

Tourism Observatories as an intelligent center in tourism planning and management. The case of A Coruña (Galicia, España)

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Objectives | This research aims to present and analyze a practical case study related to a tourism governance structure and a base tool for decision-making such as the Tourism Observatory of the City of A Coruña (Galicia), an urban destination in the north of Spain.

Methodology | The research, of an exploratory-descriptive nature, has used a mainly qualitative methodology and focuses on determining the categorical variables of presence, use and scope of this type of tourism management tools. Thus, the data collection techniques have been, in the first phase, review of documentation and use of secondary data (technical reports, statistical reports and news in the press); and, in a second phase, 10 interviews have been carried out with the main actors involved: regional and local entities linked to tourism in both the private and public area.

Main results and contributions | In an increasingly changing and dynamic environment, it seems necessary that the structuring and definition of tourism policies are consistent with the realities that emerge in tourism. For this reason, it is of utmost importance to take as a point of reference truthful and most up-to-date information possible on the development of tourist activity (Molina & Báez, 2017; Martínez & Cruz, 2023). For this reason, more and more destinations are betting on the creation of Tourism Observatories. Tourism observatories could be defined as tourism intelligence organizations that began to be launched in Europe in the 1980s but that experienced their greatest development until the year 2000, until the beginning of the era (Molina & Báez, 2017).

In Spain there are several examples of success but the Malaga Tourism Observatory (<https://visita.malaga.eu/>) started in 2008, the Madrid Tourism Intelligence Center (<https://www.madrid-destino.com/>) started in 2009, and the Barcelona Tourism Observatory (<https://www.observatoriturisme.barcelona/es>) started in 2015, stand out among all of them. The sources they use are diverse, including supply and demand indicators, sustainability measurements, and periodic surveys, among others. The statistical data obtained, over time, can

be used to make comparisons of time series and evolution analysis that will also facilitate decision making in situations of uncertainty (Bertocchi et al., 2020). Carrying out a review between the different observatories, it is confirmed that the main tools used are Tableau or Power BI. These platforms work in a similar way and work through systematic data collection in Excel sheets. The first results of the study have allowed us to know in greater detail the implementation of a tourism observatory in an urban destination such as the city of Coruña, the first municipal tourist observatory in the autonomous community. This project, launched in 2023 as a result of a collaboration agreement between the Council, through its Tourism and Congress Consortium and the University of Coruña, allows it to provide a differential character to the integration of the academy in its configuration and, especially, in its coordination and function. The main objective of this project is to design and provide a tourism intelligence tool that allows the compilation and analysis of data relevant to the destination in a stable manner. Furthermore, it allows you to diagnose the sector through the compilation of two main indicators and results associated with the evolution of two different pillars/products of the destination. With this context, it has three axes of work:

- Monitoring of tourist data on a single web platform in real time;
- Preparation of analytical and predictive reports through own studies on the destination and face or destination;
- Measurement of carbon footprint in the tourism sector.

In this paper, the main indicators, ways and tools used to obtain them will be presented in detail. Likewise, the main tourism actors (public and private) are consulted about their interest, their involvement, and the usefulness of the tool, among others.

Limitations | The project is in an early stage of development, so the study has been limited to its first year of operation and follow-up will be necessary.

Conclusions | If this becomes a reality, the tourism observatory will be an essential tool for planning and tourism management because it allows and facilitates structuring and analyzing all this amount of information as well as predicting and anticipating possible trends and/or needs. Of course, the project of A Coruña Tourism Observatory is in the initial phase so that in successive phases of work it will also be necessary to integrate other types of specific and sectorial studies that allow obtaining a comprehensive x-ray of the destination. The results show that a project of these characteristics will be useful if the information obtained is concise, precise and reliable. Likewise, the participation of public and private actors is essential for the success of the Project. Finally, it should be noted that one of the main challenges in extracting value from data is its

quality, that is, processing is one of the most relevant phases, as well as its correct interpretation, use and dissemination.

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