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# How to Create a Sustainability Strategy for Tourism Development? The Case of the City of Pavia

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## ABSTRACT

Based on the experience of Pavia's city (near Milan, in Italy) this paper analyses the implementation of a sustainability strategy for tourism development. The research is based on primary and secondary data. This study intends to investigate this problem. The key questions of the paper are: 1) How to create a sustainability strategy for tourism development? 2) What are the main critical success factors (FCS) of a sustainability strategy for tourism development? The results show a suggests a strategic framework can be applied also to other organizations and cities.

In riferimento all'esperienza della città di Pavia (vicino a Milano) in Italia, questo articolo analizza l'implementazione di una strategia di sostenibilità per lo sviluppo turistico. Le domande chiave della ricerca sono: 1) Come creare una strategia di sostenibilità per lo sviluppo turistico? 2) Quali sono i principali fattori critici di successo (FCS) della strategia di sostenibilità e lo sviluppo turistico? La ricerca si basa su dati primari e secondari. I risultati mostrano un modello teorico che può essere applicato anche altre organizzazioni e città.

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**Keywords:** strategy, tourism development, sustainability, planning

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**Section:** *Refereed Paper*

## 1 – Introduction

Based on the interesting experience of Pavia this paper analyzes the implementation of a sustainable strategy for tourism development. We have chosen to analyze the case of Pavia because this city has got *the premium for the best attractive for national tourism in Lombardia based on data of Regione Lombardia (Istat-Polis 2018)*. In our knowledge, only a few studies are available on this important topic on Pavia. With this in mind, we intend to investigate this problem. The key questions of the paper are:

1) *How to create a sustainability strategy for tourism development?*

2) *What are the main critical success factors (FCS) of a sustainability strategy for tourism development?*

The outline of the paper is as follows: the second section describes the theoretical review and the methodological aspects; the third section analyses the case of Pavia; in fourth section there is the discussion and last concludes our analysis.

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## 2 – Theoretical background and methodological approach

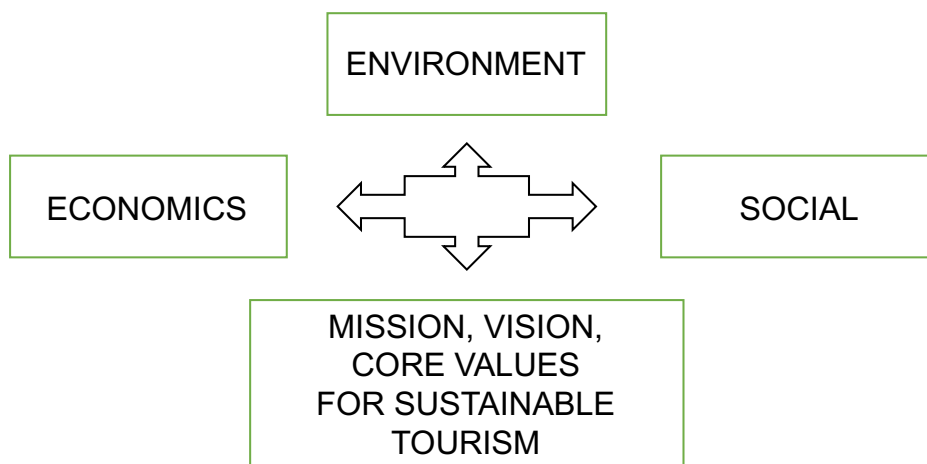
### 2.1 – Theoretical background

In this part, there is a description of some of the more important research in the international literature on some relevant paradigms of research (Kunh 1970).

#### 2.1.1 – Strategic process and planning for tourism development

The topic of sustainable tourism is important for the territorial strategy (Bramwell et al. 1993; Briguglio 2008; Butler, 1999; Dodds 2007; Hall 2011; Hardy et al. 2002; Meadows et al. 1972; Pezzoli 1979; Sharpley 2009; Weaver 2013; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987; Pilotti 2011; Mella 2012; Covey 2004; Riva 2012; Coda 1988; Freeman, 2010).

There are different dimensions (economics, social, environment) of the strategic and planning process for sustainable tourism (see Figure 1 and Table 1); also, it is important the definition of the mission, vision, core values of the city of Pavia for the sustainability.



