

Competitiveness of Tourist Destinations and Brazilian Strategy

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Abstract | The paper aims to contribute to the understanding and empowerment of issues related to competitiveness and innovation in tourism as a strategic element to tourist destinations. Considering the fundamentals of so-called economy of experience (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), determinant factors of the current and prospective competitive environment for general economic sectors are indicated. Based on that, this paper will explore those considered as having the greatest impact on tourism. A special look is cast on the characteristics of tourist demand and expectations within this new context, what determines the composition of tourism offer and find in the elements of experience and innovation a key element in coping competitiveness between destinations. The analysis of these changes indicates significant opportunities for value creation and innovation in products, segments and tourism sectors. The identification and classification of these factors are facilitated by the comparison between models of competition for tourist destinations proposed by different authors. Based on these benchmarks, the Brazilian strategy is identified and characterized to confront the international competitiveness in tourism, as well as the implementation mechanisms suitable for regions and destinations. For this purpose, we analyze the aspects of the political-institutional management of tourism in the country, the Tourism Regionalization Program, the Program Inductors 65 destinations, with a focus on competitiveness studies and guidelines for planning and managing tourism in destinations. The observation of its dynamics and competitiveness assessment, allows inferences about the effectiveness of these policies and strategies for tourism destinations in Brazil.

Keywords | Tourist Destinations, Competitiveness, Tourism Brazilian Strategy.

Resumo | O artigo tem como objetivo contribuir para o conhecimento e apropriação de temas relacionados à competitividade em turismo e da inovação como elemento estratégico para destinos turísticos. A partir dos fundamentos da denominada economia da experiência (Pine e Gilmore, 1999), são indicados os fatores determinantes do ambiente competitivo atual e prospectivo para os setores econômicos em geral e explorados aqueles considerados de maior impacto

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sobre o turismo. Um olhar especial é lançado sobre as características da demanda turística e suas expectativas dentro deste novo contexto, fator que condiciona a composição da oferta turística e que encontra nos fundamentos da experiência a inovação o elemento chave no enfrentamento da competitividade entre destinos turísticos. A análise destas mudanças indica significativas oportunidades de geração de valor e de inovação em produtos, segmentos e setores turísticos. A identificação e classificação destes fatores são facilitadas pela comparação entre os modelos de competitividade para destinos turísticos propostos por diferentes autores. Com base nestes referenciais, se identifica e caracteriza a estratégia brasileira para enfrentamento da competitividade internacional em turismo, bem como os mecanismos de implementação indicados para regiões e destinos. Para tanto, são analisados os aspectos relativos a organização político-institucional de gestão do turismo no País, o Programa de Regionalização do Turismo, o Programa 65 Destinos Indutores, com foco nos estudos de competitividade e nas diretrizes para o planejamento e gestão do turismo nos destinos. Como ilustração, se analisa os resultados do estudo aplicado ao destino turístico Pólo Costa das Dunas, litoral do nordeste brasileiro, cuja observação de sua dinâmica e avaliação de competitividade, permite inferir sobre a efetividade dessas políticas e estratégias para o turismo nos destinos brasileiros.

Palavras-chave | Destinos Turísticos, Competitividade, Estratégia Brasileira no Turismo.

1. Tourism Destination Competitiveness: conditioning and determinant factors

Competitiveness seems to be the most frequently used term in studies on the performance and infrastructure of tourism at national, regional and local destinations. Understanding the foundations and conditions of competitiveness in the current context is imperative for those intending to develop tourism in accordance with international standards. The theoretical models for studies on tourism destination competitiveness are based on the work of World Tourism Organization (OMT, 1997). Ritchie and Crouch (2003) who indicate conditions that favour positive performance in an environment that presents significant challenges to tourist destination management, since this requires defining clear future goals and choosing coherent strategies.

In competitiveness studies, concern with evaluating the competitive performance of destinations has dominated scientific and corporative research (Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto, 2005). Academia has dedicated itself to creating tourism competitiveness evaluation models to apply at the national, regional or local level, whereas

consultants have applied models to assess different destinations around the world (Gennest and Legg, 2003; WEF, 2011).

It is important to note that all models dealing with defining factors that influence competitiveness of tourist destinations are based on sustainability criteria such as conditions for strategic planning and management. A review of the main models suggests that theoretical and methodological studies on destination competitiveness have already been consolidated. Table 1 shows an inter-model comparison based on composition and application.

This differentiation is related mainly to competitiveness and what it represents for the strategic management of destinations. If, on one hand, competitiveness is understood from a comparison of competitors, comparison of models and attributes being external to the destination and common to universal analysis, on the other, competitiveness can be interpreted from models or ideal performance standards that help in assessing the destination based on unique attributes and factors.

