

Original article

Strategic guidelines for the management of Cuban tourist destinations

Pautas estratégicas para la gestión de los destinos turísticos cubanos

Diretrizes estratégicas para o gerenciamento de destinos turísticos cubanos



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Received: 26/06/2023

Accepted: 4/06/2024

ABSTRACT

In the complex context in which Cuba's tourism activity is developing, it is necessary to adjust the sector's management to international trends in order to increase the country's competitiveness as a destination. In recent years, it has been pointed out that there is a lack, at the country level, of studies linked to the strategic and integrated planning of the sector. In this scenario, and as part of the project: Development and Competitiveness of the Cuban tourist product, the present research is developed with the objective of designing strategic guidelines for the management of Cuban tourist destinations. In the same, a previous stage linked to the theoretical-conceptual study and the description of the elements linked to tourism in the destination was developed. Subsequently, three stages were developed using methods and techniques such as bibliographic analysis, surveys to experts and discussion groups. This made it possible to present the situational analysis of Cuba in terms of the management of its destinations, future perspectives, good practices of two of the countries that constitute direct competition, as well as to formulate a total of five strategic objectives

and 30 guidelines to be taken into account for the design of strategies. The study highlights the need to recognize and assume the management of destinations from the territory.

Keywords: competitiveness; tourist destinations; management; strategic planning.

RESUMEN

En el complejo contexto en que se desarrolla la actividad turística cubana, se hace necesario atemperar la gestión del sector a las tendencias internacionales para con ello elevar la competitividad del destino país. En los últimos años, se ha señalado que se carece, a nivel de país, de estudios vinculados con la planeación estratégica e integrada del sector. En este escenario, y como parte del proyecto: Desarrollo y Competitividad del producto turístico cubano, se desarrolla la presente investigación con el objetivo de diseñar las pautas estratégicas para la gestión de los destinos turísticos cubanos. En la misma se desarrolló una etapa previa vinculada con el estudio teórico-conceptual y la descripción de los elementos vinculados al turismo en el destino. Posteriormente, se desarrollaron tres etapas donde fueron utilizados métodos y técnicas como análisis bibliográfico, encuestas a expertos y grupos de discusión. Lo anterior permitió exponer el análisis situacional de Cuba en cuanto a la gestión de sus destinos, perspectivas futuras, buenas prácticas de dos de los países que constituyen competencia directa, así como formular un total de cinco objetivos estratégicos y 30 pautas a tener en cuenta para el diseño de estrategias. En el estudio realizado sobresale la necesidad de que se reconozca y asuma la gestión de los destinos desde el territorio.

Palabras clave: competitividad; destinos turísticos; gestión; planeación estratégica.

RESUMO

No complexo contexto em que se desenvolve a atividade turística cubana, é necessário adaptar a gestão do setor às tendências internacionais para aumentar a competitividade do país como destino. Nos últimos anos, tem sido apontada a falta de estudos ligados ao planejamento estratégico e integrado do setor em nível nacional. Nesse cenário, e como parte do projeto: Desenvolvimento e competitividade do produto turístico cubano, esta pesquisa foi realizada com o objetivo de elaborar diretrizes estratégicas para a gestão dos destinos turísticos cubanos. Uma etapa preliminar envolveu um estudo teórico-conceitual e uma descrição dos elementos ligados ao turismo no destino.

Posteriormente, foram desenvolvidas três etapas utilizando métodos e técnicas como análise bibliográfica, pesquisas com especialistas e grupos de discussão. Isso permitiu apresentar a análise situacional de Cuba em termos de gestão de seus destinos, perspectivas futuras, boas práticas de dois dos países que constituem a concorrência direta, bem como formular um total de cinco objetivos estratégicos e 30 diretrizes a serem levadas em conta para a elaboração de estratégias. O estudo destaca a necessidade de reconhecer e assumir a gestão dos destinos a partir do território.

Palavras-chave: competitividade; destinos turísticos; gestão; planejamento estratégico.

INTRODUCTION

In the international environment, tourism has become one of the fastest growing socioeconomic sectors, which in recent years has undergone continuous expansion and diversification. This has led to an increase in the number of attractions in tourist destinations and an increasing difficulty in competing in the global market in a sustainable manner. This is linked to the development of competitiveness studies in two spheres: tourism organizations and destinations (Armstrong Zulueta et al., 2023).

Mendivil Portillo et al. (2019) state that changes in consumer preferences and demands, the existence of new segments, the need to conserve natural resources and the specialization of the different tourism agents are elements that make it essential to analyze the competitiveness and management of tourism destinations. This has led managers to bet on the renovation and diversification of services in order to manage the level of quality and, at the same time, alleviate the disturbance factor for local inhabitants (Dredge, 2016).

