, Steiermark, Tirol and Vorarlberg. Areas in Switzerland are Wallis, Berner Oberland, Ticino, Zentralschweiz, Graubünden, Région du Léman (Canton de Vaud). For France, Rhône Alpes and Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (PACA) and the department of Alpes Maritimes. For Germany the Bayern region and, finally, because the analysis can be done only at a local rather than a regional level, in Slovenia the towns of Maribor and Kranjska Gora have been chosen.

Diverse development patterns have emerged for the mountain areas of these regions, both in terms of timing and process (see CIPRA 1998 and 2002). Referring specifically to the application of principles for destination management, the major findings of this analysis refer to organisational features,

functions ascribed and methods of financing used for the destination. Worth noting is that the regions do not necessarily coincide automatically with the destinations, given that in some cases the region can contain distinct tourist destinations.

### 3.1 Legal Entity

In Italy, the regions of Valle d’Aosta, Lombardia, Trentino, Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia have instituted an organisation for promotion of tourism or a regional office that provides information for tourists and for the public in general. Moreover, regional governments in Veneto and Trentino have initiated reforms that look to privatise these public entities. The Piemonte region set up the regional tourism organisation as a consortium with public membership, while Alto Adige formed Alto Adige Marketing, a syndicated company with clearly demarcated responsibilities; its 23 members include the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, the Hoteliers Union, the Chamber of Commerce, and other consortia and associations of operators.

As regards Austria, in the regions of Burgenland, Oberösterreich and Vorarlberg the tourist organisations are government-run entities, while those in Kärnten, Niederösterreich, Salzburg and Steiermark are privately owned companies. In Tirol the *Tirol Werbung* serves as the principal tourist organisation and has as members the province of Tirol, a special “fund” to promote tourism, and the Chamber of Commerce.

In Switzerland the tourist organization of Wallis is organized as a private association (*Dachverband des Tourismus*) charged with monitoring and following the interests of the public, including tourism. In Canton Ticino the *Ente Ticinese per il Turismo* is, as stated in the tourism law of 30 November 1998, “a publicly owned corporation to which physical and legal persons of public or private status can belong.” In the Berner Oberland region there is a private organisation called *Berner Oberland* whose legal status as association as of September 2001 replaced the previous centralized regional organisation. Since January 2002 Zentralschweiz Tourismus has been replaced by the stock company Luzern Zentralschweiz Tourismus, which serves as the platform for commercialisation of the tourist products and runs a new center for services and coordination of the tourist activity of seven destinations in the region. In Graubünden, *Graubünden Ferien* is an association charged from the federal government with the tourism marketing services for the region. In the Région du Léman the *Office du Tourisme Vaudois* (OTV) is a government-run entity also acting as a coordinator of the local tourist offices.

In France at a regional level the *Comité Régional du Tourisme* (CRT), whose legal status might be determined by regional councils, private law companies that are financed with public funds and are responsible for regional tourist development policies and for tourism promotion abroad. Alpine departments in France are in the Rhône-Alpes and in the Provence-Alpes Côte d’Azur (PACA). The CRT Riviera Côte d’Azur is in charge of the maritime Alps but coexists with the PACA CRT.

In Germany the regional tourism organisation of Bavaria is *Bayern Tourismus* Marketing, whose main partners associated are the four tourism organisations of the Bavaria region.

In 1998 the Law on the Promotion of Tourism defined that promotional activities, stimulation of the development of tourist infrastructure and the provision of information for visitors, in Slovenia would be achieved on a local and on a national level Hence there is no tourism organisation at a regional level in Slovenia, but it does exist at a local level. The most important tourist destinations host local tourism offices or boards (*zabod*) which are run by the local municipalities.

As noted in table 1, more than half of the public tourism organisations in the alpine region are run as private companies, though the presence of a public board as partner or associated as majority shareholder stays determinant. While the private law formula in tourism organisation is a recent phenomenon, it nonetheless appears to be growing in popularity as many public companies are changing their status and becoming private; moreover the presence of associated members guarantees several financing possibilities and fosters increased effectiveness.

