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The Territorial Marketing Plan: an instrument for provincial public management (Ourense, Spain)

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ARTICLE SECTION

The Territorial Marketing Plan: an instrument for provincial public management (Ourense, Spain)

Abstract: This work is situated between territorial marketing and local development applied to the province of Ourense (Galicia, Spain). The main objective is to identify those areas of work, where it is necessary to place greater emphasis to facilitate the development and growth of the province and therefore improve the quality of life of its citizens. For this, a two-phase analysis was carried out: in the first, the state and general structure of the province was diagnosed through extensive fieldwork and the use of different data collection techniques, which was based on the recognition of the strengths and weaknesses that define the provincial identity. In the second, a proposal of Territorial Marketing Plan was provided, in order to improve the brand positioning of Ourense. This concluded with the identification of four large areas of work: economy, services, infrastructures and foreign image and institutionalism, which derived in twenty strategic objectives, that finally culminated in twenty-five specific actions.

Key words: SWOT Analysis, Territorial Diagnosis, Strategy, Public Policies, Local Development.

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IDEAS CLAVE / HIGHLIGHTS / IDEES CLAU

1. La planificación estratégica permite la gestión de un territorio abierto, con características y tamaños diferentes
2. La identificación de los factores que caracterizan un territorio facilita su sostenibilidad en el tiempo.
3. La participación de todos los agentes sociales implicados garantiza la adecuada evaluación del territorio.
4. La provincia es un ámbito administrativo con capacidad suficiente para ordenar y vertebrar el ámbito municipal.

1. Strategic planning allows the management of an open territory, with different characteristics and sizes.
2. The identification of the factors that characterize a territory facilitates its sustainability over time.
3. Participation of all involved social agents guarantees the adequate evaluation of the territory.
4. The province is an administrative area with enough capacity to organize and structure the municipal area.

1. La planificació estratègica permet la gestió d'un territori obert, amb característiques i grandàries diferents.
2. La identificació dels factors que caracteritzen un territori facilita la seua sostenibilitat en el temps.
3. La participació de tots els agents socials implicats garanteix l'adequada avaluació del territori.
4. La província és un àmbit administratiu amb capacitat suficient per a ordenar i vertebrar l'àmbit municipal.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT¹

Globalization integrates territories, blurs boundaries, makes the localization of capital indifferent, and increases competition between regions, which motivates new local development processes. For a territory to attract activity, investment, technology, or qualification, and therefore nurture the development and well-being of its inhabitants, it is key to understand that region's spatial factors.

In a global world, competition takes place between regional economies instead of states. In addition, the homogenization of consumption and the integration of production techniques had spatial effects at all levels. This led local development to seek intra-territorial competitiveness, being the intangible aspect what makes the difference, and where the integration with the environment stands out.

To that end, the image offered by each area (brand value) becomes increasingly important. For a business brand to succeed, it is advisable to use marketing, which may be implemented to territories as well, thus satisfying the requirements of their target markets: citizens, investors, tourists, and businesses.

Any territory may be considered as an item to be sold, where the main product lies in the perceptions of others towards that area. Businesses seek their customers' satisfaction with the products or services offered, and similarly, the citizens should be proud of the institutions they select. Hence, the specification and perception of public management is determinant for the spatial orientation of the territory, the province of Ourense.

That orientation is materialised by setting up a Plan that aims to improve the living conditions of the people in the province. Ourense as a sustainable territory, that facilitates human settlement and enhances the quality of life of the inhabitants.

Therefore, a territory's development is based on a process shaped from a triple perspective:

- Conception of the citizen as a customer that accompanies other target markets, demand-approach.
- Identification of socio-personal needs to address collectively with available resources, offer-approach.
- Harnessing of opportunities and strengths, minimising the risk of threats and weaknesses of the environment; with the premise of a sustainable development.

Public Management is the means of allocating adequate resources to reach the social pursued objective, at the least possible cost. Based on this assumption many Public-Sector reforms were undertaken in different countries, considering the citizen as a customer that must be cared by the Administration, giving rise to what has been called "New Public Management" (NPM), where the identification of differential territorial aspects through Territorial Marketing (TM) plays a key role.

A step beyond NGP is the inclusion of the concept "Good Governance", which seeks to provide with a system of reliance for the Administration. One of the most widely used instruments so that the territorial management deviates as low as possible from that good governance is the Territorial Marketing Plan (TMP) adjusted to the territory (province). This paper shows the construction of a TMP at a provincial level, Ourense.

¹ Traducción exclusiva de los autores / Authors' exclusive translation.

TM facilitates spatial planning, as it jointly tackles the issue of lack of resources and the satisfaction of population needs. For this reason, the investigation began with the territorial diagnosis, through official statistics, status reports, and socioeconomic indicators; identifying seven study areas: Geography_climate_natural_environment, Demographics_migration, Culture_heritage, Tourism_thermalism_mountain, Transport_communication, Economy_activity_development, Innovation.

The methodology followed comprises two phases:

- Documentary research, field research, and data collection, which allow to diagnose and evaluate the internal and external status of the province.
- TMP design and development, according to results obtained in the previous phase.