These elements are part of the fundamental reasons why destinations, as territorial tourism products (Martín Fernández, 2009), are constantly evolving, which reaffirms the approach of prioritizing the conception of tourism development based on the integrated product, i.e., tourism destinations. This approach requires not reducing the destination to the sum of its components and recognizes the complexity that emerges from the myriad of diverse relationships of the agents operating in it. Destination management encompasses directing, coordinating and supporting the integration of different resources, activities and agents involved, through appropriate policies and measures (Rodríguez Jiménez et al., 2020, p. 76).

Based on the above elements, and following the ideas put forward by González Morales (2018), Ramseook et al. (2015) and Martín Fernández (2009) for the study of management in destinations, it must be started from recognizing the web of complex relationships that are generated within these as territorial tourism products, so that the need arises to understand the destination from its boundaries, content, stakeholders and customers, so that instruments can be established for resource management and marketing.

Internationally, the success of tourism destinations depends largely on the ability to manage their components; this is why several countries have created management entities, called *Destination Management Organizations (DMOs)*, which are responsible for leading in comprehensive management processes (Butler & Hart-Robertson, 2022; Moreno Melgarejo et al., 2018). Consequently, authors such as Fantoni Alvares et al. (2019, p. 2) state that "new research is needed to refine existing models, as well as for the establishment of new models capable of evaluating the process of tourism evolution, based on the diversity and particularity inherent to each tourist destination".

In the case of Cuba, for several years, academia has raised the need for the existence of an administrative structure, a subject or territorial management entity, which would solve the horizontal problems in the tourism sector and which, with the support of government agencies, could achieve the integration and coordination of the different actors in the territory. Contrary to this, Rodríguez Jiménez et al. (2020, p. 76) affirm that destination management has been limited to "coordination, supervision and orientation functions carried out by the delegations of the Ministry of Tourism (Mintur) in the territories, which (...) have general tourism management instruments (...)".

For its part, the Faculty of Tourism of the University of Havana in 2020, as part of the Temporary Working Group: *Tourism Immediate Future*¹, presented in its research report different elements that affect the results of tourism management in the country. Among them is the lack of a coherent definition of tourist destinations, evidencing the existing shortcomings in the epistemological order, as well as of the brands that identify them and of a complete conception of their development, the lack of a territorial body that promotes and controls, as a whole, all the direct and support factors

¹ Research group composed of 27 professors and 80 students of the institution, with the objective of making recommendations to the Mintur for the management of this sector in Cuba, after COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic.

and that, at the same time, demands that unnecessary or insufficiently thought-out investments are not made or with excessively optimistic recovery calculations.

Likewise, research carried out in the national territory shows that there are still problems related to the verticalization of the activity that has not taken into account local initiatives in their entirety, lacking a territorial development and management strategy consistent with the new trends (Hernández Flores et al., 2021; Ramírez Pérez et al., 2020).

With the above elements, it is necessary for Cuba to have a development model in line with international trends, focused on the integrated management of destinations, which will allow the articulation with the different actors, contributing to the evaluation and improvement of the competitiveness of the country's destination. Based on the above and taking into account the current policy of the Cuban government, which has begun to ensure the decentralization of the economy and decision-making, as well as the articulation of the different actors for the management of the territories (Díaz-Canel Bermúdez et al., 2020), the following general objective is established: to design the strategic guidelines for the management of Cuban tourist destinations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was developed as part of the research project *PS256LH-001-002: Development and Competitiveness of the Cuban tourist product*. For the fulfillment of the objectives, previous research was carried out, which contributed to the results of students of the Bachelor's Degree in Tourism of the Faculty of Tourism, in their Diploma Works. A procedure was designed that allowed the authors to fulfill the objective of the present research. The final proposal is presented in figure 1.