Studies and proposals that follow initial investigations reveal a more complex and overlapping context when an attempt is made at creating a

Table 1 | Comparison of the main characteristics of competitiveness models for tourist destinations

Models Characteristics	Travel and Tourism Competitiveness (TTCI) according to – the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2011)	Tourism-inducing destinations – Fundação Getúlio Vargas (2008)	Comp&tenibleModel – Mazaro (2006)	Determinants and Indicators – Dwyer and Kim (2003)	Premier-ranking – Gennest and Legg (2003)	Destination competitiveness – Ritchie and Crouch (2003)
Nature	Methodological-applied	Methodological-applied	Conceptual-methodological	Conceptual-methodological	Methodological-applied	Theoretical-model
Main motivation	Institutional Studies	Consultancy studies	Academic studies	Academic studies	Consultancy studies	Academic studies
Model objectives	Apply to diagnoses and competitive ranking of destinations around the world.	Apply in the self assessment of diagnoses and competitive classifications of Brazilian destinations.	Propose a conceptual model that serves as a monitoring instrument of tourist destination evolution.	Guide analysis and studies that seek to understand the inter-relationship and movement among variables of the tourism system.	Apply in the self assessment of diagnoses and competitive classifications of Canadian destinations.	Establish conceptual competitiveness and sustainability models for tourist destinations.
Dimensions and factors	subindexes; regulatory framework, business environment and infrastructure and human, cultural, and natural resources.	Macro dimensions: infrastructure, tourism, public policies, economy and sustainability models.	Administration: planning, management, coordination, cooperation, strategic foresight. Competitiveness: resources, attractions, positioning, profitability, tourist satisfaction. Sustainability: socio-cultural, environmental.	Local and created resources, support, administration, preservation, security, demand and market factors.	Resources and essential attractions, quality and critical mass, satisfaction and value, accessibility, equipment and services, profitability, image, marketing, innovation, local sustainability.	Innate resources and essential attractions, support resources, destination management, policy, planning and development, qualifiers and determinant attributes.
Path to sustainability		Model	Strategic, essential	Consequence, result	Model	Guidelines and premises

Source: own construction.

theoretical-conceptual framework for competitiveness and sustainability in tourism. As stated earlier, factors, attributes or variables that make up this context have already been identified and appropriately evaluated, notably in the model created by Ritchie and Crouch (2003), in essence the most theoretical of those analysed and having the merit of being exhaustive in the *must be* dimension.

Methodologies suggested by Premier-ranking (Gennest and Legg, 2003), applied in Canadian destinations and used by *Fundação Getúlio Vargas* (Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Ministério do Turismo, 2008) to assess tourism-inducing destinations in Brazil, are important in defining the dimensions and attributes of competitiveness for destinations and confirm the multidimensionality of factors susceptible to the influence and impacts of tourism. However, they are dichotomous assessment formats intended for diagnostic purposes, which are not included in a qualitative or explicative evaluation of variables.

Following this proposal, the model created by Dwyer and Kim (2003) goes further to define the dimensions and critical factors for local tourism and suggests a methodology for assessing destination competitiveness using multivariate statistical tools that can identify and quantify variable motility, which systemically explain the logic of decision-making and action.

Along these same lines, the Comp&tenible (Mazaro, 2006) was developed to amalgamate and systematise all the factors that influence the strategic adjustment between opportunity and macro environmental determinants into different dimensions, translated in this context by the imperatives of sustainability. These dimensions represent the anticipated influence of the main management components on results and impacts of tourism on destinations.

At the international level, the study conducted by World Economic Forum (WEF) is the most complete and perhaps the most important considering

its methodology and scope. The aim of the Tourism Travel Competitiveness (TTCI), which covers a record 139 economies in 2011, is to provide a comprehensive strategic tool for measuring “the factors and policies that make it attractive to develop the Travel and Tourism (T&T) sector in different countries” (WEF, 2011: 14).

It is based on three broad categories of variables that facilitate or drive T&T competitiveness. These categories are classified into three subindexes of the index: the T&T regulatory framework subindex, T&T business environment and infrastructure subindex, and the T&T human, cultural, and natural resources subindex. The first captures elements that are policy related and generally under the government’s purview; the second captures elements of the business environment and the “hard” infrastructure of each economy; and the third subindex captures the “softer” human, cultural, and natural elements of each country’s resource endowments. Each of these three subindexes is composed of a number of the 14 pillars of T&T competitiveness.

To evaluate competitiveness of destinations in Brazil , the Ministry of Tourism uses the model developed by the FGV called National Tourism Competitiveness Index – 65 Destinations Inducing Regional Tourism Development. The ICTN-Brazil is divided into five subindexes, as follows: Infrastruc-

ture, Tourism, Tourist services and equipment, Public policies, Economy and Sustainability. Each of these five subindexes is composed of a number of pillars to a total of thirteen.

The comparison between the models (Table 2) has revealed that the critical factors influencing the competitiveness of tourism destinations have already been identified, although there are some differences in the structure and organization of the variables. It is important to note that there seems to be no distinction between the target levels rated, that is, the critical factors are the same for a country, a region or a tourist location. In Brazil, the same instrument is applied to destinations and its results reflect overall results obtained for the country.

It is important to point out that all studies start from the assumption that competitiveness is inherent to the destination and not the market or competition and that results allow comparisons among different destinations. The aim is to enhance self-diagnosis in order to outline competitive advantages and strategies in accordance with the macro environment rather than the market or sector criteria themselves. According to the Ministry of Tourism, the ICTN “consolidated itself as an indicator that allows monitoring the ability of a destination to evolve” (Ministério do Turismo, 2011: 27). This seems to be the main focus of the studies described here.

Table 2 | Composition of the indexes of the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness (WEF, 2011) and Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV) models

TTCI - WEF	DITE - FGV
Policy rules and regulations Environmental sustainability Safety and security Health and hygiene Prioritization of Travel & Tourism Air transport infrastructure Ground transport infrastructure Tourism infrastructure ICT infrastructure Price competitiveness in the T&T industry Human resources Affinity for Travel & Tourism Natural resources	General Infrastructure Access Touristic Service and Related Structure Marketing Public Policy Regional Cooperation Monitoring Local Economy Business Capacity Social Aspects Environment Culture —

Source: own construction.

