

A general overview of tourism clusters

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Abstract

In terms of tourism development, the prominence of clustering activities as a significant strategical tool is on the rise. This study aims to explain what a tourism cluster is; how it is processed, how its network system functions and how tourism clusters are classified. Views about cluster classification are presented according to the success of the tourism cluster and its labelling criteria. There is also information about certain tourism regions in cluster maps. Overall, this study seeks to reveal the characteristics of tourism clusters through an analysis of specific tourism clusters. Furthermore, through analysing significant tourism clusters it aims to form a general framework under which all tourism clusters may be analysed.

Keywords: Cluster, Tourism, Clustering, Competitiveness, Regional Development

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1. Introduction

To sustain their economic development, regional development has great importance for regions, which are industrially underdeveloped. Within the context of regional development, these regions have chance to utilize their tourism potentials and contribute to their economic development by benefiting from tourism activities. There are interregional economic imbalances in most countries, including Turkey. These can be overcome with help of tourism sector since tourism sector is directly related to economic development. Tourism sector and its economic activities are capable of remedying economic imbalances among regions and making a major contribution to economic development with efficient use of tourism resources (Çeken, 2008). Thanks to tourism activities, geo-economic and socio-cultural assets, and some specific services, whose exporting is not possible, bring foreign currency into the country (Olalı and Timur, 1998). Sharpley (2002) indicates in his study that while tourism is a significant development tool for regions and regional development, its impact at national level is undeniable. Its potential and effects on economy are an opportunity for many regions and organisations.

Given today's compelling industrial competition among SMEs and relatively larger companies, company survival is progressively becoming more challenging. For this reason, it is essential for companies to cooperate in the name of sustainable competitive advantage and regional development. In this regard, clustering is an important strategical policy tool by which firms can utilize know-how and take advantage of the network systems in given clusters as a key to the solution.

From the viewpoint of the tourism sector, the non-homogeneity of tourism products renders tourism clusters remarkably different from those in other economic industries. In other words, tourism clusters contain many complementary components not only from the private sector, but also from public institutions. This study seeks to reveal cluster phases, the structure of cluster networks, and common characteristics of successful tourism clusters and challenges in the tourism clustering process by making

reference to significant tourism clusters, which have been founded in recent years.

2. Definition of cluster

Clusters are geographical cooperation of value chains in which companies, public institutions and universities do business with each other. Rather than being in the same sectors, it should be called the same value chain since complementary companies from different sectors can be in the same value chain. This was also stated by Porter (1998) in the following way that clusters are defined as geographical concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (for example universities, standards agencies and trade associations) that compete but also co-operate. Delgado and et al. (2015) also define a cluster as geographic concentrations of industries related by knowledge, skills, inputs, demand and/or other linkages.

The clustering of companies is not only natural; governments can also encourage the development of emerging clusters by supporting efforts that a group of companies can do to achieve the full potential merger (Iordache and et al., 2010). This means that the companies within a cluster can come together by themselves or that they can be formed by strategic plans of local authorities. Bathelt et. al. (2004) suggest that while much of the literature about clustering focuses on network relations between firms, it is more important to start out by considering the learning process that takes place within the firm before turning to the role of interfirm interaction. This can happen with learning organizations. Having stronger communication network through clustering, managers are able to reach information faster and use it on time to take action in their companies.

Thanks to the synergy which is created in a cluster system, the members of companies build a data network to transfer them to each other within the companies and in this way, they contribute to their regional and national economy by increasing their competitiveness.

The main idea of clusters is "working together." Sometimes, the managers of companies in clusters believe mistakenly that working with their opponents

in same value chain would be inaccurate for the sake of their companies. However, they would work together not to take share of their current market; but to expand their market shares; to find new markets.

On the other hand, clusters are not always for new markets. By cooperation in clusters, companies could lower their costs, meet their need for personnel, or increase their capacity. A cluster is a network of companies, their customers and suppliers of all the relevant factors, including materials and components, equipment, training, finance and so on. It extends to educational establishment and research institutes which provide a large part of their human and technological capital (Kachniewska, 2013).

One of the most essential necessities for clusters, as mentioned in most of cluster definitions, is geographical concentration which enables cluster companies to create synergy and to collaborate each other within this atmosphere. Once a specialized industry cluster has been established, the firms of this cluster develop a demand for specialized services and supplies. This creates an incentive for suppliers to be near these firms in that they form important markets. In locating close to these markets, the suppliers can gain economies of scale and distribute large parts of their production at low costs (i.e., transaction and transportation costs) (Bathelt and et al., 2004).