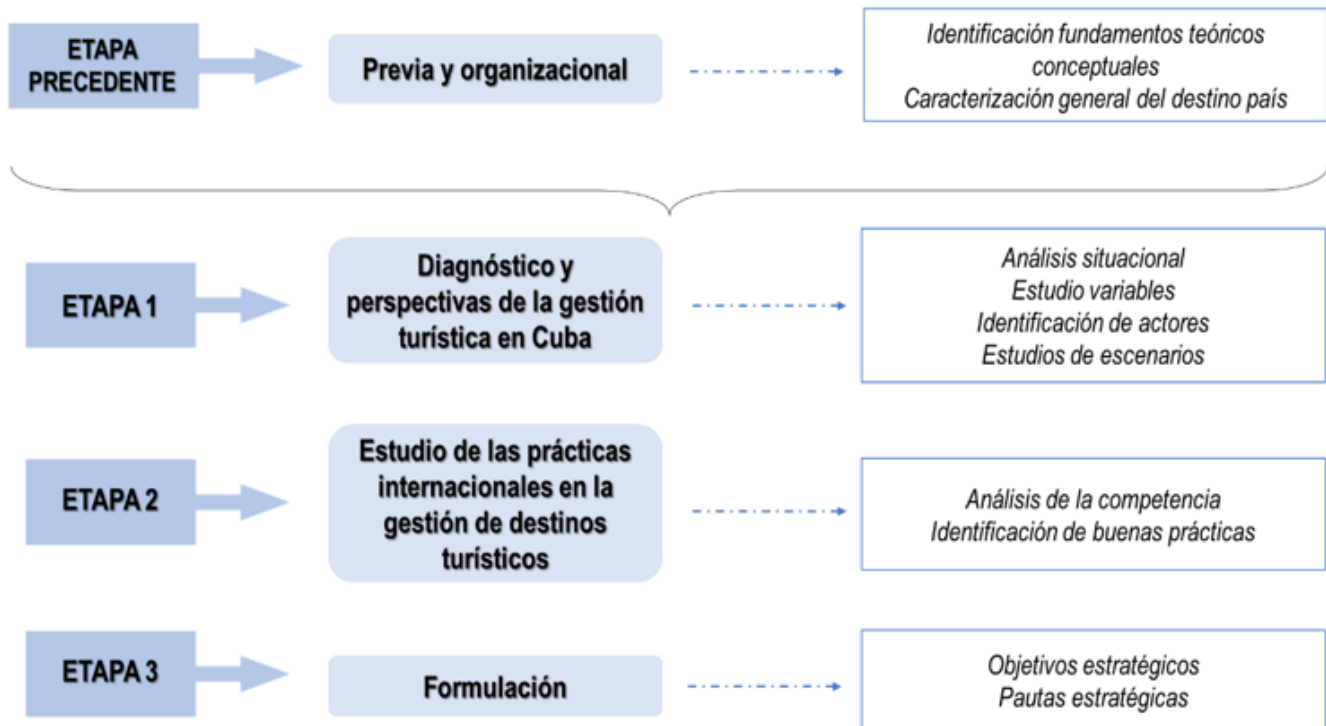


Figure 1. Procedure used in the research

Source: Own elaboration

In the preceding stage, a theoretical-conceptual study related to the management of tourist destinations and international trends was carried out. In addition, the authors made an approach to strategic planning in tourist destinations. Subsequently, and with the fundamental objective of systematizing the information existing so far on the destination under study, a bibliographic analysis and surveys were used as methods for obtaining information, which allowed a general characterization of the Cuba destination and its results related to the tourism sector.

Among the elements taken into account for the bibliographic study are: geographical characteristics of the country destination, natural and sociocultural resources, attractions, economic and commercial administration, emergence of tourism activity on the Island, development model, commercial indicators, issuing markets, development regions, tourism supply, development strategy and management challenges.

The surveys were developed using an *online* form on the *Google Forms* platform to facilitate the scope of its application to 37 specialists from various centers in the country. A directed or non-

probabilistic sampling was carried out under the following selection criteria: to have more than two years of work experience; to be linked to an entity of the Cuban Tourism System, either directly or indirectly; and to have knowledge about tourism management and destinations in Cuba.

The information processed in this stage allowed the authors to develop as the first action of the first stage of the research a closing of the situational analysis of destination management in Cuba. This situational closure was developed through the use of the External Factors Evaluation Matrix (MEFE) and the Internal Factors Evaluation Matrix (MEFI) and with the opinion of the 12 experts defined in the research.

With the results obtained, it was proceeded to the study of the variables that affect the main factors that affect the management of tourist destinations in Cuba. Once the variables were identified, they were evaluated by the experts previously defined, taking into account the relationship between them and with the support of the MICMAC *software*. With each pair of variables, their relationship of influence was evaluated. If there is no relationship, it is given a score of 0; if there is a direct influence relationship, it receives a score of 1 if it is considered weak, 2 if medium, 3 if strong and, finally, P if it is considered potential.

Then, the value given by the experts is averaged and placed in the Structural Analysis Matrix, to identify the key variables, obtaining a direct classification of the variables, and then an indirect classification. This indirect classification is obtained after boosting the initial matrix, and the results in terms of influence and dependence of each variable can be represented on a plane in which the abscissa axis corresponds to the dependence and the ordinate axis to the influence.

New experts were selected to identify the actors that have an impact on the functioning of the key variables defined in the previous stage. A new selection was made with the objective of increasing the degree of similarity of the results with the current intentions of the Mintur for the management elements. For this purpose, the experts used were those defined by Mintur to evaluate the research projects within its Sector Program.

From the information processed, a list of institutions or companies that influence or should have a direct influence on the necessary changes to the key variables identified was drawn up. To evaluate the degree of influence that the identified actors should have in the actions to be developed to comply with the strategic actions, a *Likert scale* was designed, in which a value of 4: very adequate, 3: adequate, 2: inadequate, 1: very inadequate, 0: null.