2. Competitive Context for Tourism and Opportunities for Brazil

If it is essential to offer tourism that represents the best combination among the competitive determinants of a particular historical context and the adequate exploitation of resources and attraction available in order to be competitive. Monitoring the macro environment to identify and seize strategic opportunities becomes the greatest challenge to tourist destinations in the current context and future. For Brazil, subject to the competitive imperatives highlighted by many insightful studies that explored issues such as the impact on the tourism industry and opportunities for increasing the sector's competitiveness, the long-term scenario is favourable.

In regard to macroeconomic issues and particularly the recent economic and financial downturn, Ringbeck and Pietsch (2011) analyse structural trends in the global T&T sector and assess how the economic crisis of 2008–09 accelerated these trends, which have led to the sharpest decline in international tourist arrivals in history. The authors highlight the interplay between long-term trends such as the high growth dynamics of emerging tourism regions, increasing travel spending in the Western Hemisphere and new opportunities for domestic/regional tourism as well as short-term volatility as a consequence of disruptive events. Collectively, these represent new challenges but also opportunities in Travel & Tourism for national governments. The authors describe countries that have suffered from the current downturn but have managed to grow despite the crisis, and present reasons and factors for their success.

The themes related to biodiversity and nature conservation are high priority. Lipman and Vorster (2011) discuss the important role to be played by the T&T sector in the important shift toward the green economy. The authors describe how Travel & Tourism will be an integral part of this process at global, regional and local levels, compatible with a low- carbon development trajectory in addition to

being a key sector in guiding the change to a green economy. In addition to compliance, market leadership, consumer satisfaction and competitiveness are also important goals. Further, because of its multiplier effect, which cascades through interrelated value chains in the economy, a green revolution in the T&T sector could be a catalyst for green growth and transformation in the broader economy.

Endorsing the importance of the subject, the TTCI underscores natural resources as another important factor underlying national T&T competitiveness. The study maintains that countries able to offer travellers access to natural assets have a clear competitive advantage. Evaluation of TTCI 2011 included a number of environmental attractiveness measures, such as the number of UNESCO natural World Heritage sites, a measure of the quality of the natural environment, fauna richness, as measured by the total known species of animals, and number of nationally protected areas.

However, they warn that in order to fully capitalise on its potential, the industry must abandon its inclination toward historical goals, policies and institutional frameworks that limit its decisions regarding green growth. Indeed, because of their interconnectivity and mutual dependence, the T&T sector and its related industries need greater convergence and closer collaboration. Key policies will have to be consolidated and/or aligned to meet the twin objectives of sustainable mobility and sustainable destinations. Convergence will enable the sector to speak with one voice on issues affecting the sector.

The authors conclude by stressing the importance of transforming "classic tourism", dominated by considerations of growth and market share, to "smart tourism" that is clean, green, ethical, and customer and quality orientated. This in turn will ensure that the sector becomes a market leader in the green growth paradigm and its related green jobs, investment, trade and development.

Marton-Lefèvre and Borges (2011) indicate that T&T is in a unique position to integrate biodiversity-friendly practices and solutions based on nature.

Biodiversity is vital for T&T in many tourism products and services, due to its attractiveness to the surrounding natural environments. However, the value of natural assets used by the industry is generally not internalised, leading to serious impacts on biodiversity. In 2010, a new “Grand Plan” for nature, with 20 goals for biodiversity in 2020, was approved by governments worldwide.

This “Grand Plan” aims to guide public and private decision making in the next decade. The authors point out that collective action to conserve biodiversity and implement this plan is a shared responsibility between governments, private sector and civil society. The authors also note that in order for Travel & Tourism to support the goals of global biodiversity, threats to nature must be minimised through the integration of biodiversity considerations in tourism management.

Moreover, there are many opportunities for industry to reap the benefits of biodiversity-friendly practices, including market differentiation, increasing competitiveness and development of products and premium services, as well as proposals for new business and emerging markets. In order to capitalise on the opportunities and minimise the risks, four focus areas are suggested for Travel & Tourism: (1) adoption and integration of biodiversity-friendly operating practices in T&T supply chains, (2) destination stewardship, (3) capacity building and marketing creation for “biodiversity businesses”, and (4) emerging businesses and markets based on biodiversity-friendly goods and services.

The convergence between the issues of sustainability and competitiveness in tourism is not something new. The propositions of Ritchie and Crouch (2003) are founded on the principles of sustainability: the Canadian model emphasises sustainable criteria in evaluating their destinations; the proposal of *Comp&tenible* introduces the concept of sustainability and strategic competitive advantage based on its premises. Therefore, the gap seems to be in the implementation of management models more committed to the sustainability objectives and at the same time, able to ensure differentiated competitive positioning.

3. Tourist Destinations and Brazilian Strategy

The results of the 2011 TTCI and their interpretation for the Brazilian situation provide interesting inferences about its conditions of competitiveness on a global level. Moreover, comparison with internal studies reveals important elements about touristic destinations in Brazil. The overall results of TTCI 2011 showed no change among countries that occupy the top rankings compared to 2009 and further strengthens European leadership in the industry, holding the top five positions, with seven countries among the 10 most competitive in the world.

At first glance, Brazil’s results were not positive. The country lost seven positions in the overall ranking between 2009 and 2011. It is ranked 52nd overall with an index score of 4.36 points. However, a closer look at the partial data for the subindex may reveal a more promising scenario for Brazil, details in the Figure 1.