Multiple information-gathering techniques were employed in the research:

Qualitative techniques to find out the reality under investigation:

- In-depth interviews with sectorial experts (9). Prior to this, and based on the territorial diagnosis developed, nine thematic blocks were identified. Consequently, the key issues were defined, and a reliable information was obtained.
- Focus groups (14). Where the most relevant items that concern citizens were highlighted, and the main social requirements were defined.

Quantitative techniques that facilitated the evaluation of those issues that explain its status and determine its future:

- Spatial and macroeconomic indicators, which provided information on Ourense's demographic, ethnographic, and socioeconomic profile.
- Web survey, in which citizens' preferences and needs were evaluated (questionnaire comprising 26 questions) to measure the expectations of the population and to get further information about the most concerning issues.
- Analysis of the Internet searches by Ourense's citizens.

The information obtained allowed to prepare a SWOT analysis, where four primary development axes or areas for action were revealed. As a result, the requirements and needs highlighted by experts and interviewees (qualitative identity), together with its intensity (quantitative identity), are determining factors for the delimitation of each axis:

- Axis_1. Ourense versus Economic Innovation. Considering the economic activity as a major source of wealth and employment.
- Axis_2. Ourense versus Assistance Services. Quality of life and demographic sustainability.
- Axis_3. Ourense versus External_Projection_Infrastructures. Promoting the attractiveness and image of the province.
- Axis_4. Ourense versus Institutionalism_Public_Action. Public institutions serving the interests of its citizens.

The main objective of strategic planning is endogenous development. To achieve that, politicians must promote a set of actions, goals, and resources for implementing the Plan.

The initial diagnosis enabled the characterisation of the socioeconomic and demographic structure, heritage, and infrastructures. On this basis, the main challenges were identified, as well as the strategic objectives and values of the province, which lead to the PTMP.

The mission of Ourense's TMP will indicate the path to follow, continuing with its transformation into a sustainable territory, with a high quality of life. Competitive advantages to be exploited will be the starting point to promote this area's development.

The vision of this TMP is the reality that the province aims to achieve in the medium-long term: Ourense's transformation in a province reference in terms of living standard, and sustainability. To this end, goals based on innovation, connectivity, local initiatives and demographic development ought to be established.

The values that identify the TMP are those conceptual frameworks that will guide the realisation of the PTMP (Ourense's "brand"), whose objective is to promote a sense belonging, preserving natural values, traditions, and collective identity.

Finally, the strategic objectives are the goals to achieve in the territory, the strategic plan for the long term. The strategy of the PTMP seeks to reach an imaginary of province based on positive associations that place Ourense as a territory that generates opportunities for the establishment and consolidation of the population.

The SWOT analysis concluded that the areas (axes) which require a greater intervention are the following: economics, social services, infrastructures, external projection, and public institutions under which the PTMP was classified:

- For each axis, the main objective and the secondary objectives were defined, as well as the specific actions to be developed for its achievement. And that based on problems and needs identified as more relevant for the Ourense society.
- The axes respond to the economic, assistential, infrastructures, projection, and Administration areas. There are twenty strategic goals (5 related to each axis), which are divided in four main objectives, one in each axis; and sixteen secondary objectives.
- Lastly, twenty-five actions were proposed to reach the strategic objectives identified. Each action is defined through a worksheet, and it can address different objectives.

The results obtained portrayed how the majority of public policies designed (objective-action), aim to foster an economic development, thus placing value on the ethnographic and environmental resources of the investigated area, entrepreneurship, and innovation. This will improve both quality of life and demographic sustainability, through accessible and efficient services, rehabilitation of infrastructures, external projection, and citizen-oriented institutions.

A practical guide (with a system of worksheets) was developed to facilitate the communication, implementation and future PTMP monitoring. Each worksheet describes accurately the action to perform, highlighting relevant information: belonging axis, strategic objectives, areas responsible for its management, potential beneficiaries, expected results, other areas involved, follow-up indicators and completion period.

As the Plan implies a change in the way of acting of the institutions, pedagogical aptitude is necessary, being the materialization and follow up of worksheets an essential factor.

The investigation reached the following result: The most relevant requirements of Ourense's citizens are placed in a triangle, where each side reflects the other two: lack of employment, depopulation, and ageing of the society.

At this point, the requirement for a comprehensive response about the characterisation and status of the province of Ourense was raised.

It is a dispersed territorial structure in terms of population settlement. Thus arises the need to implement territorial planning policies, through shared planning in the provision of basic services or with incentives that stimulate greater concentration of population.

Depopulation and ageing constitute the most critical problem of this province. It leads to the absence of an internal market, which handicaps population settlement and prevents the provision of efficient basic services.

Ethnographic diversity and patrimonial wealth are extensive and varied. This paper shows that these are one of the key points for the provincial development, as they imply enormous opportunities. An alternative tourism, more related to nature, health, culture represents a great strength in this territory. A specific and differential area that enhances the attractiveness of Ourense is thermalism.

Nowadays, this province resembles an extensive and heterogeneous socio-business area, whose role is based on the achievement of objectives in the short and the medium term. For this reason, it is necessary that these territories prepare a TMP, which meets and confronts current and future demographic, socioeconomic, and technological challenges.