As a final part of this stage, and based on the results obtained so far, it was proceeded to identify the possible scenarios that the destination must face, which will allow to identify and assess the benefits, impacts, risks, restrictions and other factors that may enhance or hinder tourism development. Three scenarios were identified:

- Trend: that which is based on the importance of the events for the system
- Referential: the one with the events and their probability, which expresses the system in its real context
- Framing: that which was oriented to delimit the space of possible futures

In the second stage, the competing destinations of the object of study were identified through previous research, and after different analyses, the best practices identified were taken as references for subsequent evaluation in the incorporation, or not, to the strategic planning of the Cuba destination.

During these investigations, a list of 17 international experts was used, who were selected based on the evaluation of their level of expertise in the investigations. An online discussion group on the *Google Meet* platform was also used as a tool. It is important to point out that the results of this stage were presented to the experts defined by the Mintur and to the Extended Technical Advisory Council of this organization, through which pertinent considerations were taken into account for the proposal to be made in the subsequent stage of the research.

The importance of stage three lies in the coherence of all the elements that will make up the strategic guidelines that are designed with the results of the analyses previously carried out. The authors design the strategic objectives that correspond to the legal characteristics, mission and vision of the entities responsible for tourism activity in Cuba and, based on this, establish the set of guidelines that should be included in the strategies designed for the management of each specific destination.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the elaboration of the MEFÉ and MEFI matrices, a total of 60 factors (34 internal and 26 external) that influence the management of Cuban tourist destinations were determined. After consultation with experts, a total of 11 variables were selected that have an impact on destination management and, therefore, should be taken into account for strategies and actions to improve the destination (Table 1).

Table 1. Variables that affect the management of Cuban tourist destinations

No.	Long title	Short title	Description
1	Demand studies	EDem	The process of understanding consumer demand for a product or service in a target market.
2	Power of decision stakeholders	PAct	Decentralization of decision making to stakeholders
3	Development of Intelligent Tourism Destinations	ITD	Actions carried out to establish Intelligent Tourism Destinations (ITD)
4	Use of technologies in marketing processes	ICT	Level of ICT use in product design, pricing, distribution channels and promotion processes.
5	Competitiveness	Comp	Actions developed in order to improve the country's market position as a destination
6	Sustainability	Sost	Sustainable tourism management through three dimensions: economic, social, environmental. Dimension indicators. Legislation and regulations. Certifications.
7	Supply-demand ratio	O-D	Direct relation of supply to unsatisfied demand needs
8	Management from the territory	GDT	Organization and planning of the tourist activity from the territory.
9	Quality of service in the tourist experience	CS	Attention to the visitor, high quality individual services. Responsibility of travel agencies for each component of the travel packages they sell.
10	Information	GestInfor	Development and effective use of information systems to understand visitor needs and for effective product development. Also, regular monitoring of visitor satisfaction and tracking of industry performance.
11	Planning	Planf	Design of plans and strategies for the short, medium and long term. Evaluation of control tools.

Source: Own elaboration

With the matrices generated using the MICMAC software, a hierarchy of the variables studied was established, both from the point of view of the influences and the dependencies between the variables, which made it possible to construct the Potential Indirect Influences Matrix, which in turn generated a graph of potential indirect influences/dependencies as shown in figure 2.