**Fig. 1 – Dimension of Sustainable Tourism** (Source: our elaboration Freeman 2010)

The main principles of sustainable tourism (Sharpley 2009) are:

- a) building local capacity;
- b) enhancing sense of place through design;
- c) enhancing the experience;
- d) minimizing environmental impacts;
- e) providing mutual benefits to visitors and hosts;
- f) reflecting community values.

The European Commission (2010, 2013) defines some many areas for a strategy of sustainable tourism (see Table 1).

The strategic process for sustainable tourism can be divided into many phases.

- 1) *The analyzing phase.* There are several tools in this phase of general strategic planning. The main outputs of this phase are: analyze of the contest (SWOT *analysis*), mission, vision, maps of stakeholders.
- 2) *The planning phase.* The main outputs of this phase are conference and stakeholders, private and public partners.

- 3) *The actions phase* (Archibald, 1999). *The outputs in this phase are seven guidelines; specific set of the project: action plan; general plan of development.*
- 4) *The control phase* (Kaplan & Norton, 2001, 2004). *The outputs of the control phase are Kpi and Balanced scorecard.*

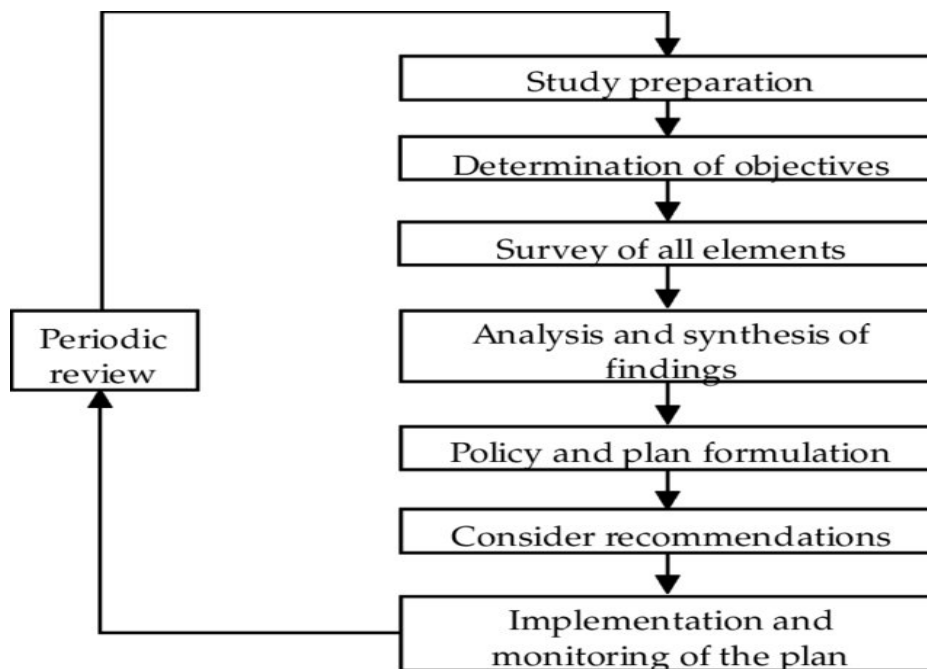
**Table 1 Framework of ETIS' Indicators** (Source: elaboration from European Commission 2010, 2013)

<b>A. Destination management indicators</b>	<p><i>A1. Sustainable Tourism Public Policy:</i></p> <p><i>A2. Sustainable Tourism Management in Tourism Enterprises</i></p> <p><i>A3. Customer Satisfaction</i></p> <p><i>A4. Information and Communication</i></p>
<b>B. Economic Value</b>	<p><i>B1. Tourism Flow (volume and value) at Destination</i></p> <p><i>B2. Tourism Enterprises Performance</i></p> <p><i>B3. Quantity and Quality of Employment</i></p> <p><i>B4. Safety and Health</i></p> <p><i>B5. Tourism and Supply Chain</i></p>
<b>C. Social and Cultural Impact</b>	<p><i>C1. Community/Social Impact</i></p> <p><i>C2. Gender Equality</i></p> <p><i>C3. Equality/Accessibility</i></p> <p><i>C4. Protecting and Enhancing Cultural Heritage, Local Identity and Assets</i></p>
<b>D. Environmental Impact</b>	<p><i>D1. Reducing Transport Impact</i></p> <p><i>D2. Climate Change</i></p> <p><i>D3. Solid Waste Management</i></p> <p><i>D4. Sewage Treatment</i></p> <p><i>D5. Water Management</i></p> <p><i>D6. Energy Usage</i></p> <p><i>D7. Landscape and Biodiversity Protection</i></p> <p><i>D8. Light and Noise Management</i></p>