3. Clustering process

Clustering is a long-running process of which each phase requires profound preparation. For this reason, regions which willing to improve their competitiveness need to lead clustering process with a proper strategical plan. "Best practice suggests that cities and regions are seeking to build industrial clusters, as they provide fertile ground for innovations, competitiveness economies of scale, rapid rates of technology transfer and efficiencies through resource leveraging." (Isbasoiu, 2006). Moreover, it is also necessity to build data network which should be comprised of accurate information. Thanks to access to database within the cluster, member companies of the cluster can reach results of analyzes such as market analyze and determine their market strategies by taking these results into consideration. Rival companies come together for a common goal and this improves social capital. On the other side, domestic and foreign fair

economic supports, and training and certification programs in accordance with necessities could enhance competence and competitiveness of the companies (Eraslan and Dönmez, 2017). There are several factors traced to infrastructure deficiencies, absence of capital and experienced work force, lack of organizational structures and absence of information network and its channels; however, one of the most significant challenges faced by several firms is the limited use of the new technology (Matopoulos and et al., 2005). In order to deal with these negative aspects, the clustering process ought to be managed in a correct way. There are certain facilitators which can be utilized by cluster management for the clustering process. Environmentally friendly strategy, leadership, stakeholder collaboration, and communication and information are among the most essential facilitators in the process.

Public institutions that are the most strategical ones to utilize these above-mentioned facilitators are of capital importance to set the private sector in motion. Development Agency, for instance, is expected to analyze, develop and support economic sectors in the region. In order to provide private sector representatives with cluster advantages, they first need to have knowledge about the current situation through strategical regional action plans; then they determine need and deficiency to be remedied. In the end, they make a report in accordance with the findings. These reports can be carried out by various public institutions such as the chamber of commerce, the chamber of industry, commodity exchange, municipalities, governorates, or city councils, which are all territorially active in the region.

To make up for the deficiencies and to make companies more competitive in the sector, the applicant institution determines the clustering approach as its policy tool. First action taken by the applicant is to hold introductory meetings about the cluster for related actors such as private sector, public and educational representatives that all are essential for a cluster. The participation of university representatives is a must for a successful cluster through effective university-industry interaction. Having organized first opening meetings, the applicant institution is supposed to bring company representatives together on sectoral basis so that they can gather around the same table, discuss their similar

issues in detail, exchange ideas on them, and brainstorm about possible solutions. However, the main aim is to make them understand that they can collaborate with each other within the scope of regional competitiveness. This gives an idea about the sector to the applicant for the next step of a cluster project, which is stakeholder analysis.

In stakeholder analysis, the applicant itself or an experienced consulting company, which is hired for the step by the applicant, visits all possible companies in the region that are ready for co-operation within a cluster. Company representatives, who are visited on site, are expected to answer approximately 70-80 questions categorized under several headings such as definition of business, value chain, product and service, marketing activities, competitors, distribution channels, networking tools, relationship with supplier and buyers, value chain, payments etc.

Having gathered practical information about the companies in the field, the applicant starts to draw the lines of value chains which exist within the cluster. One of the most significant parts of these analyzes is the Porter's Five Forces Analysis, which are as followed:

1. Competitive rivalry
2. Supplier power
3. Buyer power
4. Threat of substitution
5. Threat of new entry

The analysis is also performed during company visits to observe how competitive companies are.

Another significant analysis is social network analysis which demonstrates the relationship between companies and their suppliers/buyers. In this part, relationship with customers and buyers, supporter institutions and stakeholders, with which companies co-operate, are analyzed respectively to observe the network power of companies.

After cluster companies have been analyzed by different models, their deficiencies and aspects to be improved come to light. The next step is to make up these ones for a better place in regional competitiveness; therefore, the applicant organizes training and certification programs in accordance with necessities and demands of cluster companies. These can be foreign trade training, target market analysis,

certification programs for foreign trade, training programs for personnel of cluster companies etc. This is a complicated and tough process which should be properly performed since the success of the regional competitiveness depends on this training and certification phase. The application generally carries out these training programs with help of universities or professional consulting companies.

Meanwhile, it is important to build or to maintain social interaction among cluster companies. That's why the applicant regularly organizes brainstorm meetings in semi-official environments so that private sector representative can break taboos and identify their suppliers and clients; and in this way, they can start acting together in their business, or even start a new business together. One of the most favourable advantages in a cluster is to control or decrease costs by acting together. This could be a great advantage for them even when they don't start a new business.

Another important point for the success of cluster is benchmarking method. At the establishment phase of clustering process, the applicant institution seeks for another partner cluster as its partner which has similar characteristics and has already achieved success in the clustering process. It is essential to keep in touch with partners in the cluster and to come together with its representatives, especially during the establishment phase of the cluster since they have already gone through same difficulties and they could give the cluster a lead.