Nation	Region	Public	Private
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<b>Italy</b>			
	Piemonte		X
	Lombardia	X	
	Val d'Aosta	X	
	Friuli Venezia Giulia	X	
	Trentino	X	
	Alto Adige		X
	Veneto	X	
<b>Austria</b>			
	Burgenland	X	
	Kärnten		X
	Niederösterreich		X
	Salzburgerland		X
	Steiermark		X
	Tirol		X
	Oberösterreich	X	
	Voralberg	X	
<b>Switzerland</b>			
	Graubünden		X
	Zentralschweiz		X
	Berner Oberland		X
	Région du Léman	X	
	Wallis/Valais		X
	Ticino	X	
<b>France</b>			
	Rhône Alpes		X
	PACA		X
	Riviera Côte d'Azur		X
<b>Germany</b>			
	Bayern		X
<b>Slovenia</b>			
	Maribor	X	
	Kranjska Gora	X	

**Table 1** Legal form of tourism organisations in the Alps

### 3.2 Functions

The functions of the public tourism organisation concern mostly the promotion of the tourist product, the collection and diffusion of information and the realisation of research and studies to monitor trends of the different tourist seasons. The use of new technologies, on the one hand, and the growing consideration of the tourist destination not only in terms of available hotel accommodations, but also as a complex and delicate territorial system, have required more suitable functions for tourism organisations to perform, such as:

- a) Web site creation and maintenance;
- b) Providing sales support for the tourist products;
- c) Differentiated promotional campaigns according to the target;
- d) Realisation of “thematic” products;
- e) Promotion of quality projects;
- f) Education;
- g) Coordination of local destination;

h) International and interregional projects and initiatives, working with European programs and funds.

In Italy most companies for promotion of tourism perform essentially the same functions, among which are the improvement and promotion of local tourist products, market studies, and coordination among public and private actors within the region.

In Austria the type of activity performed at a regional level depends in large part on the legal form of the organisation. The regions of Burgenland, Oberösterreich and Vorarlberg have active policies for promotion, marketing and support of tourist products. Organisations with mixed public-private participation such as Salzburg, Kärnten, Niederösterreich and Steiermark support actively the commercialisation of the tourist products, as well as traditional activities to develop and support tourism. *Tirol Werbung* has set up affiliated companies that work with computerized systems (TisCover); they also manage proposals from film producers interested in filming in Austria (Cine Tyrol) and also the *brand* Tirol.

In Switzerland *Wallis Tourismus*, in addition to the regular activities of supporting general tourism policies as well as the specific activities of product marketing and commercialisation, promotes projects at a local level that seek to create a system of excellence (*Valais Excellence*) that involves the entire regional territory and that could expand to a national level. A key element of this programme is “hospitality training and education” for educators, who in turn pass on these skills to new generations. The *Ente Ticinese per il Turismo* develops and coordinates the local tourist offering. In addition it manages the “assistance granted by the governmental congress” based on specific quality criteria, and can establish or participate as stockholder in public or private companies in the tourism sector. The situation in the Berner Oberland region is different in that the *Berner Oberland* organisation is charged exclusively with coordinating promotional policies and activities. This is part of a larger pilot programme aiming to reorganise the regional territory based on the popularity of each of eight different locations, each of which participates in the promotional campaigns of *Schweiz Tourismus*. L’Office du Tourisme Vaudois (OTV) works to strengthen the collaboration for promotion in overseas markets with the city of Geneva and with Wallis. In addition this office promotes the development of new thematic products. The OTV has also increased its role as coordinator of local tourism offices grouped in the “Groupement d’Offices du Tourisme” in order to reinforce synergies among tourist offices and to serve the destinations. Among the main functions of Zentralschweiz organization, which differentiates this organisation from the others, is the possibility of direct commercialisation of the tourist product. Also in Graubünden the role of coordination among local destinations is very important. This organisation also runs a call center for individual tourists and travel groups.