Of the top three performing economies per pillar TTCI’s 2011 Brazil is ranked first in natural biodiversity, followed by Tanzania and the USA. This pillar also represents the country’s best score, reaching 6.4 points on a scale of 0 to 7. The subindex that measures human, natural and cultural groups ranks the country 11th worldwide.

Another important indicator is the detailed analysis of pillars displaying the competitive advantages of the highest placed countries in the overall ranking. Noteworthy is the predominance of leadership in dimensions related to general infrastructure and tourism, health and public health, safety and other factors directly related to planning and management of localities and mainly conditioned by decisions under the control of managers. The pillars in which Brazil fared worst, causing a drop in ranking, were attributes related to management skills that can be acquired and factors that can be controlled.

Under the logic of competitive advantage, it can be inferred that the prospective scenario for Brazil is potentially more favourable, considering the acknowledgement of biodiversity attributes as an

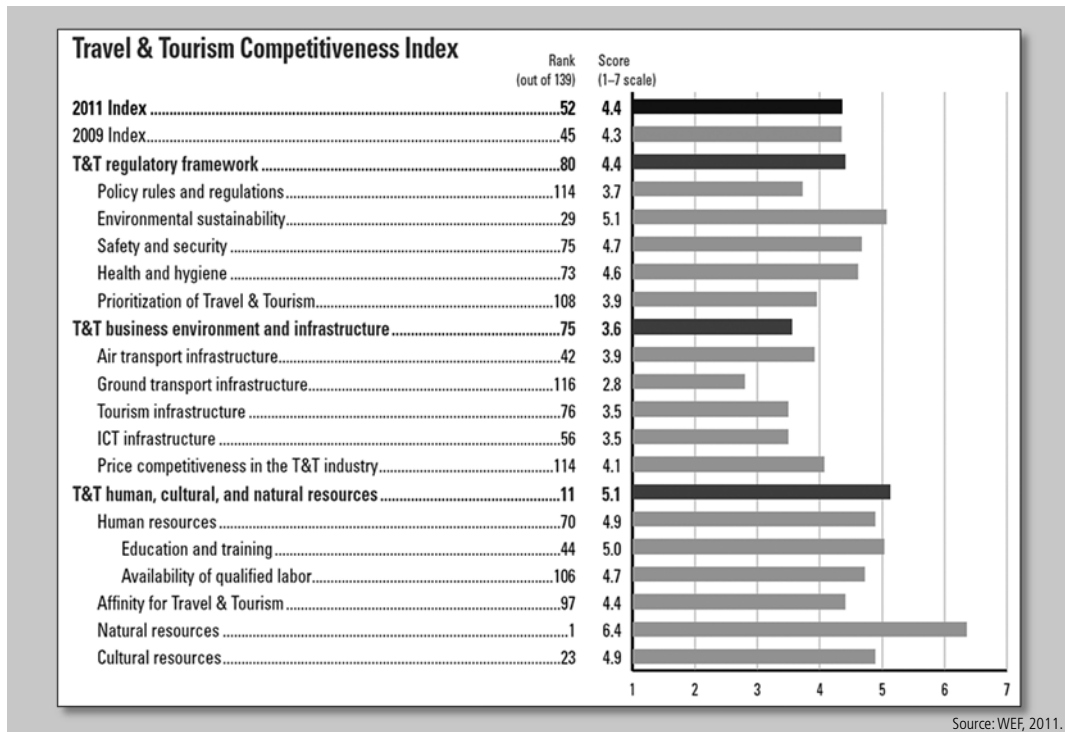


Figure 1 | The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index Brasil.

important tourism resource, and mainly because they are innate, not susceptible to imitation and cannot be constructed from management decisions, as is the case of those related to infrastructure, urban planning, etc., reasons for the current competitive advantages of leading countries in the overall ranking.

In our analysis, the competitive disadvantages of Brazil can be reversed and transformed into successful attributes that may lead to higher rankings, while the attributes of the worst rated countries, especially related to endogenous resources and attractions, cannot be modified by deliberate management decisions. It is not possible to change the natural and cultural characteristics of a country, but infrastructure and accommodations can be improved.

This interpretation is based on studies indicating an important driving force of variables, management decisions and strategic choices regarding competitive destinations, including factors that have an impact on more general issues, such as local sustainability

(Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Mazaro, 2006). However, the application of tools for evaluating consolidated competitiveness emphasises the importance of format and management criteria adopted by the destinations in successful tourism strategies.

This finding is crucial for the analysis of long term strategies for tourism in Brazil, considering that the factors and indicators of the study show that Brazil's weak competitiveness in international tourism is subject to change by the acting manager of the destinations. This means controlling the factors that weaken tourism and prevent it from achieving its full potential.

Another valuable intangible resource in Brazil is the receptivity of its people and their propensity to be happy. The importance of this factor was recognised in the 2011 edition of the TTCL, which includes *affinity for Travel & Tourism* as a key indicator that measures the extent to which a country and society are open to tourism and foreign visitors.

It is important to recognise that the general openness of the population to travel and foreign visitors has an important impact on T&T competitiveness. In particular, it provides a measure of the population's attitude toward foreign travellers; a measure of the extent to which business leaders are willing to recommend leisure travel in their countries for important business contacts; and a measure of tourism openness (tourism expenditures and receipts as a percentage of GDP), which provides a sense of the importance of tourism relative to the country's overall size. Tourism in Brazil accounts a mere 0.9% of international travellers (Ministério do Turismo, 2007).