After training and certification phases, cluster companies should be ready for the international area. They participate in international fairs, B2B meetings or even organize their own fairs. In this point, the partner cluster is strategical for the cluster because it has already experienced in participating in such meetings and fairs. This phase is always open to new developments in that strategies of worldwide companies change always as the technology and science improve. Cluster companies are supposed to observe international area very carefully and develop themselves so that they can be as competitive as their rivals. To make the cluster sustainable, the support of public institutions and universities is as essential as that of partner cluster. They ought to be always reachable for cluster members and give their best for regional competitiveness. Although the above-

mentioned process is not a standard one, the success of an industrial cluster is inevitable when a similar one is performed.

4. Clustering in tourism sector

Almost every tourism destination contains agglomeration characteristics; that's why geographical concentration can be considered as a significant component. However, every group of tourism enterprises with a geographical concentration cannot be named as a tourism cluster since they need some time to organise themselves, to set up their interaction business networks and then to run this organisation properly. For this reason, Ferreira and Estevao (2009) state that tourism cluster is a geographic concentration of companies and institutions interconnected in tourism activities. Tourism clusters are premised on creating a bundle of complementary attributes that serve to satisfy consumer needs, creating more and more opportunities for firms that choose to co-locate with each other. Hence, the proposition, that tourism-based cluster formations might add to multiplier and externality effects and serve to accelerate the opportunities for new forms of economic wealth by creating a demand for a host of complementary activities which in turn generate their own effects (Michael, 2006).

Unlike other products offered by manufacturing or service companies, tourism products are heterogeneous: they are complex and consist of plenty of complementary components provided by suppliers from various public and private sectors (Kachniewska, 2013). This is stated by Lade (2010) in other words that great opportunity exists for cooperation and networking relationships to be developed in the tourism industry due to its heterogeneous nature.

Whereas customers cannot observe actors within the most industrial clusters that are suppliers, sellers, agencies, logistic firms, etc., which is not the case in tourism clusters: customers (tourists) experience most actors until they consume tourism services and products. For instance, Kachniewska (2013) states that one week stay of a tourist in a distant place entails contacts with some 30-50 different entities (tour operator, insurance company, carrier, hotel, restaurant, tourism attraction, exchange office, taxi-driver, souvenir shop, local authorities etc.) – this way a value

chain is being constructed. Another example for the difference of a tourism cluster from most industrial clusters is that in tourism sector, customers (tourists) go to the tourism product or service.

Whereas sea-sand-sun were once prominent in tourism activities, interactive relationships have been the main focus on account of advancing information technologies, which are theme parks, smart city applications, slow cities, etc. This enhances the importance of tourism clustering so that tourism enterprises could be more competitive. Traditional tourism resources, comparative advantages (climate, culture etc.) become less important comparing to other tourism factors of competitiveness; information (or rather the strategic management of information), the intelligence (the ability of team innovation in an enterprise), knowledge (know-how, or a culture) are new resources and key factors now in touristic enterprise competitiveness (Iordache, and et al., 2010)

Iordache and et al. (2010) state that clusters have an impact on competition in the three following ways: by increasing the productivity of companies in a given area; deriving the direction and pace of innovation, the future productivity will be affected; and stimulating new business that will develop and strengthen that cluster. Online check-in, 2-d barcode applications and visual tours etc. can be instances for innovation in the tourism sector. Lade (2010) focused on attitudes towards competition and cluster development of four regions located along Australia's Murray River: Mildura, Swann Hill, Echuca, Albury Wodonga. Questionnaire surveys by Lade were carried out in the between 85-100 tourism firms of each case region. With the help of these surveys, presence of cooperation, which is one of the key characteristics for successful cluster development, was questioned in each of the regions. The findings argue that a relatively high level of collaboration is in existence in the Echuca region, where there is presence of related and complementary enterprises within the region that all together raise regional competitiveness development by collaborating each other.

Lade (2010) analyzed the four regions in terms of their cluster characteristics, which can be observed in the Table 1.

Table 1. Successful cluster characteristics

Presence of Successful Cluster Characteristics				
Cluster Characteristics	Mildura	Swan Hill	Echuca	Albury Wodonga
Intedependence of firms	X	X	X	X
Flexible firm boundaries	X	X	X	X
Cooperative competition	X	X	X	X
Community culture and supportive public policies	X	X	X	X
Shared understanding of competitive business ethic	X	X	X	X
Private sector leadership	X	X	X	O
Wide involvement of cluster participants	X	X	X	X
Appropriate cluster boundaries	X	X	X	O
Institutionalization of relationships	X	X	X	O
Social structure and attention to personal relationships	X	O	X	O
Life cycles	O	O	O	O

X indicates presence of characteristic; O indicates further development of characteristic.