Also the SWOT *analysis* permits to define the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats of Pavia (De Lotto, 2008). Based on strategic guidelines (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994) it is possible to develop a portfolio of projects (Pilotti 2011,2019). Among the most effective means of evaluation of the project are:

- *value analysis*: definition and identification of possible alternatives (Senge 1999, Simon 1995, 2000) and the selection of the most advantageous economically solutions
- *tools for the review*, verification, and validation of the design,
- *tools for the government of the quality* of process and product.

Page (1995) describes (see Fig. 2) some steps for planning a tourism strategy for sustainability (Figure 2).



**Fig. 2 – Tourism planning process** (Source: Page, 1995)

The development of a catalog of best practices can facilitate the development of projects (Ugolini et al. 2017; Bayoub 2014). Also, the scenario planning for the development of strategy can be used and is based on trying to answer a series of questions:

- a) *where are we?*
- b) *where are we going?*
- c) *where do we want to go?*
- d) *how to get there?*

For control, the balanced scorecards permit to understand the impact and the importance of each project for the: *customer perspective; financial perspective; internal process perspective; learning and growth perspective.*

### 2.1.2 – Key performance measures

Relate to digital marketing strategy is important to control some KPIs; we describe some relevant studies. Ryals (2005, 2006) analysis the difference in terms of performance based on the application. C.R.M. The research shows a positive correlation between Revenues and Lifetime Value and between Lifetime Value and Customer Margin.

Bassi and Guido (2006) describe the importance of measuring aspects involved in the pre and pos- stage of the purchase. The proposed scale of three versions for convenience, for shopping goods; the rating of the projects is important to fix the priority.

Guido et al. (2010) describe customer satisfaction and the importance of define scale based on the sector follow other past studies. The main KPI (Edelman and Singer 2015) for the definition of a customer's value, customer's retention, customer satisfaction, are the annual quantity of customer's order, the average amount of returned insurance policy, the average amount of each insurance policy, rates of new customers attraction, number of fully satisfied

requests, customer's marginal profit, the impact of price variation on demand, the time interval between two customers.

Goranczewski and Puciato (2010) analyze some steps for tourism planning (Figure 3).

