The Strategic Management Process in a Border Destination: The Eurocity Chaves-Verín

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Abstract. The aim of this study is to analyse the process of managing a border destination: The Eurocity Chaves-Verín. The research was carried out with a view to different levels of action, namely, to understand the importance of water for the region as a tourist product, to evaluate the positive and negative aspects of the destination development, and to determine the importance of the innovative product “Bio-healthy plans”. Using the qualitative methodology, through semi-structured interviews in a [32] analysis proposal, it was concluded that the model used may be an added value concerning the approach to tourism destinations, because it is considered a wide range model viewing results and plans for future actions, to be implemented at the destination. It is a current model, easily adaptable to the generality of tourism destinations, particularly in the pandemic context of health, experienced in this year. The main results show that we are facing a thermal and wellness destination, which involves all stakeholders, and currently, tourism provides many positive elements for the region.

Keywords: Border tourism · Destination management · Health and wellness tourism · Eurocity Chaves-Verín

1 Introduction

“Cross-border tourism is the reinvention of the border as a tourist destination, with a differentiated identity in sociocultural terms, establishing regional and transnational relations, based on each of the regions as a central object of motivation and tourist experience, related, regarding to the “dry border”, with interculturality, thermal, historical, natural and gastronomic tourism. Crossing the border ensures the sharing of the tourism destination” [1], where borders still tend to celebrate the neighbourhood [2]. New tourism trends emerge, which try to respond to the new motivations of tourists, capable of attracting their own tourist demand and generating a complementary supply in the destination, also giving the possibility to the border tourism growth, namely in the Eurocity Chaves-Verín (ECV). It uses resources that attract populations on both sides of the border, given the attractiveness resulting from cultural differences and
existing natural conditions, promoting several possibilities of stays with enriching arguments for leisure activities, as they are places of international permeability, presenting conditions to increase the number of visitors who can stay on their travels and enjoy nature and heritage [3].

2 Literature Review

2.1 Tourism Relevance

Tourism as a global phenomenon affects people and nations that establish relationships with each other and aggregates phenomena of culture, heritage, economy and environment, guiding their economic, social, cultural and environmental development, in a permanent change process, so that one can define tourism as an activity that is constantly evolving, covers a wide range of offers and products of different nature, involves a diversity of economic actors and their impacts are felt across the economy [4]. In 2019, estimates show that the number of non-resident tourists arriving in Portugal should have reached 24.6 million, corresponding to a growth of 7.9% compared to the previous year, above the one registered in 2018 (+7.5%). Spain kept being the main inbound market (share of 25.5%; +0.1 p.p.), having grown by 8.2% in 2019 (+8.9% in 2018) and contributing with around 26.1% to the total increase in the number of tourist arrivals. “Leisure, recreation or holidays” was the main motivation to travel in 2019, justifying 12.1 million trips (49.4% of the total, +3.0 p.p.), followed by “visits to relatives or friends”, with 9.2 million trips (37.8%, −3.6 p.p.) and “professional or business” reasons (2.0 million), with 8.2% of the total 6 (−0.1 p.p.) [5]. The Northern Region has been experiencing a very positive dynamic in Tourism in recent years, not considering the pandemic situation experienced in recent months, which is believed to be over soon. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) foresees sustained growth for the tourism industry in the next 20 years: Emergence of new consumption patterns and motivations, focusing on destinations that offer diverse experiences and with a high degree of authenticity and environmental quality in different types of Tourism (Culture, Heritage, Nature, Gastronomy, Sport…) [6].

2.2 The Eurocity Chaves-Verín

An innovative project, ECV is based on the geographical proximity, was born in 2007 with the support of the Eixo Atlântico (Atlantic Axis) and is formed by the municipality of Chaves in Portugal and the city of Verín, in Spain. The border regions (Raya/Raia) have many characteristics that can be used as differentiating elements viewing the creation of new tourism products, taking advantage of the activities that make or were part of the populations to create unique and inimitable tourism products, producing tourist activities based on local rural and industrial activities. The “raia” (border) is a space of possibilities for the creation of intercultural tourism, and it is necessary to identify innovative tradition elements that position the “raia” as a tourism destination [7]. The border between Spain and Portugal marked the way of life of the different populations established in this region throughout history [8], and many studies have
recognized the importance of border, and border culture, as tourist attractions for the development of regional tourism.