These data demonstrate the huge and unexplored potential for growth in the sector, especially when based on the attributes of sustainability and within a strategic perspective and vision for the future. Determinants that have shaped the competitive context underscore that strategic opportunities are limitless in terms of tourism for destinations that transformed macro environmental imperatives into strategic guidelines.

Therefore, in the case of Destination Brazil, which is ranked first in the TTCI natural resources pillar, the competitive advantages can and must be sustained. This means market insertion and positioning in different segments that depend on natural diversity for their development and which find fertile terrain for growth in the current competitive context.

4. Guidelines and Brazilian Strategy for Competitiveness in Tourism

The history of tourism in Brazil is fairly recent. During the long military dictatorship, travel was treated as a national security issue and the focus was on controlling the movement of people. With the transition to democracy, accompanied by open markets and socioeconomic restructuring, travel and leisure became public policy, and individuals were able to use their free time.

Since the turn of this century the country has adopted a new economic development model that includes mechanisms to improve income distribution and job opportunities, favoring the inclusion of millions of Brazilians in the so-called consumer society. As a result, Brazil possesses a positive set of economic and social indicators conducive to accelerated growth. It has reduced its dependence on external financing and today the country is less vulnerable to international crises than before. In recent years, it has substantially increased its participation in international commerce, accumulating record balance-of-payment surpluses.

This favorable performance allowed for the accumulation of unprecedented levels of international reserves, transforming the country from a debtor to a creditor nation. Considering that growth in tourism is closely related to economic growth, and given the current stability and perspective for expanded economic activity, it can be inferred that this is a strategic moment for Brazil, filled with new tourism opportunities.

The National Tourism Plan – NTP 2003-2007 represents a mark of political modernity in the field of tourism. This plan arose from a maturing process in terms of the central government's approach to the sector, initiated at the end of the last century and consisting of the first formal document that establishes guidelines for its development and a definitive strategy for tourism-related issues.

The National Tourism Plan – NTP 2007-2010 continues programs initiated in 2003 and expresses its priority direction in its title (*A Voyage of Inclusion*). It reinforces and widens its application as a planning and management instrument that characterizes tourism as an engine for development and a generator of employment and income in the country. This inclusion can be achieved in two ways: production through the creation of jobs and income and consumption, by attracting new tourists to the internal market.

The NTP is structured into macro programs directed to large tourism intervention areas. Each one is subdivided into programs dedicated to specific

topics within each policy dimension. For purposes of this analysis, it is necessary to focus on macro program regionalization, which considers strategies with a direct impact on the competitiveness of Destination Brazil, especially regarding the structuring of hundreds of destinations in all the regions of the country. The other macro programs are very important for competitive performance, but are considered support strategies for developing activities at the macro level.

With the specific objective of promoting the transfer of planning technologies and decentralized and participative management, the macro program for regionalization considers strategies directed toward the implementation of effective actions at tourism destinations and defines priority regions for the structuring and organization of tourism in Brazil for the near future. Its focus is regional tourism diversity, which proposes greater emphasis on quality and originality as attributes capable of adding value to Brazil's tourist products.

Its main objectives are to promote the development and decentralization of tourist activities, support planning and structuring of tourist regions, considering cultural plurality and natural diversity, encourage tourism-related production, adding value to tourist products and strengthening their competitiveness.

This macro program is organized into four programs that integrate a set of planning-related measures for tourist regions in the 27 Brazilian states. Effective action is achieved by institutionalizing regional management through the formation of networks. Furthermore, the regionalization process is monitored and accessed at the municipal, state and national level, with special emphasis on integrated actions with neighboring countries. Due to the dimension of the country and the operational capacity of those involved, tourist destinations and itineraries must be prioritized in order to achieve international quality standards.

Tourism regionalization implemented by the Tourism Regionalization Program – Brazilian Itineraries – proposes:

"(...) the structuring, organisation and diversification of tourist products based on the National Tourism Plan. It consists on a decentralised, coordinated and integrated public policy management model based on principles of flexibility, implementation, mobilisation, intersectoral and interinstitutional cooperation and joint decision making, as the guiding strategy of other NTP macro programs and actions" (Ministério do Turismo, 2006: 36).

Incorporated into this NTP version as a tourist program for macro regionalization, the proposal is distinguished by segmentation as a strategy to organize tourism for planning and management purposes, with the aim of conceiving products, itineraries and destinations that reflect the peculiarities and specificities of each region, emphasizing Brazilian characteristics. The Tourism Regionalization Program mapped 200 tourist regions in the 27 Brazilian states through a project carried out in conjunction with State Tourism Organs and Forums.

They selected itineraries and regions that showed opportunities of achieving international market quality standards. To priorities destinations in the 87 itineraries chosen, encompassing 116 tourist regions, evaluations and studies conducted by the International Tourist Marketing Plan called *Plano Aquarela*, and the National Tourist Marketing Plan called *Plano Cores do Brasil*, in addition to other studies on federal government investments and the potential of these destinations were considered.

Based on this study, 65 tourist destinations were chosen to induce the development of itineraries and tourist regions in all the states. Until 2010 these destinations served as models for regional tourist development. Their successful experiences and practices will be extrapolated to other tourist destinations in the country.

The choice of destinations was based on their relevance for national tourism. These became a priority for receiving technical and financial investment from the Ministry of Tourism. The main selection criterion was the potential for tourist development

in these cities and surrounding areas. All Brazilian states and their capitals were considered and are organized within program guidelines.