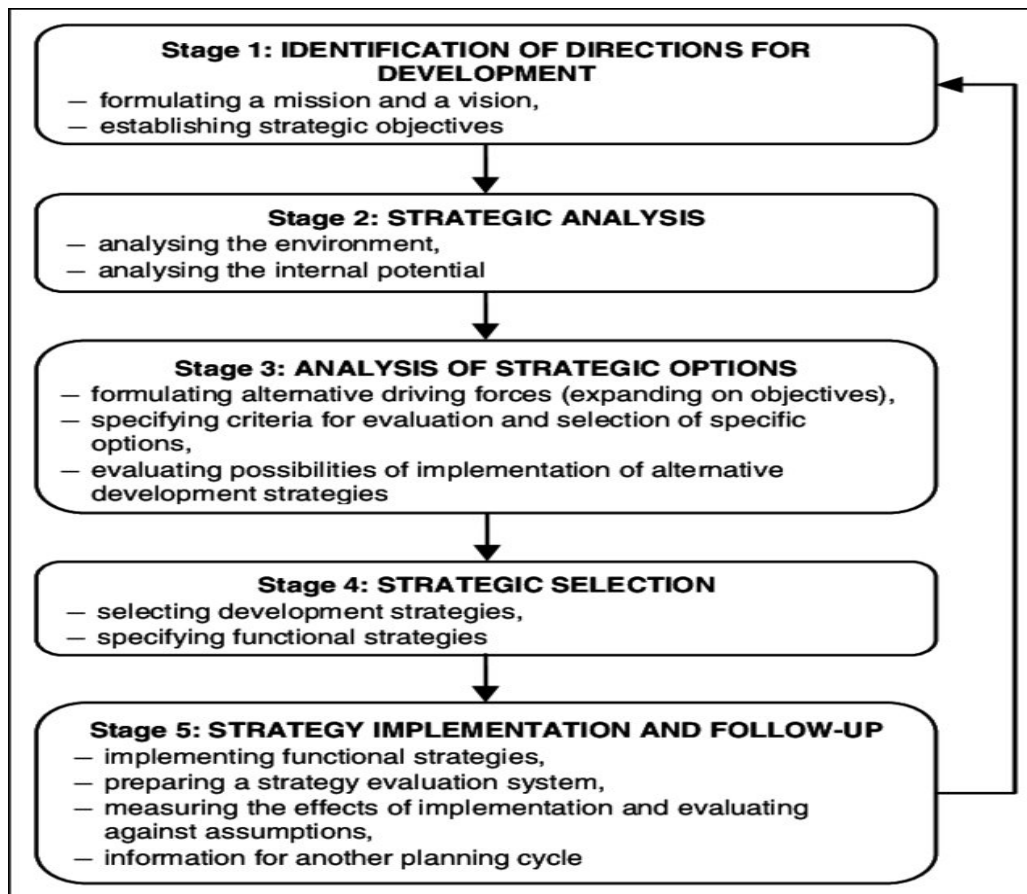


Fig. 3 – Tourism planning (Source: Goranczewski and Puciato 2010)

Mintzberg, (1994) studies the prospective is of planning is medium-long range. For this approach, every project of innovation is measured through the use of KPIs (key performance indicators) that can be correlated with the various areas of achievement. The purpose of the model is to measure KPIs and control. The phases of implementation of the method KPIs are based on the selection of the processes to be monitored: it is important to identify the processes most relevant and important (Mella 2012, 2015, 2017). You can assign a scale to define the various processes. After the definition of KPI is important to check the robustness and evaluate several indicators.

## 2.2 – Methodology

We analyze the case of Pavia's city based on the previous literature using primary and secondary data. We also visit the city and its main touristic attractions. About secondary data, we study a set of data and documents (see Table 2). The method of case study is used because it permits to underline the main innovations in the strategy of the company. Regarding secondary data, we study important documents

The empirical method of this analysis follows the logic of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) developing a case study methodology (Eisenhardt, 1989); important sources are based on public strategic documents of the city of Pavia; it is very important to compare the evolution of the plan during the times.

**Table 2 – Pavia secondary data used in this research** (Source: our elaboration)

MAIN SECONDARY DATA	PROSPECTIVE
<b>Pavia tourism communication 2020</b> (www.visitpavia.it) (source: Chamber of Commerce of Paiva)	focus on strategy and communication
<b>Piano Regolatore Provincia di Pavia 2018</b> (source: Mayor of Pavia)	focus on strategy
<b>Pavia Tourism Annual reports 2009-2019</b> (Source: ISTAT e Polis Istituto Regionale per il supporto delle politiche della Lombardia)	focus on strategy
<b>“Programma di Promozione Turistica 2019”</b> (source: Regione Lombardia)	focus on organization and management
<b>“Piano annuale della promozione turistica e della attrattività 2018 ”</b> (source: Regione Lombardia )	focus strategy

Regarding primary data, we collect data and information about by contact and interviewees with the experts (see Table 3) about the areas of research (see Table 4). We also analyze the communication strategy of the city.

**Table 3 – Interviewees** (Source: our elaboration)

Chamber of commerce	1 interview
Expert about Tourism of Pavia	8 interviews
Member of Public administration	1 interview

The Chamber of Commerce has a relevant role in the marketing of the territorial company during the time.

**Table 4 – Main issues covering during the interviews** (Source: our elaboration)

1) <i>What is the organization of a tourism marketing strategy in Pavia?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- priorities and main activity-project</li> <li>- strategic guidelines</li> <li>- web marketing</li> <li>- system of control</li> </ul>
2) <i>What are the main critical success factors (FCS) in digital marketing strategy?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the best practices</li> <li>- history and innovation</li> <li>- digital and website communication</li> <li>- multi-channel contact center</li> </ul>

The method of case study is used because it permits to underline the strategy during the time of Pavia. Touristic places are: Visconti Castle, Certosa di Pavia, Duomo di Pavia, and Basilica di San Pietro Cielo d'Oro, Fraschini Theater, Ponte Coperto Bridge (see Table 5).