2.3 The Tourist Products of Eurocity Chaves-Verin

The Northern Region of Portugal has a set of diversified and differentiating tourist resources, valued, and enhanced, in an exploratory survey conducted to hikers in Portugal. The main motivation identified was to observe and enjoy the beauty of the landscape, breathe fresh air, and interpret nature [9]. The differentiating aspects include water, namely rivers, lakes, reservoirs and thermal waters, which are one of the bases and substance of the national tourism offer, and is part of the emerging well-being products, once it begins to be recognized internationally and has a high growth potential, generating high added value flows, enhancing also the multiplier effect of tourism in the economy [10]. In Galicia, thermal and wellness tourism is also of recognized importance and great potential to attract a medium-high profile international target [11], planning to consolidate the thermal offer, strengthen and position the Galician region as a health tourism destination based on thermalism through the properties of thermal waters, at national and international level, so it can be perceived that on both sides of the border is intended to present a unique and differentiating destination based on water. The Tourism Master Plan of the Eurocity, Water Destination Chaves-Verin, also aims to reposition the border destination as an active well-being destination, combining several physical activities, and different tourist products developed, such as water routes, bike paths along the Tâmega river, among others, whose infrastructures were designed for this purpose.

![Fig. 1. Repositioning the eurocity of water destination Chaves-Verin Source: Tourism Master Plan, Adapted.](image)

The destination is linked as an active one, but it can also be relaxed, depending on the desire of each tourist, because nature tourism is equally conductive to relaxation and rest, whose leisure tours can be done as well in the available parks. It is intended to combine the historical differentiating products – thermalism and golf, to nature tourism,
culture and wine and gastronomy in a competitive advantage, as explained in Fig. 1, creating the Well-being destination, integrated with the bio-healthy, active and relaxed [12]. According to the ten strategic products defined by national tourism [13], related to ECV there are six identified: Cultural and Landscape Touring, City Break, Nature Tourism, Health and Wellness, Wine and Gastronomy, and Golf, among the distinctive and differentiating offer of the destination, which can place it in a reference destination regarding the tourist product of Health and Wellness. The tourist attractions are based mainly on nature, history and culture, but the elements or natural factors originate the structuring and organization of most tourism destinations, which is distinctive for the ECV. This region has a significant landscape and natural value, where Water, History, Culture, Nature, Gastronomy, Wines,… Health Tourism and Wellbeing, and the complementarity between them can effectively increase the competitiveness of the destination. Regions are associated with the provision of health and wellness tourism services capable of developing complementary tourist products, based on the diversity of endogenous resources present in its territory [14].

Table 1. Eurocity’s tourism resources

| Nature                                      | Historical-cultural                                      | Gastronomy                                      |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| — Water                                     | — Historical, Artistic, Architectural, Cultural Heritage  | — Typical                                      |
| — Mountainous Plateaus of Trás-os-Montes    | — Thermal Baths (Thermal Heritage)                       | Gastronomy/Local Products                      |
| — Tâmega River                              | — Festivals and Pilgrimages                              | — Wines from Monterrei and Chaves              |
| — Thermal and water route                   | — Crafts                                                 | — Wineries and                                 |
| — 21st century thermalists                  | — Way of Saint James                                     | Gastronomic Fairs                              |
| — Ecomulfluvial path of the Tâmega          | — Smuggling Route                                        | — Healthy Bio Plans                            |
| — Chaves Cycle Route                        | — Route of castles                                       | (…)                                            |
| — Birdwatching Route                        | — National Road 2 (Km 0)                                 |                                                 |
| — Ham mountain bike route (…)              | — Urban route of Verin                                   |                                                 |
|                                             | — Urban route of Chaves                                  |                                                 |
|                                             | — Urban route of Vidago (…)                              |                                                 |

Source: Own Elaboration.

From the analysis to Table 1, it is verified that Health and Wellness Tourism is referred in the three main tourist products, and it is this complementarity between offered products that intend to make the destination unique. In tourism it is the offer of differentiating services and promoters of competitive advantages (based on synergies between endogenous resources) that will have to meet the needs of an increasingly demanding, more informed and with a variety of alternative destinations available [14]. The products: Thermalism, Health and Wellness; Birdwatching Route; Ham mountain bike route; Smuggling Route; Wine and Gastronomy and the Healthy Bio Plans are the dominant destination products and Thermalism, Health and Wellness is the product that offers greater complementarity to other tourist products in the region, positioning itself as the leader of the tourist offer [13]. It may possibly add thermal tourism, nature,
adventure, urban, family, among others, beyond the proper segmentation of the tourist system [15].