The policy of municipalising tourism management was adopted before the implementation of the NTP in its current form, but it indicated the path that subsequent proposals would follow: the focus on destinations. This can be considered one of the main challenges for tourism policy in Brazil, because of its dimension, diversity and large number of municipalities with more than 5000 inhabitants. Of these, more than 3000 identified themselves as tourist destinations in a survey taken in 1998. The first significant challenge was to find criteria to establish priorities in a universe of important questions and how to select priority destinations to implement policy.

To emphasize the importance of this strategy, the specific and priority goal of NTP 2003-2007 is

the structuring of the 65 tourist destinations with international quality standards, the so-called Inducer Destinations. This action must be based on the principle of environmental, socio-cultural and economic sustainability working in a participative, decentralized and systemic way to stimulate the integration and consequent organization and expansion of tourist products. The Figure 2 shows the Map Inducer Destinations by region in Brazil.

The other tourist regions must be institutionally organized and prepared for their future qualification and structuring, based on products defined by objectives. This also means being strengthened to absorb the impacts of development in their territories. Professional qualification and certification, as well as certifying tourist enterprises, are also essential for structuring tourist destinations to international quality standards.

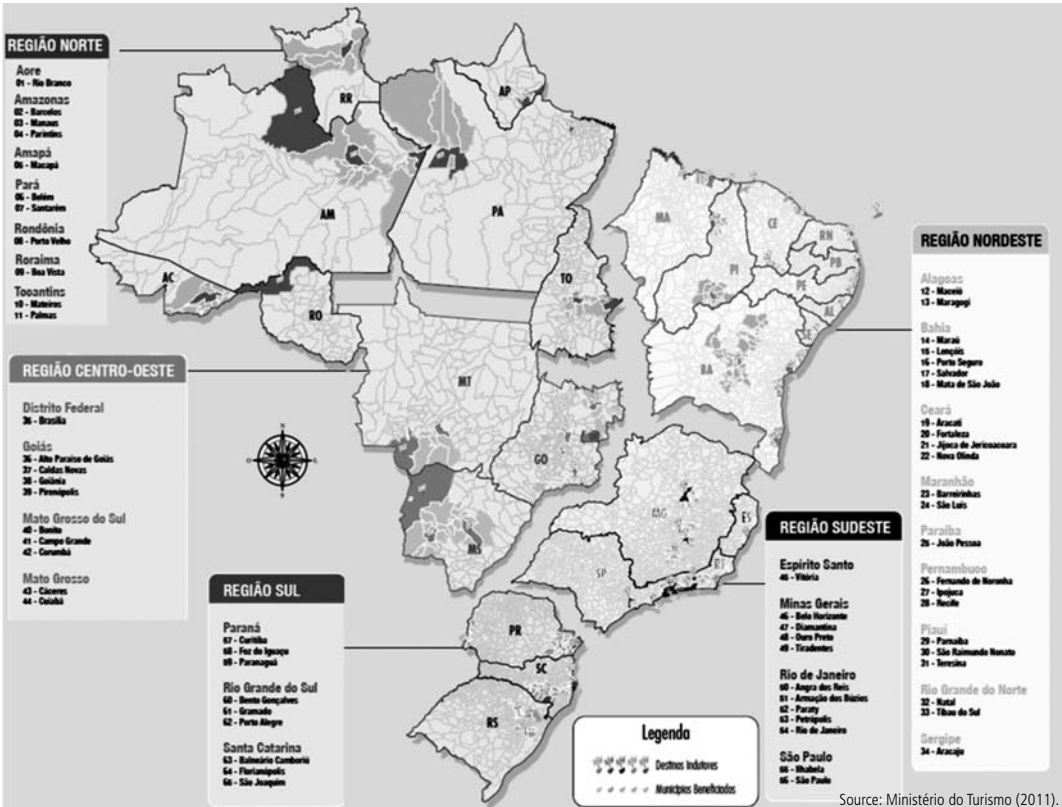


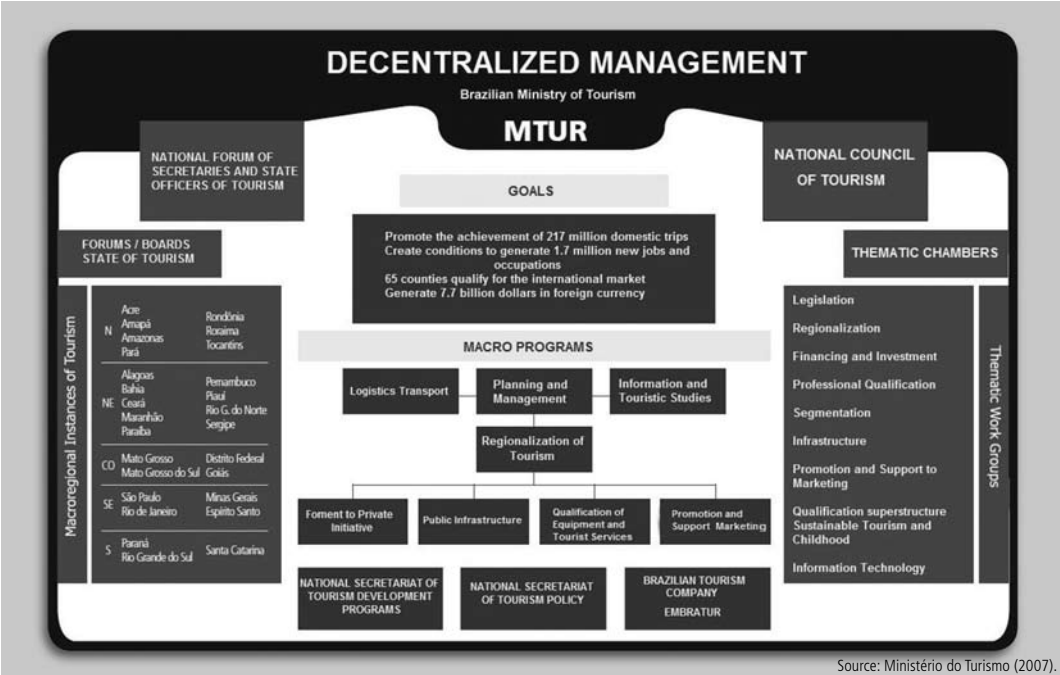
Figure 2 | Inducer Destinations in Brazilian Strategy by region.