Resource: Lade, Clare. "Developing tourism clusters and networks: Attitudes to competition along Australia's Murray river." *Tourism Analysis* 15.6 (2010): p.657

The tourism sector is a sector which can serve for global expansion. Tourism development strategy applied to a potential region with a clustering system could enhance the competitiveness of the region. They tried to explain the definition of cluster, and the features of a tourism cluster in their study. The study concludes that the tourism development strategy within the clustering system is to maximize the created value at each link in a cluster. They claim that the tourism cluster development needs to focus on income losses such as distribution, the advertising of tourism services and products, information services etc. All these could be diminished within a cluster structure. In conclusion, their study states that the experiences of developed countries with clustering systems indicate that clustering processes function as a basis for sustainable dialogue among industry representatives, public institutions, tourism enterprises, educational media, information services, etc. This enables tourism enterprises to improve the development of mutual

relations between innovation processes, management practices and specialized staff skills.

Ferreira and Estevao (2009) suggested a conceptual model for tourism clusters which can be a prominence role as a regional development strategy. They constituted the model with help of several elements that they analyzed in the Porter's Diamond, Crouch and Ritchie's Model of Competitiveness, and Dwyer e Kim's Model of Competitiveness. It seeks an answer of the question if there is a consonance among three main components: the tourism product, the touristic destination and the tourism cluster. According to them, if the interconnection of the first two components is efficient, the tourism cluster will work in a productive way. The model of competitiveness of tourism clusters for better regional development may help identify gaps and the potential for competitive development.

As it can be observed in the above-mentioned studies, the success of tourism clusters is based on the strong and sustainable interconnection of cluster components and members. The more efficient collaboration there is among members (private sector, public institutions, universities, R&D centers etc.), the more productive a cluster could be formed. The positive impact of clustering on each member in the cluster can be easily observable. For instance, Peiró-Signes et al. (2015) analyzed the differences between hotels in U.S. located inside of clusters and outside of clusters. They also analyzed different sets of hotels, which are based on their star category, location and structure. Their study's result demonstrates that there are more significant differences for hotels with luxury and chain-hotels. According to their study, cluster system enhances the economy of U.S. hotels. They argue that hotels in cluster system furtherly improve the current competitiveness which is already among hotel enterprises.

Networking systems in a tourism cluster, which is more heterogeneous than other industrial sectors, is regarded as one of the most significant factors; therefore, knowledge exchange process should be well managed when considering that it can be vital for actors of tourism sectors. As tourism is one of the most service industries and travel for pleasure and its products are sold in the sector, sector actors are supposed to reach necessary knowledge in time and utilize technology as required for their customers;

hence, this makes knowledge more significant for the sector; for instance, the Cluster Montagne, awarded with Gold Label by ESCA, has an effective network system within the cluster. It provides its members with broad database of the sector, analyzed information as fact sheets or news letters; in addition, it influentially promotes its members in social networks and digital media and it has the services of event marketing and public relations for its members (<http://www.cluster-montagne.com/>).

Furthermore, cluster members can have know-how information without efforts through network system which is significant for companies in terms of economical dimension and innovative approaches (Zhou and et al. 2007). They don't have to risk their time and money for the information.

According to several studies, the network systems in clusters are divided into two categories which are closed networks and diverse networks. Closed network is a network system in which main enterprises and their stakeholders exchange their strategic information with each other. On the other hand, diverse network is a network system in which all actor in a cluster limitlessly exchange information. Martínez-Pérez and Beauchesne (2017) state in their study, in which they have analyzed 215 hospitality and tourism firms located in the World Heritage Cities of Spain, that both network systems are equally required for the success of a tourism cluster.

Like other industry clusters, knowledge exchange and the way the network works in tourism clusters can occur in various ways. Sørensen (2007) implies in his study that this can vertically happen such as tour operators at tourism destinations and their distributors; or horizontally take place when complementary tourism companies exchange knowledge with each other in a destination. On the other hand, Shaw and Williams (2009) state in their study that the particular nature of tourism markets gives labour mobility a potentially distinctive role in this sector. In tourism sector, several tourists travel to where there is another language spoken and other clusters which are unfamiliar to them. For this reason, there is a knowledge need about these cultures in tourism. Maybe this is the explanation why there are many more immigrant employees in tourism sector compared to other ones. Because relationships and connections of a

tourism cluster are expected to be more active and complicated, utilizing network and its advantages are unavoidable for tourism companies.