2.4 Thermal Heritage of Eurocity Chaves-Verín

The objective of the Tourism Master Plan is to reposition the ECV destination as the Eurocity of Water, promoting the Wellness Thermalism as a reference tourist niche and convert the management of services and events in the niches of Nature, Culture, Wine and Gastronomy into a competitive advantage. The fundamental characteristics of the Eurocity are the two cities, two countries, a border, nine hot springs and a river (Tâmega) that crosses the Eurocity as a union axis between the two sides of the border. From where a water of unparalleled quality hot springs. The most prominent hydromineral hot springs are those in Table 2, according to their geographical location.

| Table 2. Hydromineral hot springs |
|-----------------------------------|
| Galiza (Verín)                    |
| Cabreiroá                         |
| Sousas                            |
| Fontenova                         |
| Fonte do Sapo                     |
| Caldeliñas                        |
| North Portugal (Chaves, Vidago)   |
| Campilho                          |
| Vidago                            |
| Caldas de Chaves                  |
| Vilarelho da Raia                 |
| Source: Chaves Verín Tourism Master Plan, Adapted. |

In the territorial area of ECV there is one of the largest concentrations of hot springs in Europe, endogenous resources that constitute a source of opportunities to achieve the classification of Thermal Destination and thus develop an area of tourism excellence focused on health and well-being.

2.5 Border Tourism

The border is a line of separation and contact between two or more states, where there is a discontinuity between the spaces of each country, not only due to territoriality, but also due to cultural, religious or other references; borders were conceived as institutions that serve to mark the functioning of barriers between states, to impose control over the flow of population, to regulate border trade or to indicate the platform and facilitate contact and exchange [16]. From a theoretical point of view, the definition of border is no longer considered in terms of administrative lines and macro-political institutional practices, but also considering the social, political and cultural processes of border reconstruction and the different views concerning local, regional, national, state and international scenarios [17].

One of the characteristics of the borders is its ambiguity of the shared space, which creates hybrid identities caused by intercultural sharing and which are intended to present itself as a unique tourist product in the border regions, where the culture and identity of both sides are interacted in an authentic way over time, as is the case of the
Smuggling Route, a tourist offer of the region, which geographically, involves both sides of the border and involves local inhabitants, where the border is becoming a tourist-cultural product [18], characterized by mobility and the experience of crossing borders, and where it becomes an attraction and create unique advantages on opposite sides that make borders an important destination [19], with natural and historical-cultural resources being the basis of tourist activity, viewing the viability of sustainable tourism [19]. There is a positive influence of the tourists’ attitudes on the perceived value in the border destination, as well as their positive satisfaction evaluation [16]. However, to promote border tourism, there must be a process of integration between territories, with tourism appearing as a significant component of this integration. Generating positive results for both regions: employment opportunities, improving the local economy, increasing the standard of living of the local population, and generating new market opportunities [19, 20]. It is necessary to add and involve stakeholders and the local population in order to define strategies for the development of border and cross-border tourism, oriented towards the Euro-regional, Iberian, European and global markets [18].

2.6 Health and Wellness Tourism

Wellness tourism is a niche market in global expansion, offers specific business opportunities through products that promote or maintain health [21], can be promoted as a healthy way of life and bring positive benefits to tourists and residents [22]. While medical tourism assumes a condition of having or not having a disease, wellness tourism aims to care for healthy people with a proactive interest in maintaining or improving their health by offering treatments in spas or therapy establishments [23]. Historically, the demand for mass spas, such as treatment of a disease or tourism, has decreased in the post-war period [24]. And, if ‘medical tourism’ refers to the journey to a destination in search of medical intervention to cure a disease [25], ‘wellness tourism’ refers to obtaining health and well-being through a holistic approach (body and mind) without medical intervention during the holidays [26]. It integrates the need for physical health, beauty, longevity, awareness, spiritual sensitivity and connections with the community, the environment or religion [27]. Well-being tourists are determined to play an active role in their own health [28]. They are generally attracted by good natural, cultural environments, traditional communities or alternative welfare services and activities [29]. Therefore, rural areas, forests, mountains, resorts of hot springs, places that offer wellness alternatives, for example, yoga, meditation, and spiritual retreats, are the main destinations of wellness tourism [30].