The strategic focus of the project consists of instituting a management system in the action plans of the 65 tourism-inducing destinations, qualifying local stakeholders to strengthen local management and expand knowledge of strategic planning. This will create a working network that maintains a constant and efficient exchange of information aimed at accelerating planning, execution and monitoring processes. This work will also determine the ability of local managers, who will receive technical support from a group of national administrators to structure and execute plans that guide competitiveness actions.

As a strategic action instrument, the NTP indicates guidelines and policies for the sector and is organized into macro programs for which goals are established for four-year periods, the duration of each government mandate. Its main objectives are to generate 1.7 million jobs in the sector, increase domestic trips to 217 million and promote 65 tourism-inducing destinations according to international market models.

The NTP is being implemented in the different regions of the country, supported by a decentralized coordination structure and action management, given Brazil’s large land mass and in accordance with the perspective that decisions must be made by the destinations themselves, where tourist activities actually take place. The structure and organization of domestic tourism encourages cooperation and participation between different government sectors and the private sector as well as a host of institutions representing civil society, making the National Tourism Council (NTC) responsible for planning.

The Brazilian strategy for structuring competition in tourism by means of management training and for regional and local governance demonstrates the correct form of transferring technology and power to destinations and controlling the process of tourism development, thereby enhancing the resources and attractions of each place or region. The current organizational flowchart of tourism in Brazil is depicted in Figure 3.



Source: Ministério do Turismo (2007).

Figure 3 | Current organizational flowchart of tourism in Brazil.

However, perhaps the most important and significant gap in the implementation of the program is between diagnosis of destination conditions and poor implementation on the part of local management of strategic objectives committed to high levels of competitiveness. The fragility and lack of management, in some cases, shows the chronic situation at Brazilian tourism destinations.

However, the country exhibits a number of cases where the concept of efficiency and effectiveness predominates in the municipal management of regular population flows rather than in the management of tourism flows themselves. Tourism management often refers to the administration of cities and towns, tangible places where tourism actually materializes.

If we analyse the NTP under the criteria and principles of strategic planning (Tribe, 2010) and tourism sustainability, it is immediately apparent that this is essentially a political document and that, although it has the undeniable merit of being in printed format, representing a more formal and professional management approach to tourism in the country, it displays a number of inadequacies and inconsistencies that can compromise its effectiveness.

The first is inconsistency between stated objectives and the time horizon, since 4 years is not enough to change the tourism scenario in a country the size of Brazil. This was demonstrated when it did not reach the goal of expanding participation in international tourism in 2003-2007 NTP, a deficiency that was exacerbated in NTP 2007-2010.

The social aspect of the plan indicates that Brazilians should be the main beneficiaries of tourist development in the country. To that end, domestic and rural tourism has increased to generate economies of scale and widen the participation of Brazilian families in tourism. It can be observed that NTP 2007-2010 expands and strengthens the internal market, with special emphasis on the social function of tourism. This is a central aspect of tourism policy in Brazil, since it is based on and justified by its mega geographic and demographic dimensions and focuses on the potential for both supply and demand.

However, the social character stated in their guidelines is not sufficient to generate actions actually committed to Brazilians or to promote the distribution of benefits through economies of scale. Brazil does not have defined incentive mechanisms or control over activities at destinations, to ensure compliance of social proposals and more inclusive tourism. The social aspect seems to have been wrongly interpreted, stimulating flow in the internal market mainly through funding programs for specific segments, such as seniors, students, among others.

In fact, in recent years, the number of Brazilians from economic Classes C and D travelling by plane for the first time has grown exponentially. This indicates that these changes drive the economy in many small towns. However, it is thought that, in addition to demand, this would require inclusion as the foundation of tourism plans for these localities and social inclusion programs through the provision of tourist destinations. This distortion has increased the flow of travellers, allowing the establishment of monopoly operators and exposing the serious problems of general infrastructure in tourist locations.

Another important gap is between proposed sustainable development of biodiversity and effective measures that guarantee preservation, subsequently taking advantage of this distinctive heritage as a differentiated tourist attraction. The evaluation of TTCI clearly demonstrates loss of tourism competitiveness in the country, as mentioned before, due to poor urban infrastructure in terms of mobility, sanitation, waste treatment and disposal, security, town planning, leisure and appropriate conditions for the exercise of citizenship.