In France with the law of 3 January 1987, national government responsibilities for tourism were delegated to regional governments. Thus the CRT draw up a programme for development of tourism and recreation at a regional level, focusing on the creation and promotion of quality tourist products and on building customer loyalty; moreover the CRT prepare and coordinate activities to promote the region abroad. Three departments in the Rhône Alpes region especially look to the Alps for tourism: Savoie, Haute Savoie and Isère. The same is true for the Provence Alpes et Côte d’Azur, where two CRT coexist, the first covering the maritime alpine areas (*Comité Régional du Tourisme Riviera Côte d’Azur*), and the second working in five departments, two of which have extensive alpine tourism: Alpes-de-Haute-Provence and Hautes-Alpes.

In Germany the tourism organisation of Bavaria promotes the products developed within the single regions. Other functions are to strengthen the brand “Bayern”, to create new products and to increase the quality of information and booking services.

In Slovenia local tourist offices engage in promotional activities and manage the creation and coordination of events.

Table 2 summarises the main functions of PTB for each region in the Alps.

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Region</b>	Promotion	Sales support	Research and studies	Web sites	Development of new products and tourism offers	Quality project, education	Cooperation among regions	Coordination of destinations
<b>Italy</b>									
	Piemonte	X		X	X	X		X	X
	Lombardia			X	X				
	Val d'Aosta	X		X	X			X	X
	Friuli Venezia Giulia	X		X	X				X
	Trentino	X		X	X				
	Alto Adige	X		X	X	X			X
	Veneto	X		X	X				
<b>Austria</b>									
	Burgenland	X		X	X				X
	Kärnten	X	X	X	X		X		
	Niederösterreich	X		X	X	X	X		
	Salzburgerland	X		X	X	X		X	
	Steiermark	X	X	X	X		X		X
	Tirol	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	Oberösterreich	X		X	X				X
	Voralberg	X	X	X	X	X			
<b>Switzerland</b>									
	Graubünden	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	Zentralschweiz	X	X	X	X				X
	Berner Oberland	X			X		X	X	X
	Région du Léman	X		X	X	X		X	X
	Wallis/Valais	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
	Ticino	X	X	X	X	X			
<b>France</b>									
	Rhône Alpes	X		X	X	X		X	
	PACA	X		X	X				
	Riviera Côte d'Azur	X		X	X	X		X	X
<b>Germany</b>									
	Bayern	X		X	X	X	X		
<b>Slovenia</b>									
	Maribor	X		X	X	X		X	
	Kranjska Gora	X		X	X				

**Table 2** Functions of tourist organisations in the Alps

### 3.3 Financing

The analysis of the different ways of financing tourist organisation has revealed two possible modalities: public and non-public. Possible forms of public financing include state, regional and European funds; visitor's, tourism or licences taxes; incomes from lotteries and gambling; company shares when the government is shareholder of a private organization. Sources of non-public financing are partner shares, commercial activities, and sponsorships.

Public financing is the rule in five Italian regions: Valle d’Aosta, Lombardia, Trentino, Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia. In Piemonte financing is shared (80% public – 20% private) and even more in Alto Adige (50% public – 50 % private).

In Austrian regions financing for tourism related activities derives, in varying degrees from region to region, from regional funds, visitors’ taxes and from a tourism tax. In Salzburg a Regional Tourism Fund (*Fremdenverkehrsfoerderungsfond*) was established to finance and sustain tourism related activities at a regional level. In Tirol the revenues generated from the obligatory tax on tourism (*Pflichtbeiträge*) paid by regular members of the tourism consortia, along with revenues from the visitors’ tax (*Aufenthaltsabgabe*) are turned over to the Regional Tourism Section; these funds are then redistributed (except a minimum amount that is withheld) to the territories where they originated and are used to finance tourism projects of regional interest, thus the very appropriate name of “fund to create incentives for tourism” (*Tourismusfoerderungsfond*).