5. Tourism cluster examples around the world

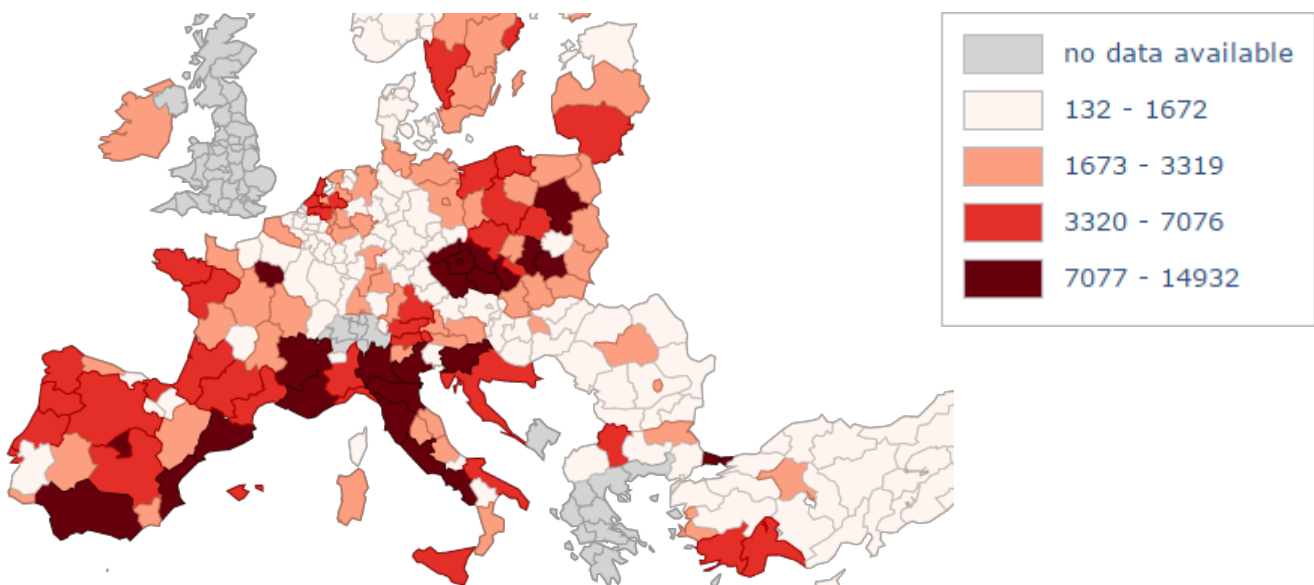
As part of EU efforts to create more world-class clusters across the EU by strengthening cluster excellence, the Commission launched in 2009, under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, the European Cluster Excellence Initiative (ECEI). To continue the successful work of this pan-European initiative which involved 13 partners from nine European countries ESCA - The European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis was established to offer practical advice to cluster management organizations. ESCA promotes cluster management excellence through benchmarking and quality labelling of clusters and cluster management organizations. There are three types of label, which are gold, silver and bronze. (<http://www.cluster-analysis.org/>)

There are minimum requirements for the Award "Gold Label" (<http://www.cluster-analysis.org/>):

- ✓ The cluster organisation management activities must have been started at least two years ago.
- ✓ Within one year at least 15 % of the cluster participants shall be involved in bilateral and/or multilateral co-operation activities with each other.
- ✓ The cluster organisation must initiate and regularly update its web presence (webpage, social networks), giving overviews and details of the cluster and of the work of the cluster organisation and maybe even of the industrial and/or technological sector in general, as well as important contact points in the local language.
- ✓ More than half of the committed cluster participants shall be businesses (industry/service providers) within the cluster relevant sector or field of technology. The cluster shall also have research organisations and/or universities among its committed partners.

- ✓ Within one year, the cluster management team must have been in direct contact with at least 20 % of the cluster participants, meaning
 - a contact during a visit at the participants premises or a visit of the participant in the premises of the cluster organisation,
 - an extensive bilateral exchange of information and experience via telephone or email, or
 - a joint work of the cluster management team and representatives of the participant in specific projects, working groups, and/or other joint activities.
 - ✓ The involvement of companies in the process of strategic analysis is mandatory. Furthermore, a minimum of two of the following strategic instruments shall be used, in the context of strategic analysis:
 - Identification of the industry and market challenges, e.g. by conducting an industry analysis on the attractiveness of the strategic segments where the cluster participants compete or could compete, based on own studies and/or existing studies
 - Analysis of the value chain and value systems for the existing industrial/technological sector and for the needed value system for the transformation of the cluster strategy
 - Benchmarking against Advanced Buyers Purchase Criteria (locally and globally) in the new strategy, identification of key success factors to compete and benchmark the new value chain activities against best practices worldwide
 - Further strategic planning tools like SWOT or similar instruments
- The cluster's strategic challenges shall be outlined in a documented (written format, ppt, multimedia, ...) format, describing the previous analysis, the strategic options for the participants of the cluster and the way in which the cluster organisation plans to support them in the long, medium, and short term, stating aims and objectives.

Figure 1. Number of enterprises for hospitality and tourism in 2013



Resource: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cluster/observatory/cluster-mapping-services/mapping-tool_en

It can be observed in the above-shown figure by EU that Andalusia, Istanbul, Tuscany, Rhone-Alpes are the regions with most enterprises for Hospitality and Tourism in 2013.