2.7 Case Study

ECV is a border destination, holds a great therapeutic value with its mineral medicine waters, rich in several tourism products, will be the best strategy for a Health and Wellbeing destination. Recognized the contribution that tourism has to the local development of territories and after identified its territorial resources, this research intends to analyse: What positive/negative impacts the development of tourism can bring to the ECV, measure the water potential as a tourism product in the destination,
and, to determine the relevance of Bio-healthy plans as a differentiating element of tourist destination.

3 Methodology

The aim of this article is to analyse the market positioning of the Health and Wellbeing tourism product in the ECV, and whether the promotion of the destination is in accordance with the chosen model.

To fulfil the objectives of this research, was adopted the qualitative methodology, and the semi-structured interview was used as a data collection instrument. The interview is an advantageous data collection technique due to its efficiency, promoting the collection of diversified data [32]. Semi-structured interviews are characterized by the existence of a previously prepared script, but still offering the interviewer, the freedom to include during the interview, several aspects considered as convenient. The methodology based on the model “The 10 As of Successful Destinations” by [32] suggests this model as a useful tool of tourist attributes capable of evaluating the success of tourist destinations. These ten attributes can be a good starting base of work for all destinations that argues that tourism plans should be built by setting the targets for Tourism at destination [32], and can still be used as a tool for Integrating a Tourism Planning, where the author combined the model with the UNWTO recommendation code for tourism master plans to produce a more detailed set of topics recommended for the content of the plan topics of integration areas can be seen in the fourth column of Table 3.

| A’s     | Attributes                                      | Question                                                                 | Plan content topics          |
|---------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Awareness | Tourists’ level of knowledge                     | Is there a high level of awareness of the destination among potential tourists? | Marketing and promotion     |
| Attractiveness | The number and geographic scope of appeal of the destination’s attractions | The destination offer a diversity of attractions that are appealing to tourists? | Product development         |
| Availability | This attribute is determined by the ease with which bookings and reservations can be made | Can bookings and reservations for the destination be made through a variety of distribution channels? | Marketing and promotion     |

(continued)
The author added 5 A’s to the initial 10 A’s to define the areas of action concerning tourism planning, according to Table 4.

Table 3. (continued)

| A’s            | Attributes                                                                 | Question                                                                 | Plan content topics                  |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Accessibility  | The convenience of getting to and from the destination, as well as moving around within the destination | Is there convenient access to and from the destination by all modes of transportation? Is there convenient transportation within the destination? | Transportation Infrastructure Tourism zoning |
| Appearance     | This attribute measures the impressions that the destination makes on tourists | The destination makes a good first impression? Does the destination make a positive and lasting impression? | Tourism zoning Product development |
| Activities     | The extent of the array of activities available to tourists within the destination | The destination offers a wide range of activities in which tourists want to engage? | Product development Programming |
| Assurance      | This attribute relates to the safety and security of the destination for tourists | Is the destination clean, safe, and secure? | Quality standards of tourism services. Safety and security. Infrastructure Legislation and regulation |
| Appreciation   | The feeling of the levels of welcome and hospitality contribute to this attribute | Do tourists feel welcome and receive good service in the destination? | Human resources Community attitudes |
| Action         | The availability of a long-term tourism plan and a marketing plan for tourism | Is the tourism development and marketing in the destination well planned? | Statistics and research. |
| Accountability | This attribute is about the evaluation of performance by the DMO | Is the DMO measuring the effectiveness of its performance? | Institutional framework Statistics and research |

Source: [32], Adapted.
The interviews were conducted individually to three representatives of public agencies that work directly in the tourism sector of the region. Interviews with experts from public bodies or associations, researchers and other tourism experts can also provide very useful information on the local situation, regarding the sector, and the market (demand, competition, and trends) [32]. The interview schedule includes several open questions, and all interviews were audiotaped and transcribed (Table 5).

Table 4. Additional A’s

| A’s attributes         | Recommended areas for tourism planning |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Accommodation          | Accommodations                         |
| Actors                 | Stakeholder roles and responsibilities  |
| Agenda for sustainability | Policies Tourism zoning                  |
| Attainment             | Timelines/timeframes                    |
| Allocation             | Budgets                                 |

Source: [32], Adapted.