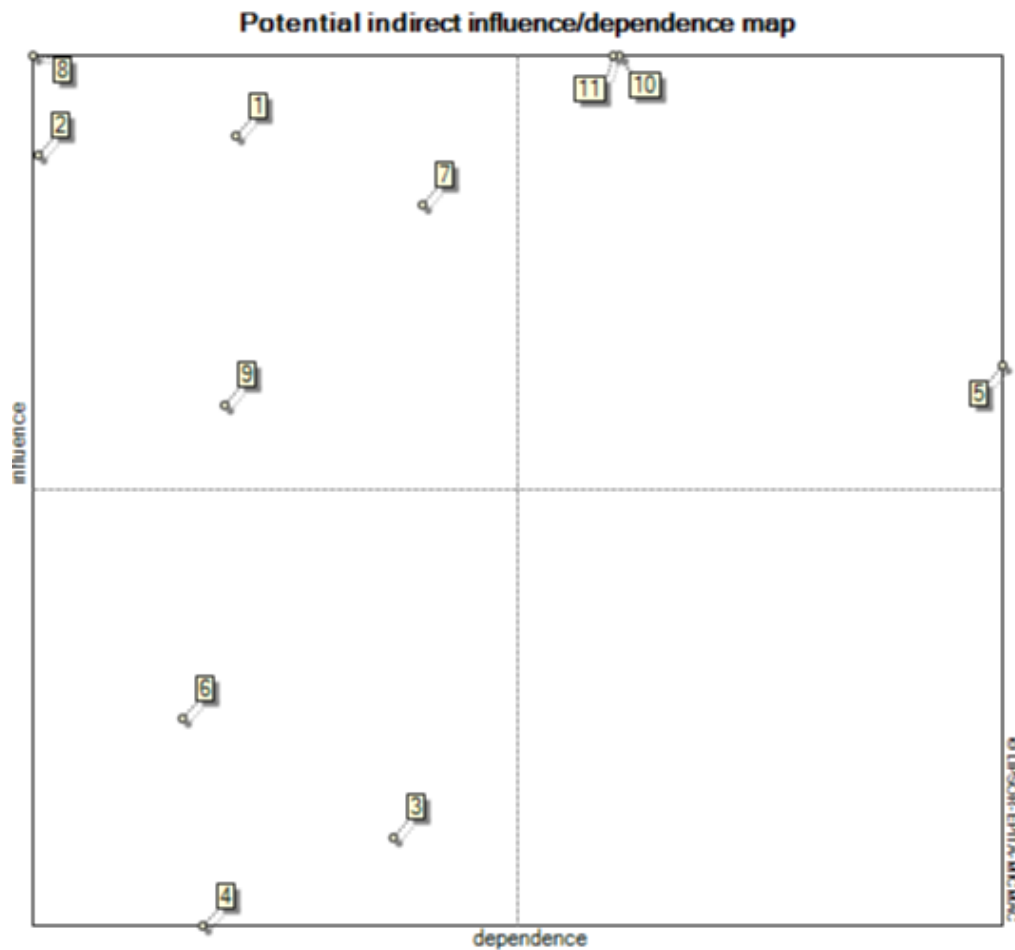


Figure 2. Map of potential indirect influences/dependencies of the variables that affect the management of Cuban tourist destinations
Source: Own elaboration in MICMAC software

Based on the information generated in the previous graph, the variables under study were classified, as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Classification of the variables that affect the management of Cuban tourist destinations

Quadrant	Classification	Variable
1	Driving variables	V 1. Demand studies V 2. Decision-making power actors V 8. Management from the territory V 7. Supply-demand relationship
2	Variable links	V 5. Competitiveness V 10. Information V 11. Planning
3	Resulting variables	-
4	Excluded variables	V 3. ITD development V 4. Use of technologies in marketing processes
5	Platoon variables	V 9. Quality of service in the tourism experience V 6. Sustainability

Source: Own elaboration based on MICMAC software analysis

After classifying each of the variables and taking into account the opinion of the experts, the key variables were defined (those that are very driving and very dependent and influence the management of destinations in Cuba): demand studies, decision-making power of the actors, management from the territory, supply-demand relationship, information and planning.

The above analysis does not mean that the rest of the variables are not taken into account when designing strategies and their actions, but rather that transformation and change actions should be prioritized towards the elements that affect the key variables determined.

Given the importance of the territory for the tourism activity that takes place in it, the participation of all the factors and actors that interact within the system, it is essential to have a common objective that combines different values: generation of economic growth, equity, social and cultural change, socio-environmental sustainability, quality of life, mainly.

For the development of the research, it is recognized, in the first instance, that the analysis of the actors that have or should exert influence on the management process of each destination is not unique for the entire destination country, because depending on the activity being analyzed, they may vary, as well as the power of influence they have in the territory. The analysis presented contains the actors that influence or should exert direct influence on the necessary changes to the key variables identified.

From the discussion group, a list of the institutions or companies that influence or should directly influence the necessary changes to the key variables identified was drawn up (Table 3).

Table 3. Actors influencing the change actions necessary for improving destination management

No.	Actor	Characterization
1	Mintur	As the supreme body that directs, plans and manages tourism activity in the territory.
2	Gaviota Tourism Group	Its structure includes entities that commercialize tourism products of great importance for the sector.
3	Mintur territorial delegations	They carry out the mission of guiding, outlining, implementing and controlling all activities within the territory, as well as those related to each of the following of the corresponding accounting subsystems and the activities of investments, technical services, logistics and transportation.
4	Territorial governments	In line with the state's territorial development policy, where it is necessary to promote the development of the territories based on the country's strategy, so that the municipalities are strengthened as a fundamental instance, with the necessary autonomy, sustainable, with a solid economic-productive base and reducing the main disproportions between them, taking advantage of their potential.
5	Private sector	Since the transformation of the country's economic policy, its recognition represents a potential to channel a large part of the activities developed in the destination.
6	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of Cuba	State body in charge of directing, executing and controlling the policy of the State and the Government in scientific and technological activity, environmental policy and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, ensuring

		its development and evolution in a coordinated manner to contribute to the sustainable development of Cuba.
7	Vocational Training Centers	This includes the centers belonging to the Ministry of Higher Education (Faculty of Tourism at the University of Havana, as well as the Departments of Tourism in the rest of the country), as well as the training centers that belong to the Tourism Training Centers in the country.
8	Ministry of Culture	It is in charge of regulating Cuba's cultural policies, therefore, several of the attractions and resources that can be commercialized in the territories are subordinated to its management policy.