5.1. The cluster Montagne

Among the clusters awarded with gold label by ESCA, which is really challenging to have, there is only one in the tourism sector, which is the Cluster Montagne founded in France in 2012. The cluster organisation is located in the centre of the French Alps. With its founders' words, one of the aims is to represent and promote French know-how for sustainable mountain tourism development around the world. Another one is to organize a structured tourism sector with the "French Travel" strategy towards foreign markets to sell the French excellence for infrastructure building, hosteling, events organization. When considering mountain tourism, they are now trying to improve summer tourism for the destination by collaborating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, Ministry of Sports, Ministry of Finances. The cluster has been mainly in cooperation with the countries such as Chile, China, Iran and United States through international organizations (<https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/cluster-organisations/cluster-montagne>). Having separately departments within the organisation, the Cluster Montagne offers its members professional services (Information, Innovation, International, Performance). The cluster Montagne is composed of 172 companies; 10 education including Université Grenoble Alpes, training and research centers and 25 institutions, which all have been also categorised in terms of their expertise (Environment, Governance&Public Policy, Natural Hazards, Operation-Service-Training, Summer Development, Urbanism&Architecture, Winter Development. 9 specialists are working also for the Cluster Montagne (<http://www.cluster-montagne.com>).

5.2 IDM Südtirol

IDM Südtirol was constituted in 2016 in order to provide South Tyrol in Italy with business services. IDM stands for Innovation, Development Marketing. IDM Südtirol is the only cluster organization in tourism sector, which has been granted the silver label by ESCA. Its aim is to ensure the sustainable development in the region and support business

companies. They have been also promoting the region as a touristic destination. Since about 90% of all their visitors come from either German-speaking countries or Italy, they have been specialized in tourism marketing. Their ultimate intention in tourism sector is to vary their visitor countries (<https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/cluster-networks/idm-sudtirol-alto-adige-south-tyrolean-network-ecosystems>)

In March 2016, the Government of South Tyrol introduced the regulatory policy that would pave the way for its 'Future of Tourism' (Zukunft Tourismus) project in which three new Destination Management Units (DMUs) were founded with the aid of local tourism organizations. The government reorganized its tourism structure and gave them their first duties at the beginning of the year 2018. The DMUs have been attached to IDM Südtirol and are responsible for supporting local service providers. Alongside its work on marketing communications, IDM itself is also acting as a consultant for and coordinator of product development (<https://www.idm-suedtirol.com/en/tourism-agricultural-marketing/tourism-marketing-future-of-tourism-project.html>)

5.3 Georgian Tourism Association

Having been founded in 2006, the Georgian Tourism Association (GTA) is a cluster organisation consisted of hotels, tourism and wine companies in Georgia. The cluster is working for cooperation among the tourism companies and sustainable tourism development in the country. The cluster is in cooperation with Georgian National Tourism Administration, Agency of Protected Areas, international Organisations (USAID, GIZ Private Sector Development project, GIZ regional communal development project, Eurasia Foundation, SDC, IUCN and etc.), local partners (i.e. Elkana, Geoland and etc.) and its member companies. GTA has already completed more than 10 projects some of which were internationally organized. They have totally 65 members: 46 incoming and outgoing travel companies, 10 hotel companies, 4 wine companies, 3 travel companies and 2 other tourism-related companies (<http://www.tourism-association.ge/eng/main/index/56>).

The organization has mainly focused on eco-tourism activities in order to improve sustainability of

tourism development in Georgia. They successfully conducted the Project “Sustainable Tourism Development in Protected Areas” in 2009 and the Project “Enhancing Sustainability of Tourism Development in Protected Areas of Georgia” (2010) as well as collaborating with NTA (National Tourism Administration in Georgia) to create green certification for sector actors in tourism (<https://www.oecd.org/env/outreach/Georgia%20pilot%20project%20report%20final%20EN.pdf>).

5.4. *The Tourism cluster Schleswig-Holstein*

Having been awarded with a bronze label by ESCA, the Tourism Cluster Schleswig Holstein Project was launched in 2015 and it provides the following services: Building national networks to use actors and projects, Transfer of information and knowledge, increasing the amount of sustainable firms, supporting development of sustainable regions, supporting development of sustainable products. (<http://www.tourismcluster-sh.de>) The Cluster aims for Tourism Strategy 2025 with new focuses for end customer-marketing. Until the year, The Cluster is supposed to enhance economic conditions for tourism; to improve competitive position; to develop image, brand and marketing; and they have also some quantitative objectives: to enhance 6,9 billion Euro in 2012 to 9 billion Euro in 2025 in tourism gross revenue; to enhance 24,8 million commercial overnights in 2013 to 30 million ones in 2025; and to be top-3 ranking in customer satisfaction in 2025, which was rated as 7 in 2013. (https://wtsh.de/wpcontent/uploads/2016/12/brochure_cluster_policy_Schleswig_Holstein.pdf)

Since July, 2017 the cluster has been a member of the organization called “Futouris” which is working for preserving the natural and cultural heritage of our world and shaping the future of tourism in a sustainable way since its founding in 2009 (<http://www.futouris.org/en/>)

The cluster has been collaborating with the state administration of Schleswig Holstein for its tourism strategy 2025. Their motto is called “30-30-3”, which is to have 30 million overnight stays; to increase the total tourist turnover by 30% to 9 billion euros; and to ensure that the state will be among the top 3 states with highest guest satisfaction in touristic activities by 2025 (<https://www.nordseetourismus.de>).