**Table 5 – Main touristic attractions of Pavia** (Source: our elaboration)

- Certosa di Pavia (1396-1495), a monastery built from Gian Galeazzo Visconti as a family chapel near Visconteo's park
- Visconti Castle (1360-1365), housing the Civic Museums of Pavia
- Cathedral of Pavia (1488), with the third largest dome in Italy
- The magnificent medieval Basilica of San Pietro Cielo d'Oro ("St. Peter in Golden Sky") (1155), in which the tomb of San Agostino is located
- The superb medieval Basilica of San Michele, built in sandstone 12 centuries ago, in which the kings of Italy were crowned with the "iron crown"
- The many towers (900-1100), for which Pavia was called Civitas Turrigera, Civitas Urbs Centum Turrium, "the city of the hundred towers"
- Fraschini Theatre (1771-1773), competing in beauty with the larger "La Scala" in Milan
- University Campus, founded in 1361 by by the duke of Milan, Gian Galeazzo Visconti (with Volta, Foscolo, Nobel P. Golgi, Nobel P. Rubbia, past teachers) and its magnificent University Library
- The Historical colleges Borromeo (1561) and Ghislieri (1567), built in the mid sixteenth century Pavia, and the 20 modern colleges making Pavia one of the largest college campuses in Italy
- Ticino River, called the Blue river. Coming from the Alps, crossing rocks rich in gold, Ticino keeps gold in its waters and deposits it in its sand, dispersed in a large number of microscopic particles
- Ponte Coperto, astonishing Roofed Bridge based on a Roman construction

This city has won the premium for the best attractive for national tourism in Lombardia based on data of Regione Lombardia (Istat-Polis 2018).

### 3 – The Strategy of city of Pavia

Pavia is an important touristic city near Milan in the north of Italy (see Figure 4). Many stakeholders (Bertalanffy L. (1968) collaborate to the evolution of Pavia: public institutions at different levels (provinces, regions, municipalities, etc.), the system of the university, small and medium firms, financial institutions, systems of actors in health sectors, non-profit organizations, voluntary associations, environmental, farmers, small traders. Instead, the seven strategic guidelines are important tools to determine the mission, the visions, and images (Pilotti 2011, Abel 1993, Hamel et Prahalad, 1994; Hamdouch et Maman, 1995; Aledda 2019).

It is possible to organize the strategic territorial planning of Pavia in four images and seven guidelines with relative projects.

The four images for the city of Pavia can be:

- an innovative and nice city for the system of the university and the 20 colleges;
- an innovative district for the health;



- a cultural and historical city of art and tourism;
- a city where the different past industrial areas are valorized.

We can find some elements of the structure of the main site of tourism communication of the city of Pavia (see Table 6) The site is the largest channel of communication of Pavia. It is organized in four sections *Place, What to do, Events, Plan*,

a) *The place section: it offers a considerable amount of information and images related to the place,*

b) *What to do section: it gives information on art & culture, wellness, bicycle touring, religious tourism*

c) *the Events section; it is specifically dedicated to search and find events*

d) *the Plan section; it offers the possibility to decide and find where to stay.*



**Fig. 4 – The city of Pavia** (source Campus-Pavia)

Marketing tourism strategy applications will be able to identify and make evident the emerging needs of customers. This analysis phase is fundamental because the relevant information is identified, and the criteria are defined according to which this information will be cataloged and made available. There is the implementation of relational marketing (Gummesson 2002, 2008). Pavia analyses the "customer journey" (Edelman and Singer 2015) and tries to expand and improve it by communication in the international community. The "customer journey" can be defined as the path of sequential steps and interactions that a customer goes through product and service and the company during the time.