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Table 5. Interviews

| No. interview | Interview date | Interview length |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| E1            | 18/06/2020     | 31:35           |
| E2            | 24/06/2020     | 53:29           |
| E3            | 10/07/2020     | 01:47:02        |

Source: Authors

4 Results

After the interviews, the results were analysed, in order to understand if the tourism planning in the destination complies with the norms and the model suggested [32]. The Destination Management is defined by the “Cross-border Tourism Master Plan for the ECV destination that extends to the entire territory of the Municipalities of Verín in Spain, Chaves in Portugal, and Vidago as the third thermal hub” (E2), is headed by eurocity” (E1), “and there is a set of documents” (E3). The attribute awareness of the destination is related to the level of knowledge that tourists have about the destination and the question that arises is whether there is information available among potential tourists, which is positive and in line with the existence of diversity of distribution channels. “We have online and offline distribution channels. In the online distribution channels, the destination offer is available on the website visitchavesverin.com and in the promotion campaigns we develop in both countries and on social networks... stakeholders have their tourist distribution channels in tour operators in both countries... And, when we have operating joint package, we also work with some tour operator to proceed with this distribution in Spain and Portugal” (E2), “Yes, we as Alto Tâmega, have (distribution channels) (E1)”, “we do not have an international distribution chain, but we participate in fairs regularly” (E3).
Regarding the questions, whether the destination offers a diversity of attractions and whether they have the ability to engage, attract tourists and prolong the stay, the answers are positive “Yes, our tourism products allows a wider stay of visitors. A tourist, when arriving in Chaves or Verín can use a tourism office, where he is informed about the activities he can carry out on both sides of the border” (E2). “Yes, there’s a lot. Chaves has 150,000 stays... this means a set of integrated offers, not only talking about thermal tourism, which is very relevant, of course, perhaps the main product, because there are 11,000 tourists, spa users, in Chaves to do treatments, and part of them have a medium of overnight stays, in the territory, about 12 days” (E1), “from the material to the intangible we have a vast heritage” (E3). The ECV it has several accessibilities “by highway” (E3) “is very well located both in Portugal and Spain that allows you to reach from Porto, Lisbon, Madrid, Santiago de Compostela... quickly and safely. The destination ECV is very close (1h30) to three airports” (E2), “we really liked to have direct planes, however Chaves is at one hour from the international airport of Porto, which is accessible (E1), and there is the possibility of coming by train from Madrid, which from 2021 it will already be possible to do in TGV” (E2). “The railway would be interesting and ecological” (E3), “we do not have” (E1). There are transport (road) that make Chaves-Verín” (E1).

As for the Appreciation and Appearance of the destination “the feedback is positive and has been going up a lot, which is good” (E1) “tourists feel safe and feel good” (E3). The quality of accommodation suitable for demand and dominant products stands out: “we have hotel units of all supply quality sectors” (E3) “that fit perfectly into the dominant products that is a more quality tourism, a higher segment” (E1). “Yes, there are units of high-quality accommodation... we have an offer in the destination of very good, excellent accommodation, which fits perfectly in the needs of tourists and products of relax, wine” (E2).

Regarding the work of tourist monitoring of the destination there is “in forum discussion” (E3), and “a questionnaire is being applied to tourists, and the responses have been positive” (E2). The impression caused is good, since the best way to evaluate this characteristic is to come back and recommend the destination “and return to their origin and recommend, which is the main one” (E2).

The strategic development of tourism and destination marketing that assess action and effectiveness “are well planned, the ECV tourism master plan provides for the promotion of the cross-border destination, and we are developing an online promotion strategy that is cheaper, but we still need investment and positioning, we are working on it, as well as in assessing the effectiveness - the work of tourist monitoring that is taking place” (E2). “We have a strategic plan; we have a registered trademark. Upper Tâmega - water territory and well-being... We’re on the way to having something very well designed. We evaluate the effectiveness in demand performance, so the destination has been increasingly sought and we are happy because we are certainly contributing to this” (E1), “most of our visitors are from Galician, and after the French, last year we had visitors from more than fifty nationalities” (E3).