5.5. *Tuscany Wine Tourism*

Wine tourism is the driving factor through which Tuscany has gained first place at the Wayn Award in 2012 achieving the nomination as “Best Wine Destination” one year after Florence and Siena received a similar nomination through “Travellers Choice Awards” by Tripadvisor (www.intoscana.it).

Considering Tuscan food and wine tourism we understand that in the region there are some key factors able to foster and wide the market: The landscape, the cultural heritage, the Italian life style and the rural lifestyle, the richness in typical and quality agricultural produce and products, the products brands and the territorial brands. Each feature is a value added to Tuscan tourism, a competitive advantage as well as an important element in the supply segmentation. The entire world is longing for our set of values that makes up a different life style.

Tuscany region has recently presented an innovative project concerning the wine offer; it merges the use of the technologies with the terroir features with the help of a smartphone to get all the information through the wine bottle label (area of origin, producer, vine variety, wine-making process, etc.) and to know all the other territorial quality products (Lemmi and Tangheroni, 2015).

Wine producers in Tuscany don't sell their wine products; but they are also selling the Tuscany destination as a “Tuscany experience”. In this experience, you can observe many different but complementary actors from transportation agencies, vineyard owners to wine restaurant, service providers. In general, the taste roads represent a brand given to a wide area where the local specialties are integrated with various kinds of heritage and services, suggesting the visitors to follow an exploratory itinerary; they have innovative tools to invite tourists to visit cellars and oil mills, to meet the entrepreneurs, get information and create active tourists. (Lemmi and Tangheroni, 2015) Unlike other members of food and wine tourism destinations who are present-minded in their enterprises, wine producers in Tuscany could transform the agglomeration in the region into a well-functioning cluster in which they have regional competitive advantages compared to other ones. The connection between the brand and the territorial heritage gives the brand itself a synergic impulse that

strengthens the local identity and makes the territory more competitive; as a matter of fact it represents a potentiality for a performance improvement (Lemmi and Tangheroni, 2015).

5.6. Andalusia Tourism Cluster, Spain

Although the tourism income of the Andalusia region, basic factor conditions and level of competition are very strong, the cluster is failing both to keep up with recent price-based competition from across Europe and to upgrade and differentiate itself to attract higher-end tourists. Having a mild climate all year circa 20° C, the region has also is located very close to Africa despite of being within the boundaries of Europe. Furthermore, it has 910 km of coastline including beaches of Atlantic and Mediterranean.

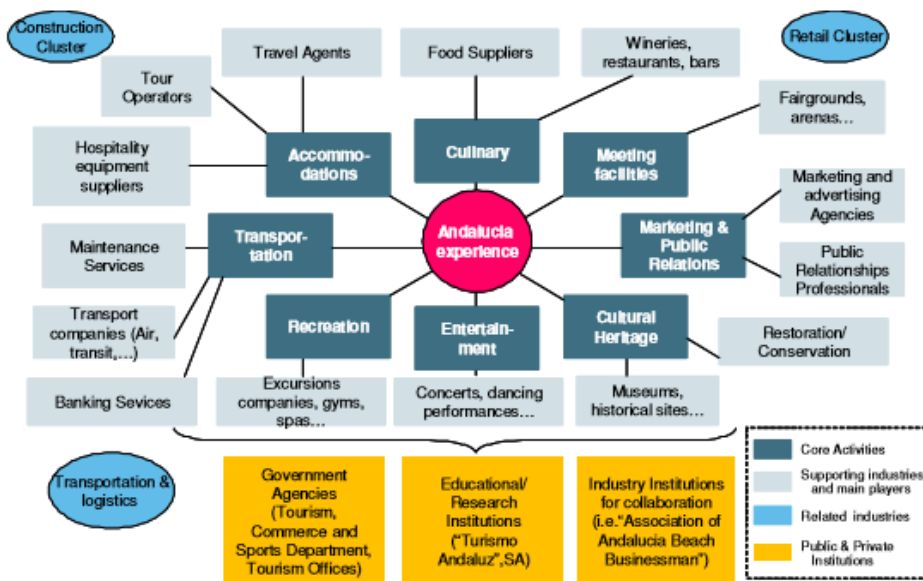
Owing to under-investment, quality of some tourism infrastructure (hotel buildings etc) have changed for the worse. The context of the Andalusian tourism is hindered by over- bureaucracy. Also, the four levels of administration generate delays in dealing with decisions such as giving a permit to open a restaurant: national, regional and local, as well as EU-wide regulation is involved.