Source: Own elaboration

Subsequently, the degree of influence that the identified stakeholders should have on the actions to be developed to comply with the strategic guidelines to be designed for destination management was analyzed using the Likert scale. The results presented in figure 3 corroborate the previous studies and reports analyzed so far by the authors.

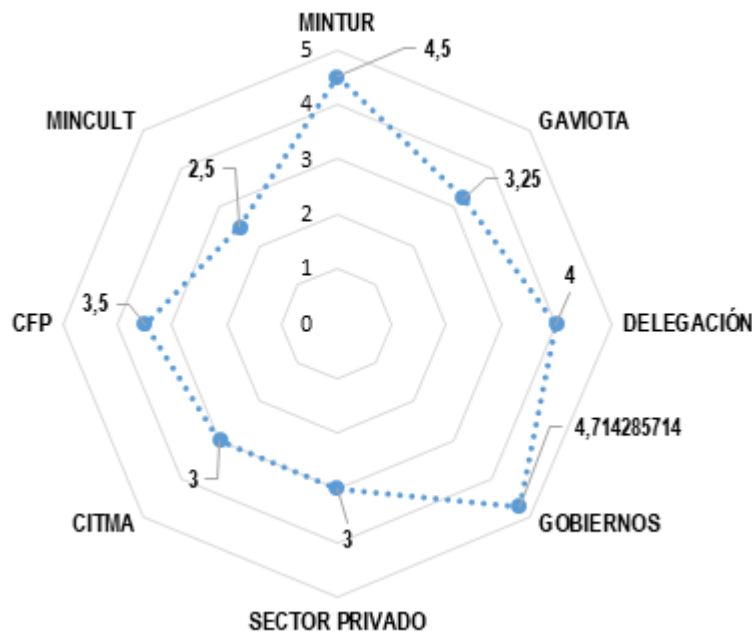


Figure 3. Influence of identified stakeholders on actions to improve destination management in Cuba

Source: Own elaboration

One of these elements is the decentralized decision-making power from Mintur to the territories, as well as the inclusion of the private sector in the destination marketing process. It also recognizes the necessary link between academia and business, responding to the government's call to contribute with innovation to the solution of the practical problems of the territory.

For the study of the perspectives on destination management in Cuba and the design of scenarios, the interviews with the defined experts were taken into account. The opinions gathered were triangulated with the data resulting from the situational analysis carried out in the previous section, which made it possible to list a series of essential events that define three descriptive scenarios (Table 4).

Although there is political will from the government to make changes in the organization of the tourism system, Mintur must maintain an open attitude to study and approve actions to counteract and avoid negative scenarios. The exploration of fundamental uncertainties, on the one hand, and of certain trends, on the other, are key in the process, where it is important to identify the factors that promote or inhibit change. This is to ensure that decision-makers consider a wide range of strategies for dealing with possible future circumstances.

According to the choice of the time and space horizon, it was tried to choose the period considered as present or future, depending on the dynamism of the tourism sector, so the short term was estimated as one year, the medium term to the space between two and three years and the long term in three years or more.

Table 4. Descriptive scenarios of tourism destination management in Cuba

No.	Events	Scenarios		
		Trend	Referential	Framing
1	Integration and cooperation between all key stakeholders involved in destination management	It is very important to	Likely	From 2 to 3 years old
2	Improvement in the process of collecting information associated with visitors	It is very important to	Quite likely	From 2 to 3 years old
3	Recognition of the need for destination management from the territory	It is very important to	Quite likely	It is happening

4	Implementation of policies that encourage the development of local tourism products	It is very important to	Quite likely	It is happening
5	Greater autonomy for local governments	It is very important to	Likely	Within 1 year
6	Legislation related to tourism management is maintained at the country level	Indifferent	Likely	Within 1 year
7	Establishment of a new tourism development model in the country	It is very important to	It may occur	Within 3 years or more
8	Design of international projects in which Cuba participates in order to improve the sustainability of the destinations	Important	Likely	From 1 to 3 years old

Source: Own elaboration

The development of these scenarios depends to a large extent on the actual actions taken to counteract each negative element that may affect the fulfillment of the most favorable or desired scenarios. For this reason, strategic objectives and actions must be established that will allow the necessary changes to be introduced in a timely manner.

Study of international practices in the management of tourist destinations

Having studied the current situation, identified the key variables, the actors that influence the current and potential management of destinations in Cuba, as well as defined future scenarios, as part of the strategic design, the authors proceeded to identify good practices at the international level that would allow them to lay the foundations for the proposal to be developed for the specific case of destination management in Cuba.