In Switzerland *Wallis Tourismus*, besides its annual contribution from the government, takes in most of its funds from the fees deriving from the visitors’ tax paid by tourists on the basis of their length of stay (*Kurtaxe*) and from regular membership fees. The Ticino canton receives a small government contribution but 70% of its financing comes from the tax on advertising. The *Ente Ticinese per il Turismo* is also supported by a portion of the cantonal tax on gambling and also by the involvement of commercial entities. In Berner Oberland region 80% of financing comes from the canton and 20% from private sources. *Berner Oberland* organisation retains 14% to cover promotional costs, the remaining 86% is redistributed among the eight principal locations based on the relative numbers of visitors to each. The *Office du Tourisme Vaudois* is financed 85% from the Canton, and 15% privately (associations, taxes, lotteries). In the tourism organisation of Zentralschweiz financing comes from associated partners, destinations and private partners, but also from the visitor’s tax. In Graubünden financing comes 75% from Canton and 25% from local tourism organisations, which pay to *Graubünden Ferien* an amount according to the number of overnight stays.

In France the CRT funds come principally from the regional council and to a lesser degree from general councils, in addition to the contributions of tourism actors. The Rhône Alpes region receives public funds, from the State, and also, for special projects, from the European Union. The CRT *Riviera Côte d’Azur* is financed 65% from the department council, 25% from the regional council, 8% from municipalities, and 2% from State or European funds. The CRT *PACA* is financed from the regional council.

In Germany financing for the tourism regional organisation of Bavaria comes from the regional government, with partners also contributing a minimum amount.

In Slovenia local tourist organisations are financed 100% by municipalities.

Table 3 summarizes the types of financing for each region.

#### 4. THE MODEL OF THE TOURIST ORGANISATIONS IN THE ALPS

Observations from the nature and dynamic of coordination activities among the actors revealed that within the alpine regions considered thus far there are no cases of “package” coordination; there are, in fact, no operators at the regional level who organize all-inclusive vacation packages to offer on the market. Thus the predominant coordination models are “point-to-point” and “network”, where the public entity has an important role in facilitating the coordination process.

The complete analysis led to the identification of three distinct destination models in the Alps:

- a) an “integrated” destination model, in which the Public Tourist Board (PTB) takes an active part in coordinating and directing the creation and promotion of the offering; in this model the different operators are highly involved and collaboration with other economic actors is encouraged, even those from different sectors;
- b) a “partially integrated” destination model, where coordination occurs principally during promotional activities and to a lesser degree for a definition of the offering; however, collaboration with and among tourism actors is extensive;

	Public	Private
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Nation	Region	State/Region EU	Taxes (tourism, visitor's licences)	Lotteries Gambling	Shares/members hip fees	Shares/members hip fees	Commercial activities	Sponsorships
<b>Italy</b>	Piemonte				X	X		
	Lombardia	X						
	Val d'Aosta	X						
	Friuli Venezia Giulia	X						
	Trentino	X					X	
	Alto Adige				X	X		
	Veneto	X						
<b>Austria</b>	Burgenland	X	X					
	Kärnten		X		X			
	Niederösterreich		X		X		X	
	Salzburgerland				X			
	Steiermark	X						
	Tirol				X	X		X
	Oberösterreich	X						
	Voralberg	X						
<b>Switzerland</b>	Graubünden				X	X		X
	Zentralschweiz		X		X	X		
	Berner Oberland	X	X			X		
	Région du Léman	X	X	X		X		
	Wallis/Valais	X	X			X		
	Ticino	X	X	X		X	X	
<b>France</b>	Rhône Alpes	X						
	PACA	X						
	Riviera Côte d'Azur	X						
<b>Germany</b>	Bayern				X	X		
<b>Slovenia</b>	Maribor	X		X		X		X
	Kranjska Gora	X				X		

**Table 3** Financing of tourist organisations in the Alps

c) a “fragmented” destination model, where coordination is weak and promotional activities are undertaken by single actors in the territory. In this case, the configuration of the destination is typically “point-to-point.”

Where the PTB has a well-structured plan to stimulate activity in the sector, more positive results are achieved in terms of destination definition and policies for destination management. Apart from specific considerations regarding the attitude towards cooperation among actors and the nature of the internal relationships of the destination, the evidence indicates that in the Alps the top-down approach guided by territorial entities is the best means of guaranteeing the high results desired in terms of coordination of the offering and organisation of promotional activities. This occurs, as we shall see in the following section, independently of the legal and organisational structure adopted to carry out destination management activities.