**Table 6 – Main structure of Pavia: visitpavia.com** (Source: our elaboration)

SECTION	FOCUS
<i>PLACE</i>	PAVIA, LOMELLINA PAVESE, BOROUGHES
<i>WHAT TO DO</i>	ART & CULTURE, WELLNESS, BICYCLE TOURING, RELIGIOUS TOURISM
<i>EVENTS</i>	SEARCH THE EVENTS
<i>PLAN</i>	FIND WHERE TO STAY

The stakeholder engagement strategy is based on some phases (Farinet and Ploncher 2002): 1) analyze the stakeholder groups as part of your environmental scan before you begin the strategic planning process; 2) identify who the stakeholder representatives are for the organization; 3) create a system to solicit their feedback; 4) incorporate their feedback into your strategic planning process. The Pavia tourism system can be analyzed by understanding the marketing communication system. It is important to set a calendar of steps and seek multiple levels of communication from the organizations (Fabris 2009; Napolitano et al. 2018) to improve the level of commitment of the stakeholders (Freeman 1984).

#### 4 – Discussion

We discover that the actual planning of Pavia is based on some main projects (see Table 7) for the tourism development and sustainability strategy.

**Table 7 – Ranking of the projects in Pavia** (Source: our elaboration from Pavia Tourism Annual reports 2009-2019 )

	ACTIVITY-PROJECTS
1	encourage the market of tourism with events (sacred music, theater, food, and wine)
2	promote the architecture of the place for a better place (Certosa di Pavia a monastic complex and top renaissance architectural hub)
3	promote the district of tourism in specific area (thermal baths and wellness sector)
4	create a university district and develop a high-level science park
5	encourage the cycle tourism and religious tourism (“via degli abati”)

Some main priority for tourism in Pavia (see Table 8):

- structuring of the tourist offer,

- training and employment, in the tourism sector
- support for digitization and information
- security of sites, essential factors in ensuring tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

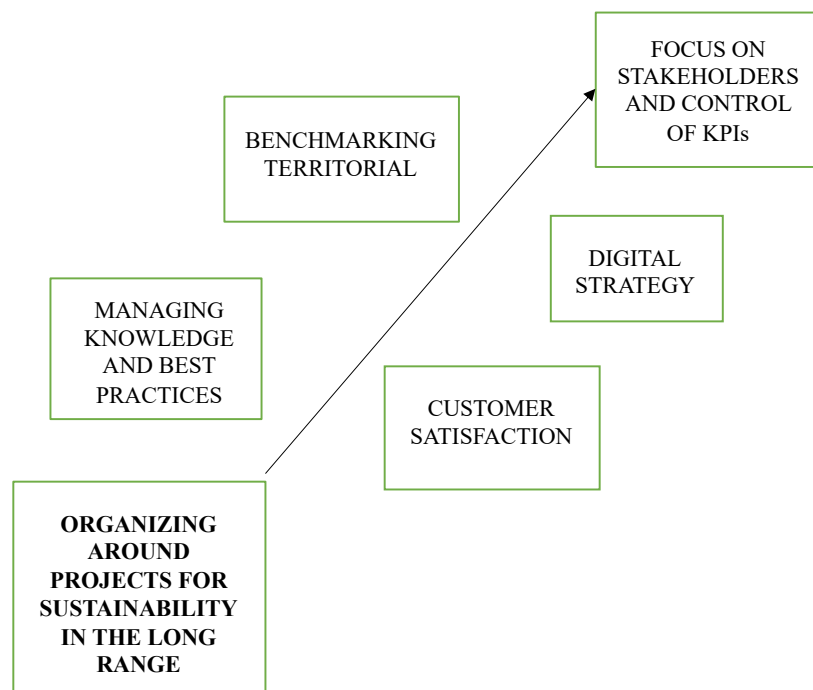
**Table 8 – The main priority in strategy in Pavia** (Source: our elaboration )

1) ECOLOGY AND IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT
2) DIGITISATION AND INFORMATION FOR THE TOURISM
3) -SECURITY OF SITES
4) -STRUCTURING OF THE TOURIST OFFER
5) -TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT TOURISM SECTORS
6) -OPEN TO INTERNATIONAL MARKET

The main lessons strategic planning in tourism of Pavia are:

1. the importance to develop a strategic vision in the short term (3-5) years but also the long term (10-25 years) and the necessity of a set of organized projects for a clear strategic guideline;
2. To understand where we want to go it is possible to analyze the intentional mission, vision, strategic guidelines, and the set of four images.

the opportunity to give a rating of the projects and using the tools of project management to follow the evolution during the time. the opportunity to develop a set of KPI and a balanced scorecard for controlling the development of the strategy of the projects. The valuation of the impact of projects in strategic guidelines by the KPIs is in Figure 5.