In the geographic area close to Cuba, there are destinations that manage their attractions and infrastructure strategically for tourism development, thus achieving a high degree of visitor satisfaction and improving the quality of life for their residents. For the analysis of this research, Mexico and the Dominican Republic were taken as references. The authors carried out a study of the management in both countries and based on this and the work carried out with the 17 international experts from Cuba, Mexico, Spain, Dominican Republic and Germany (all with graduate training

related to tourism and its management, from academia and the tourism sector in their countries) were able to identify the best practices of both destinations.

Firstly, by triangulating the above information, a comparative analysis can be made between Cuba and the countries defined as competitors, which illustrates the existing gaps and, therefore, weak points that must be analyzed and changed in the short and medium term if the competitiveness of Cuba and its specific destinations is to be improved. These data are shown in figure 4.

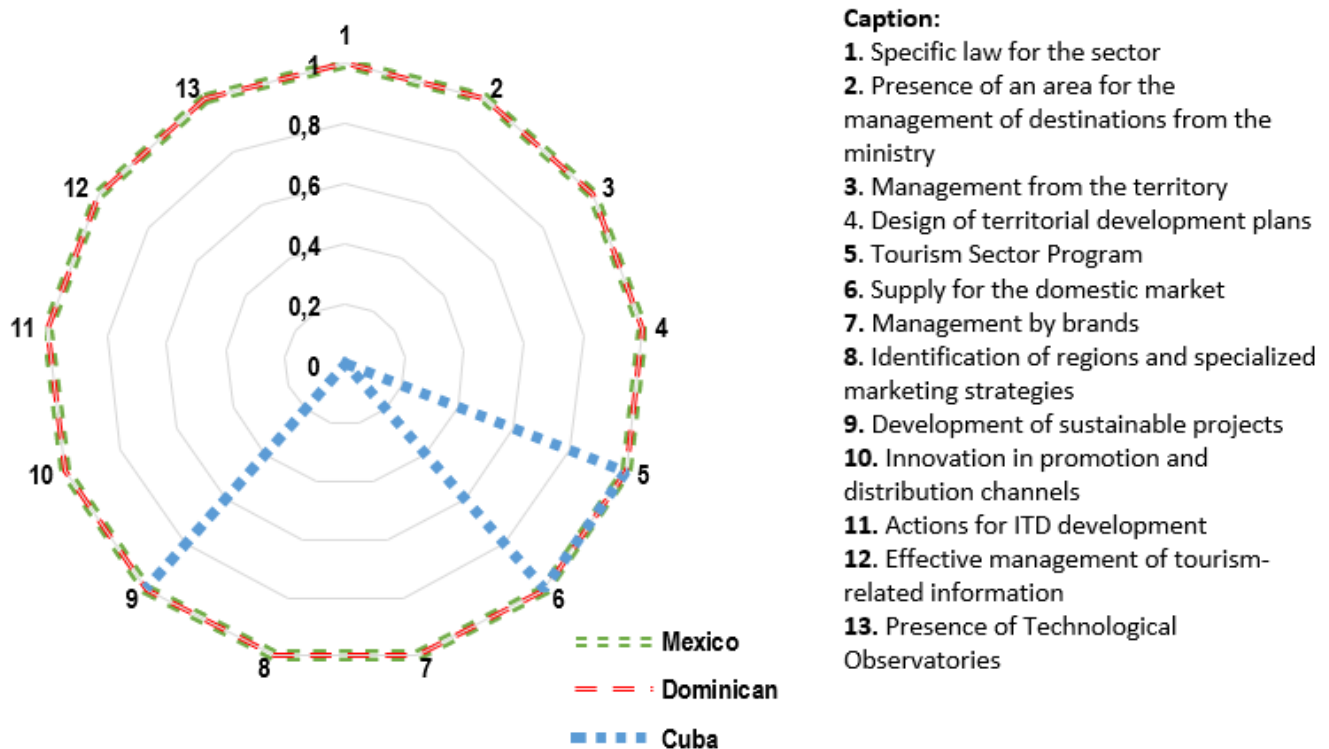


Figure 4. Presence of good practices identified in the management of the selected destinations

Source: Own elaboration

The authors recognize the need to adapt and contextualize the proposals presented. The elements presented below are strategic objectives and guidelines that are necessary at the country destination level, in order to subsequently establish strategies for each specific destination.

Objectives and strategic guidelines for the management of Cuban tourist destinations

With the results obtained in this research, it was proceed to the design of the strategic objectives and guidelines that should be taken into account for the management of destinations in Cuba.

Objective 1: Ensure destination management as part of the country's tourism management in more than 90% of destinations by the second half of 2024.