In order to create more competitive tourism sectors, the Harvard Business Research team advises that The

Ministry of Public Works should stimulate higher investment in quality tourism infrastructure. There is a lack of innovation in the tourism sector. Therefore, the different actors in the private, public and academic arena should be innovative in promoting innovation in product and processes through: collaborative university-firm R&D; company ingenuity (prizes); external pressure for innovation (e.g. quality standards) and strategic use of tax credits for technology adoption. The national and regional governments, along with the private sector and institutions for collaboration (IFCs) should conduct more aggressive marketing strategies by dedicating a cluster-wide marketing team that develops a high quality offer around the concept of “Andalusian experience” beyond sun and beaches ([http://www.isc.hbs.edu/resources/courses/moc-course-at-harvard/Documents/pdf/student-projects/Spain_\(Andalusia\)_Tourism_2011.pdf](http://www.isc.hbs.edu/resources/courses/moc-course-at-harvard/Documents/pdf/student-projects/Spain_(Andalusia)_Tourism_2011.pdf)).

At the below-given figure (Figure 2) by Business Harvard School, actors of the Andalusia Tourism Cluster can be observed.

Figure 2. Table of Andalusia Tourism Cluster



Resource: ([http://www.isc.hbs.edu/resources/courses/moc-course-at-harvard/Documents/pdf/student-projects/Spain_\(Andalusia\)_Tourism_2011.pdf](http://www.isc.hbs.edu/resources/courses/moc-course-at-harvard/Documents/pdf/student-projects/Spain_(Andalusia)_Tourism_2011.pdf))

4.7 Turisfera Tourism and Innovation Cluster, Canary Islands

Turisfera is the first tourism cluster in Tenerife. It emerged in 2010 due to the need to meet the deficit of collaboration to innovate with entrepreneurs. The objective of the cluster is to generate and channel the innovative initiatives of companies in the tourism sector, and to create a network of tourism companies that carry out innovative projects. It was also awarded with the bronze label of ESCA. The cluster has 23 members. The organisation focuses on food and wine tourism. (www.turisfera.org).

The Tourism Cluster, Turisfera, of which the objective is to start up innovative projects of collaboration between companies on the basis of the three following strategic focuses: Environmental sustainability, improvement of the tourism product, and relationship with the customer (<http://www.webtenerife.com/es/investigacion/informacion/estudios/estrategia-planificacion/documentos/review-tourism-strategy-tenerife-2012-2015.pdf>).

6. Conclusion

Since tourism sector is consisted of a structure with several actors, the sector contains many details in itself. A well-functioning cluster enables these actors to come together for regional tourism development and sustainable cooperation.

With the help of tourism clustering, it is aimed to improve environmental sustainability, development of tourism products and relationships with customers (tourists). For this reason, the process is shaped with tourism product, touristic destination and tourism cluster. In this point, the difference of tourism sector from other sectors leads to more complicated structure in tourism clustering. In tourism clusters, interrelations of many cluster members with consumers (hotels, food and beverage enterprises, travel agencies, car rental firms, souvenirs etc) are the most basic essential difference. This increases the economic performance of actors in a cluster. The most significant success factors in tourism clusters are efficient communication network and cooperation. In addition to these, cooperative competition, supportive public policies, private sector leadership, involvement of cluster participants, flexible company boundaries are also fundamental.

ESCA identifies successful clusters in respect to outstanding elements in clustering activities, by awarding clusters with gold, silver and bronze labels. According to this evaluation, there is just a tourism cluster awarded with the gold label, which is the Cluster Montagne. Awarding with the gold label depends on many conditions, one of which is that cluster activities must have begun at least two years ago. This requires a significant strategical plan. Another is about the number of cluster members which need to be businesses (private sector) within the cluster. In terms of tourism clustering, strong network among the members and efficient cooperation of the members make regional development and cooperative competitiveness possible.

On the other hand, establishing clusters is a long and complicated process during which there may be some difficulties, for instance, the 12 months clustering process of South African tourism sector failed to achieve success due to some constraints. This might be because of unrealistic goals according to Nordin (2003). Lack of strong economy, security and human resources have also negative impact on this failure.

The success of today's clusters depends on the sustainable cooperation of their members and the channels through which they are in cooperation. It is relatively uncomplicated to get in touch with necessary people thanks to information technologies which are improving day by day. Another significant factor is support of facilitator institutions, especially governmental ones. Characteristics of the sector, geographical and cultural features and qualifications of companies play a major role in structural shapes of clusters. Clustering is one of the most significant applications to allow companies to grow at the macro level in spite of the competitive approach among each other.

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