This means that our problems and gaps in competitive tourism are reflections of the appalling conditions found in tourist areas due to lack of basic sanitation, public health, access and urban mobility, such as is found in the Northeast region of the country, considered an important potential for tourism that attracts much of the Brazil's national and international flow. The problems related to basic infrastructure at destinations are related to municipal management, a responsibility not adequately assumed by municipalities.

These competitive deficiencies, even though the NTP still bases its founding principles on the Regionalization Program, whose priority is to empower destinations for tourism management, have produced poor results in the preparation and transfer of management technologies to destinations. According to competitiveness studies, it is common to ignore tourism and its significance as an organized activity integrated into urban dynamics.

Results of a three-year study conducted by the ECDI-FGV show a similar situation to the one found by TTCI 2011, reinforcing the fragile aspects of Brazilian tourism, given that findings points to the lack of clear strategies and competitiveness of tourism-inducing destinations. The results of the study are depicted in Table 3.

The results of competitiveness studies on the 65 tourism-inducing destinations carried out in 2008, 2009 and 2010 indicate the enormous need for improvements and expansion. Brazil was not awarded more than seven points on any of the 13 dimension evaluated. This is a clear indictment of how far Brazil is from meeting the standards required to maintain sustainable competitive strategies, in their widest sense. However, guidelines seem to point to paths that are converging to meet current and future competitive imperatives for tourism.

According to the NTP, tourism in Brazil must consider regional diversity, generating inherently Brazilian products, expanding the domestic market and the effective introduction of the country into the international tourism industry. Creating jobs, generating and distributing income, reducing social and regional inequalities, promoting equal opportunity, respecting the environment, protecting the historical and cultural patrimony and generating foreign exchange are some of the goals strived for.

The NTP aims to develop high quality Brazilian tourist products, considering regional, cultural and natural diversities, promoting tourism as a factor of social inclusion and encouraging competitiveness in national and international markets. To ensure execution, it counts on decentralized management to structure destinations, diversify supply and enhance competitiveness indicators according to global standards.

The conditioning factors of tourism development and NTP implementation are related to investment and private market expansion, renovating infrastructure and equipment at tourist destinations and qualifying human resources in the various activities that make up the productive tourism chain. A significant challenge is to develop and implement strategies related to transportation logistics, which allow for

Table 3 | Competitiveness Destinations Studies 2008-2010 - Brazil

Dimensions	Average								
	Brasil			Capital			Non-Capital		
	2008	2009	2010	2008	2009	2010	2008	2009	2010
General Index	52,1	54,0	56,0	59,5	61,9	64,1	46,9	48,4	50,3
General Infrastructure	63,8	64,6	65,8	70,5	71,3	74,3	58,1	58,9	59,8
Access	55,6	58,1	60,5	66,9	69,9	72,0	47,5	49,7	52,3
Services and related structure	44,8	46,8	50,8	56,8	59,4	63,3	36,3	37,9	41,9
Tourists Attractions	58,2	59,5	60,5	56,6	58,5	59,5	59,3	60,2	61,3
Marketing and Destiny Promotion	38,2	41,1	42,7	46,3	47,5	46,8	32,4	36,5	39,8
Public Policies	50,8	53,7	55,2	55,7	58,7	61,5	47,3	50,2	50,7
Regional Cooperation	44,1	48,1	51,1	42,9	47,1	48,3	45,0	48,8	53,1
Monitoring	35,4	34,5	35,3	42,1	41,8	42,6	30,6	29,4	30,0
Local Economy	56,6	57,1	59,5	64,7	67,6	70,7	50,9	49,6	51,5
Business Capacity	51,3	55,7	57,0	72,1	78,1	82,7	36,6	39,8	38,6
Social Aspects	57,2	57,4	58,4	62,3	63,1	64,2	53,5	53,4	54,2
Environmental Aspects	58,9	61,8	65,6	63,8	67,0	71,3	55,5	58,1	61,5
Cultural Aspects	54,6	54,6	55,9	61,4	63,0	64,1	49,8	48,7	50,0

Source: Ministério do Turismo (2011).

the integration of regions and tourist destinations, thereby promoting a link between the country and the world.

5. Final Considerations

In light of the current and future competitive context for tourist destinations, be it at national, regional or local level, the determinant and conditioning factors of success and special attributes required to guide strategic decisions seem to be already identified and defined. The challenge to destinations and their future is the adequate identification and study of these attributes and how each destination appropriates this knowledge and transforms it into competitive intelligence.

This perspective requires vision and understanding that, more important than having a local attraction, is how you take advantage of it. This aspect stresses management and coordination as priorities and principles for controlling development and directing results according to what is determined within rather than outside the destination, as indicated by models created by Dwyer and Kim (2003) and Mazaro (2010).

Based on this understanding, analysis of Brazilian strategy to cope with international competitiveness demonstrates that the country is in tune with competitive imperatives when it bases its tourism policy and defines its strategic plan according to decentralization principles, emphasizing its own resources, "brazilianism" aspects, regional integration and the domestic market.

After more than a decade of efforts to enhance tourism in Brazil and a policy of empowering municipalities and micro tourist regions, called regional poles, it can be inferred from global assessment that it has improved qualitatively and quantitatively when compared to the period prior to its implementation.

The Brazilian strategy of structuring for competition in tourism, by delegating management to local

and regional governments, demonstrates the correct manner of transferring technologies and power to the destinations, favouring control over the tourism development process and allowing for the strengthening of resources and attractions of each place or region. Based on these resources, the definition of priority segments is also a crucial factor for directing specific strategies and optimizing resources, given that it demarcates markets and niches for such purposes.

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