1. Recognizing the need to manage tourism activities from the territory, from the top management of the sector (Mintur)
2. Recognize the contributions made by academia for the conceptualization of destinations as territorial tourism products²
3. Define, by consensus, between Mintur and academia, the brands of the country's tourist destinations
4. Conduct opportunity studies to identify territories that currently have few development alternatives, but with attractions that can generate visitor flows to them, based on the experience of the Integrally Planned Centers
5. Evaluate the level of development achieved by each specific destination in the country for the necessary readjustment of development plans
6. Design development plans for specific tourist destinations in accordance with demand studies and with the territories' own resources
7. Define promotion strategies from the specific zones that make up the destinations based on the brands to which they respond
8. Conduct feasibility studies for the implementation in the territories of technological tools that allow the creation of ITD

Objective 2: Achieve that more than 75% of local governments are actively involved in decision making by the first half of 2024.

9. Recognize the role of the new economic actors within the activity in the territories
10. To achieve the participation of the private sector in the design of development plans and strategies from the territory

² Definition on which the subjects are designed in the Bachelor's Degree in Tourism in the different Higher Education Institutions in the country.

11. To train members of provincial and municipal governments on tourism management issues
12. Socialize with all those involved in the tourism system the objectives and policies drawn up for the management of the country's destination
13. To create the Territorial Tourism Councils as advisory and consultative bodies to the government for the management of tourist destinations
14. To create the National Tourism Council that groups together the Territorial Councils and is integrated into the structure of Mintur

Objective 3: Improve the Tourism Information Management System in 100% of the country's provinces by the second half of 2024.

15. To achieve the operation of a Technological Observatory in the specific Cuban destinations, in order to create a work and research system that will constitute a solid basis for decision making and commercial actions to be developed from the territory
16. Adapt the tourism indicators collected to those offered by international organizations such as the World Tourism Organization³
17. Increase the University-Business link in terms of knowledge management and professional development
18. Prioritize the use of technology in the management and collection of information at destinations

Objective 4: Update legislation related to tourism management by the first half of 2025.

19. Design and implement a Tourism Law that includes all legal requirements for tourism management
20. Update the commercial policy taking into account the strategies from the territory
21. To achieve through legal responsibility the articulation of actors in the positioning of the country's image and in the design of tourism products
22. Design a tourism quality certificate for tourism territories and facilities that meets the requirements of the standards of countries such as Mexico and the Dominican Republic

³ Review indicators used and presented in the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer: <https://www.e-unwto.org>.

Objective 5: Ensure supply-demand coherence for 100% of specific destinations by the second half of 2024

23. Change the current model of destination development towards a model that recognizes the importance of demand studies as a basis for decision making
24. Establish a balance in the logistic chain for tourism (look for alternatives with suppliers that overcome the barriers of the blockade and allow establishing a logistic chain coherent to what the main current competitors present), also recognizing the important role of local producers within it
25. Identify the actual use of existing attractions and products that are marketed in each specific destination
26. Identify the anchor products of each territory to be taken into account in the promotion strategies of the destinations
27. Develop sufficient attractions in the destinations based on carrying capacity studies and triangulation with demand needs
28. Recognize the importance of satisfying national demand and include its needs in development plans

In general terms, it is considered that the following should be considered:

29. Redesign the 2018-2030 Development Plan of Mintur, based on the studies and the implementation of the above strategic guidelines
30. To raise the exchange spaces between universities and training centers and the entities belonging to Mintur in order to present the research results that these centers produce to promote destination management and its results

All the guidelines outlined will contribute to the recognition of tourism management at the country level, taking as a premise the management of tourist destinations and the increase of competitiveness of the territories and the country's destination.

In general terms, the research carried out by the authors allows laying the foundations associated with the management of destinations as territorial tourism products, for which the complex relationships that are established within them are recognized, evidencing the need for the adequate management of their components.

The study defined a total of six key variables: demand studies, stakeholders' decision-making power, management from the territory, supply-demand relationship, information and planning, which should prioritize the transformation and change actions to be developed in the medium and long term.

In addition, eight key actors were defined who must influence the strategic planning of the sector in order to properly manage tourist destinations, as well as the need to shift the centralized decision-making power from Mintur to the territories.

The study of practices in the Dominican Republic and Mexico, as well as future prospects for Cuba, provided the basis for the final proposal of five strategic objectives and 30 guidelines to be taken into account in the strategies to be designed for the management of specific destinations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research that gave rise to the results presented in this publication received funding from the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Cuba as part of Research Project PS256LH001-002: "Development and competitiveness of the Cuban tourism product".

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Conflict of interest

Authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contribution

Yoan Hernández Flores, Lisandra Torres Hechavarría and Ramón Martín Fernández participated in the conception and design of the study.

Yoan Hernández Flores and Lisandra Torres Hechavarría designed the study, analyzed the data and prepared the draft.

Yoan Hernández Flores, Lisandra Torres Hechavarría and Ramón Martín Fernández were involved in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.

All the authors reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approve the version finally submitted.



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