**Fig. 5 Critical success factors** (Source: our elaboration)

It is important also to control the main KPIs as a set of indicators to evaluate the performance of the activity and a balanced scorecard. It is possible to use the global ranking grouped in 10 categories; the possibility to use more activity of longitudinal and sectorial benchmarking for developing the projects.

The starting point of any strategic planning process is the identification and communication omission based on the four main determinants of local life.

## 5 – Conclusion

This paper contributes to the discussion about strategic planning and control based on the case of the city of Pavia. For what concerns the *first question*: "1. How to create a sustainability strategy for tourism development?" we propose these conclusions:

First, there is the possibility to create a sustainability strategy for tourism development based on:

- a) develop a strategic vision in the short term (3-5) years but also the long term (10-25 years);
- b) the necessity of a set of organized projects for a clear strategic guideline for tourism;
- c) the opportunity to give a rating of the projects and using the tools of project management to follow the evolution during the time.
- d) the opportunity to develop a set of KPI and a balanced scorecard for controlling the development of the strategy of the projects; the possibility to use more activity of longitudinal and sectorial benchmarking (see Table 9)

**Table 9: Sustainable city and tourism strategy (Source: our elaboration)**

DIMENSION	KPIs
CULTURAL AND COMMUNICATION	(events: sacred music, theater, food and wine, thermal baths and wellness, cycle tourism and religious tourism ("Via degli Abati"))
TRANSPORTATION	(public transport, traffic congestion)
RECREATION	(restaurants, theatres, cinemas, sports, and leisure)
ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT	(currency exchange regulations, banking services)
SECURITY	(political stability, crime, law enforcement)
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	(protect the environment and territory)

*Second*, strategic planning of the city of Pavia permits to organize a clear portfolio of priority.

The valuation of the impact of each project (rating) on the KPI. The answer to the first question is consistent with past studies (Kaplan et Norton 2004a, 2004b, Riva 2012, Lynch and Cross 1991; Riva and Pilotti 2017; 2019).

For what concerns the *second question*: "2. What are the main critical success factors (FCS) of a sustainability strategy for tourism development?" we discover:

First, the Pavia strategy can be based in some activity-project for a *sustainable city and tourism development*

1. *favorites of tourism with events (religious music festival events)*
2. *promote the architecture of the place;*
3. *promote the district of tourism with digital communication;*
4. *set a strategic set of a KPIs target (spending review);*
5. *develop collaboration with the institution (project financing);*
6. *create a scientific park (Pavia Science and Technological Park).*

It is possible to define some KPI to control some important areas for tourism.

Second, there are many strategic priorities in the Pavia Tourism strategy (see Table 10).

**Table 10 – Main priority in strategy in Pavia** (Source: our elaboration)

FOCUS	STRATEGY
SUPPORT FOR DIGITISATION AND INFORMATION	digital marketing
IMPROVE ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT	Improve the environment
SECURITY OF SITES, ESSENTIAL FACTORS IN ENSURING TOURIST SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY	Improve the security of the city
STRUCTURING OF THE TOURIST OFFER	More segmentation
TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT, TOURISM SECTOR	More formation in the tourism sector
INTERNATIONALIZATION	More promotion in international contest

The answer to the second question is in part consistent with past research (Pilotti, 2011,2019; Gazzola et a. 2019,2020) and strategic planning for Pavia can have an increasingly important for the development of the city (Atkinson et al. 1997; Mintzberger 1978; Mintzberger et al. 1998) in the long-range.

The limit of this study is to analyze only the case of Pavia. Future research can study other cases of success and the impact in different contexts. The city has developed a strategy based on quality and constant improvement of tourism (Slack et al. 1992; Edelman and Singer 2015).

The original contribution of this paper and the production of new knowledge in the field are:

- a) *the original description and analysis of the strategy sustainable tourism strategy;*
- b) *to give a new practical framework for strategic implementation.*

The limit of this study is to analyze only a single case study. Future research can study the relation between strategic vision and collective implementation. In summary, it possible to formulate the consideration that can be a *sustainable tourism strategy* an efficient tool for the improvement of quality of the city.

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