The Assurance of destination, a condition that is even more necessary given the current situation of pandemic caused by the new coronavirus (SARS-COV-2), demands taking new measures “we have been very careful, the number of cases we have had, related to Covid’19 in the territory is very low so far. So, we are very pleased so far. It
doesn’t depend on a person’s action, but on everyone. The Marketing strategy provides for these measures (E1). Because destination is not a massive, our interviewees consider that this can also be a competitive advantage for it, and adds “we are working together on this, we are promoting the destination as a safe destination, a destination of health, well-being, the operators of the destination in Portugal with the Clean & Safe seal and in Spain with the Seal of Safe Destination. We are working on this and we are working on promoting as a safe destination and in which one can trust” (E2). We could not help but question the direct impact of the pandemic on tourism in the destination, which as is already public knowledge at the global level, was the ‘tourism sector’ that suffered the most, was devastating, not only in this destination, but in all, the hotel units closed, services were suspended, and the fact that the destination had border (E2).

However, confidence in the destination begins to appear, and this is already recovering “last week (the hotel) was complete (8 to 14 June) during the week of the holidays. The fact that we are a low-density territory with a very large geographical area ... we have a hotel industry of such great quality and quantity and have excellent and unique products... I think we are a target for people who want to seek safe and quiet destinations” (E1).

There are also some points to improve in the management of the destination, such as “better promotion, better communication of the destination and having updated the products and tour packages” (E2). “The offer is well designed, well structured, we need to continue to bet a lot on the training of actors, for the segment that we want to achieve, ... I would say that also at the level of promotion it is lacking to do much because all the money we have for promotion is little. We need to ensure that we have quality and we need to know how to sell this quality in international markets. Because the average of the overnight stays of an international tourist in Alto Tâmega is more than double in terms of days than the national tourist... it has to continue to have national customers and users but it has to be promote itself on the international segment, especially allowing to feed the low season because internationally, the thermal workers seek the thermal baths in winter. And we in Portugal traditionally look for the spa in summer and autumn” (E1).

5 Conclusions

Not forgetting that this research focus is a border destination, the truth is that we are facing a destination of health and well-being, because the Dominant Products identified in this study are essentially “those that are connected to water, ECV is a thermal destination and therefore, within our strategic tourism plan, tourism linked to the spa and well-being is clearly the main product” (E1), with water being the differentiating tourist product of the region, thus verifying its potential in the destination as an aggregator of other tourist products as verified in the literature review. The positive or negative impacts that the development of tourism can bring to The ECV, at this time are only visioned the positive “we have the right characteristics to be an alternative destination to mass tourism, we have a lot of adventure sport in the region, ... the presence of people in the territory, has much positive aspects for the territory in several
dimensions, because we are a territory with few people ... I do not see negative aspects, I see many positive aspects in the sense of boosting the economic activities of the territory, and this is very relevant at all levels” (E1). “The impacts are economic development, represents more tourists, who extend the stay, (...) profile of different tourists, the thermal tourist spends more money, the nature tourist spends less. What we want is to have an offer for residents and tourists, and we want tourists to stay longer, spend more and better” (E2).

As a differentiating element of the destination arise the Bio-healthy plans that are characterized by being a newly developed product and “there is a perspective at the level of the whole region of designing products very associated with the well-being of a quality perspective and more comprehensive than what would be just wellbeing and treatment” (E1). And especially what we are offering to those who visit us is the possibility of offering sports and having a healthy diet, know the waters and properties of the mineral waters of the destination to implement these plans. Bio-healthy plans can be followed at destination and at home with our waters and our gastronomic resources” (E2).

Innovation and the creation of new products are recognized in an attempt to encompass all products in one, and the Bio-healthy Plans are well the example of this, combining the thermal waters, the nature product, health and well-being and the local gastronomy. When it comes to health and wellness tourism, it refers to thermalism, however it has also become linked to the preventive issue and relax, associated with a healthy lifestyle. It is thus considered that thermalism, nowadays is related to an improvement in the quality of life. Thermalism is thus part of a very comprehensive concept - well-being tourism, the latter being added to health tourism [34]. The effects of wellness tourism on destinations can be different and should be better understood [35], as they can make a big difference in the success of a destination.

The [32] Model assesses the effectiveness of the plans outlined, covering several lines of action, namely marketing strategy, development of tourism products, distribution channels, infrastructure, hospitality, security, attractiveness, appearance, action and performance. There are answers and concrete actions for all of them, including the involvement of all stakeholders,” we have several meetings in Eurocity (E1), “in our tourism project... we involve all stakeholders, (...)” (E2). The management of the destination is on track to achieve success, requires more investment in the communication of the destination and definition of strategies that help combat the seasonality rate, because the central element is defined as being: Nature Tourism, Health and Well-being [36–39].

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