Table 4 presents the tourist organisations of the Alps as they fall within the model, that is as integrated, partially integrated, or fragmented. The variables used to define integration are:

- a) coordination and orientation of promotional activities,
- b) coordination in creating the offer,

- c) good ability to involve other tourist operators,
- d) collaboration with other economic actors.

Models	Nation	Region	Functions	
Integrated	A	Kärnten	- coordination and orientation of promotional activities	
		Niederösterreich		
		Salzburg		
		Steiermark		
		Tirol		
	CH	Ticino	- good ability to involve tourist operators	
		Wallis	- collaboration with other economic actors	
		Régione du Lemman		
		Zentralschweiz		
		Graubünden		
Partially integrated	A	Burgenland	- coordination of promotional activities	
		Oberösterreich		
		Voralberg		
	I	Alto Adige		- collaboration with tourist operators
		Trentino		
		Valle d'Aosta		
	F	Provence Alpes-Côte d'Azur		
		Rhône Alpes		
		Riviera Côte d'Azur		
	D	Bayern		
Fragmented	CH	Berner Oberland	- weak coordination, promotion of single territorial areas	
	I	Friuli V.G.		
		Lombardia		
		Piemonte		
		Veneto		
	SLO	Maribor		
		Kranjska Gora		

**Table 4** Models of the tourism organisations in the Alps

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The comparison among the varying destination management activities in the Alps brings to light some considerations that can provide a basis for further research. The application of destination management to the alpine territory must take into account several contextual variables, among which are:

- a) the existence of a well-established tradition of tourism in many locations;
- b) the existence of local communities whose economic development is directly linked to tourism;
- c) the importance of public intervention in managing the alpine territories;
- d) the geo-climatic and morphological uniqueness of the alpine territory.

The research has also shown that the activities of destination management change in relation to the specific tourist location in the alpine area, which can be distinguished by social and cultural factors and by the local development model. In Austria, for example, coordination takes place at the level of the entire destination and is supported by both public and private contributions, while some Italian regions have a more disaggregated model where coordination activities take place on different levels, and can even overlap. As a consequence, in Tirol a strong managerial role is played by *Tirol Werbung*, which effectively carries out *meta-management* activities, while in both Piemonte and Alto Adige it is the consortia of operators who manage coordination of the destination. In Switzerland the individual cantons have well-defined and autonomous coordination capabilities, while the French policies of subsidiarity leave ample room for the local entities to design and carry out their own policies to promote tourism.

Also emerging from the comparative analysis is the notion that the strength of the destination is greater where there is a shared public-private participation and interest in the tourism structures of the territory, also in terms of financing. The assumption of responsibility and risk by both public and private actors of a territory appears to favour the development of the local tourist offering. The research has shown that where the government of a destination actively requires and works to set up structures and financing, alongside clear decision-making and organisational processes, the public entity can in fact provide a fundamental stimulus for the development of tourism in the territory. Thus, appropriately managed direct intervention as well as incentives for the local actors can be determining factors in the start-up and realisation of long-term destination management activities. The public entity is therefore seen as a facilitator in the process of developing tourist destinations, enabling the emergence of structures that should, over time, acquire their own functional and operative autonomy.

The natural subdivision of the regions into smaller areas (valleys, villages, municipalities) poses a significant problem of interdependence among territories, both vertically (hierarchies of activity of destination management) and horizontally (partnership relationships among territories). Within the region, in fact, not all locations or tourist areas are of the same importance historically and in terms of the quality of the tourist product.

The future of tourism in the alpine regions will depend on the ability to manage these processes of coordination both within the destination and external to it. Moreover the nature of tourism in these areas requires that the actors maintain a balance between the offering created and promoted and the sustainability of that offering, in practice meaning the conservation of the natural resources that are the essence of the attractiveness of the Alps for tourists of all types.

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